

Essay on learning diversity and authentic assessment tools

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A classroom is often characterised by learners coming from diverse backgrounds. These are the contextual factors, such as age, gender, socio-economic status, language proficiency levels, and understanding ability.

These are common factors that a teacher may find present in his class and must consider in his planning and deliver of instruction.

Learners from diverse backgrounds have to be served some accommodation strategies that would facilitate their learning and even a holistic development, especially as they go through adjusting in their new environment. On the part of the teacher, these accommodation strategies are reflected in his differentiation instruction strategies.

One European-initiated study delved into an international review of the effects of early interventions for children from different social backgrounds. Burger (2009) supported the efficiency of facilitating the acquisition of basic cognitive skills through a “relatively structured but diverse learning experiences that include teacher-directed whole-class instruction, small-group work and individualized activities” (p. 154). This supports the planned instruction in the lesson plans for Science Grade 1. The Lesson Plan 1 on Physical Science uses the strategy of doing a simple experiment within a small group. It takes into account the relative structure that the diverse background needs and it gives as well the individualized pacing the students need.

Another research done in Canada talks about the problem-based learning (PBL) approach used in investigative primary Science. Etherington (2011) claims that the problem-based learning mode of teaching science was well suited to a K-6 science syllabus. PBL works with real life world context as the

point of departure for the learning process. The second lesson plan prepared for Science Grade 1 with the theme on Life Science uses the real world context of the children as the starting point. Observation of their family members is a good way to inquire about the needs of the individual persons and make conclusions about the characteristics of the person. A teacher-facilitated instruction on theorizing these characteristics is also supported by the principles of PBL.

The higher order questions in the same lesson plan reflect the philosophy and assumptions of the problem-based learning approach. Asking the young learners to think of how they might survive when their basic needs are lacking is a way to trigger their thinking ability and go deep into their cognitive development.

Another research study was done to review effective programs for struggling readers, especially those in Grades K – 5. Slavin, Lake, Davis, and Madden (2010) have justified the use of cooperative learning strategies in the classroom to have positive effects for struggling readers. They also say that small-group works can be favourable to these students with difficulty in reading and as well as for those who struggle towards proficiency in language.

Lesson 3, with the theme of Earth and Space Science utilizes a cooperative learning strategy where the students share their experiences in a small group. It also favours the struggling readers and language learners through the drawing activity. Illustrating their ideas is an alternative for those who are yet struggling to express themselves in through the more common way of speaking and writing.

In conclusion, the three lesson plans prepared for Science Grade 1 are in support of the instructional strategies that facilitate learning for the diverse background of learners.

References

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