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Being a teacher can be a tedious task, even for those who are not really trained or devoted to be in that kind of profession and more so for individuals who are were only forced to engage in teaching for whatever reasons there may be. Educating other people’s minds requires a lot of skill and effort. It is usually being stipulated that for any person to be able to teach any specific material, he has to be able to teach himself about the lesson first. The objective of this paper is to discuss some of the most common teaching dilemmas that teachers encounter in their day to day life. For constructive purposes, let us assume that the author of this paper has just started his teaching profession and is now handling a batch of 25 students with varying reading abilities, including students with reading disabilities.
- How could the teacher asses and evaluate the students for reading instruction?
There is only one way to appropriately and objectively assess each student’s reading abilities and that is to make them read aloud in front of the class. Have each student read a certain book passage and then the teacher can assess how a certain student enunciates the words that he sees, how fast he reads, and how clearly he presents the sentences from the book, and how he pauses whenever there are punctuation marks, etc. Now, after each student has taken their turn to read and have already been evaluated, the teacher can then group them according to their reading abilities or disabilities—the former is more recommended. By grouping his students according to their abilities, the process of relaying information can be made a lot faster or in other terms, be optimized. The teacher may also be able to focus on the students that experience learning impairments and less on the ones that usually nail every test without any learning compromise. The goal of every lecture or in this case, reading activity is to make sure the students learn what they see, read, or basically understand everything that comes in contact with their senses, regardless of the strategy being used by the teacher.
- What instruments can the teacher use, how can the teacher group the students?
The teacher can use traditional instruments such as blackboards, whiteboards, markers, chalks, and erasers as his main instructional materials. However, these are traditional teaching materials and the students may feel bored listening to lectures or they may have a hard time focusing on the class activities because of the lack of innovation and creativity in choosing teaching and activity materials. Presenting a lecture using a projector, a computer, and a PowerPoint presentation file can be a fairly good and at the same time, interesting set of instructional materials. The teacher can tweak his presentation in such a way that most, if not all, of his students would enjoy. He can, for example, include animations, pictures, and sound clips that are related to the topic in order to catch and retain the students’ attention. As stated in the earlier question, the teacher can group the students according to their learning or reading abilities. Although this may seem to be a discriminating way to do so, it will surely make things a lot easier. There may, however, be other ways of grouping the students such as based on their age, gender, etc. Some teachers use random groupings in dividing the students. This is however, not advisable because there is usually no organization in it and the teacher may not be able to minimize the problems that may arise as a result of the academic indifferences between his students that much.
- What materials can the teacher use; what approaches could be used, how can the teacher structure the literary block, deal with diversity in the classroom, and how could the teacher conduct an ongoing assessment?
One of the absolute requirements of being a teacher, especially for teachers who handle pre-school and primary school students is creativity. The attention span of kids tends to be so short today and so the teachers may have to do some extra works in making their lecture presentations work. They can start by using props and other materials to liven and season up the interaction. If there is a lecture about the basic human anatomy for primary school students, the teacher can for example request for anatomy models from the school’s teaching materials’ department provided that the school has one. If not, pictures of the body parts with labels would mostly suffice. The teacher may also give the students’ handouts or reviewers so that they can study in advance and focus more on the lecture. This actually works especially for long topics. Again, the main problem here is the students’ relatively short attention span. Media-based presentations may also be a good choice because it can make an obviously boring topic much more interesting. This way, the students would perceive learning any sophisticated material a fun activity and not an obligation. In the end, both the teacher and his students will benefit. The students will be able to grasp the topic a lot easier and the teacher will have to exert a lot less effort in presenting the topic. Teachers can structure the literary block by grouping the students based on whatever way he thinks they may be best grouped—although the recommended grouping approach is based on their academic capabilities. He should then focus more on the ones whose learning abilities could be further enhanced so that it could be at par with those who already have a fairly developed set of academic capabilities.
Managing issues related to cultural diversity in the classroom is a very common problem. The good thing about this is that it is fairly easy to address. All that the teacher should do is to be aware of the cultural differences between the students, and structure his lectures and class activities based on these cultural considerations. However, he should never compromise the integrity and quality of his lectures just because of simple cultural diversity issues. The first and most important thing to avoid cultural conflicts within the classroom is to be aware of the cultural barriers and make decisions based and around them. Cultural differences may never be addressed and grouping the students based on their cultural affiliations would not be a very bright idea. The best thing to do is to arrive at a compromise as much as possible.