

Reflection of Instruction

Prior to this internship experience, I have had very little time within a physical classroom. Between joining the college of education later in college and the hit of the global pandemic, I have been left to learn about being a teacher almost strictly through a theoretical lens. I lacked the knowledge of how to apply these theories within a classroom. However, with hands-on experience of teaching, as well as mentoring from my cooperating teacher, I have learned how to most effectively apply theories to components of instruction and meet the needs of all learners.

The most crucial aspect of designing instructional practices that reach all learners, in my opinion, is ensuring you know what types of learners you have and how to best reach them. My mentor teacher noted that this is something I need to focus on determining early on in the school year. While I can do so through observation, I also can create an opportunity to allow students to advocate for themselves by asking them directly. This not only allows me to know their preferences of learning styles, but also encourages my students to share other pertinent information that will help in reaching their individualized needs.

Once I know my students' preferences, I am able to implement instructional practices to meet these needs. Through my student teaching, the most impactful way I have seen this done is through presenting information in a variety of ways. This includes presenting the same concepts utilizing different mediums. For example, when teaching time to second graders, I modeled how to read a clock, provided videos with instruction, allowed students to have hands-on experiences with clocks, and more. This ensured all students had the opportunity to interact with the concept in a way that was most influential to them. Further, it is also incredibly helpful, in terms of meeting the needs of all learners, to provide students with a wide variety of ways to showcase their knowledge. This can be done through a traditional assessment, portfolio, essay, presentation, or other. Just as they prefer to take information in differently, many

students have preferences when it comes to producing work as well. Mixing up both formative and summative assessments ensures all students can showcase their best selves.

Another great opportunity for instruction that reaches all learners is through small group. Both of my mentor teachers have used small group meetings multiple times a day across multiple subjects and standards. I have in turn implemented them within my lessons and due to their success will implement daily small groups within my future classroom as well. Small groups are organized by students' capabilities within a specific area, such as math or reading. From there, the teacher is able to tailor the small group instruction to the needs of the group. For example, some of my second graders struggled identifying the “zones” of the hour hands while others could read a clock perfectly and were ready for elapsed time problems. Based on this information, I am able to more directly address specific needs of the students as well as track progress more directly. Overall, it is an incredible way to implement instructional practices that most effectively meet the needs of all learners in my class.