Teaching Methods and Strategies

Introduction

There are a variety of **teaching methods and strategies** available to teachers, some of which may be more effective at achieving different types of instructional goals. Teaching methods and strategies are techniques that teachers use to help students develop knowledge and/or skills. There are two main types of instructional methods: **teacher-centered instruction** and **student-centered instruction**. <u>Effective teaching methods</u> are any teaching methods that help the students successfully meet the learning goals set by the instructor.

Instructional Methods and Examples

The two main types of instructional approaches or instructional methods are teacher-centered instruction and student-centered instruction. In teacher-centered instruction, the teacher plays the most active role, whereas the students play more of a passive role. An example of teacher-centered instruction is a **lecture**, where the teacher speaks and the students listen.

On the other hand, in student-centered instruction, students play more of an active role in their own learning, although the teacher is still typically involved. An example of <u>student-centered learning</u> is a **<u>seminar</u>**, where students have a formal discussion with each other while the teacher acts as a facilitator, but does not dominate the discussion.

Teacher-Centered Instruction

Teacher-centered instruction includes any type of instruction where the teacher plays more of an active and engaged role, while the students play more a passive role. There are a variety of teaching styles, teaching techniques, teaching approaches, and teaching methods that fall under the umbrella category of teacher-centered instruction. Teacher-centered instruction is not always as engaging to students, because they play a passive role and their attention may wander.

Here are some examples of teacher-centered instruction methods:

- Lecture: A lecture is when the teacher speaks for a period of time about a topic, while students listen and possibly take notes. Generally, a lecture is different from a discussion or a seminar because students do not typically speak during lectures, except possibly to ask quick questions. Lectures are not considered very effective instruction methods on their own because they are not very engaging for students. However, they can be useful when mixed with other methods, such as more student-centered methods.

- **Dictation**: Dictation is used to teach language and spelling skills. In dictation, the teacher says something and the students write it down, then check their work against the original text. Like lectures, dictation is not considered the most effective teaching method because it is less engaging for students.

Student-Centered Instruction

Student-centered instruction includes any methods where the students play more of an active and engaged role in their own learning, and do not take a back seat to the teacher. There are many effective teaching methods, instructional approaches, and teaching style examples that are considered student-centered instruction.

Here are some examples of student-centered instruction:

- **Assignment**: An assignment is a task, often a written task, that students complete individually, in pairs, or in small groups. Assignments are typically formative, meaning the student is supposed to learn something through doing the assignment, rather than just demonstrate what they have already learned previously (as in an assessment). Examples of assignments include: sets of math problems, essays, science experiments, projects, and graphic organizers. In order for assignments to be effective, they need to be aligned with learning objectives, have set grading criteria, have clear instructions, and be followed up with by teacher support or feedback.

- **Discussion**: A discussion is different from a lecture because the students, rather than the teacher, do most of the talking. This makes it a more engaging instructional method for students. There are several types of discussions, including Socratic Seminars and fishbowl discussions.

- **Student Presentations:** Presentations are student-centered for the student who is giving the presentation, because they have to be very engaged in the process. However, presentations are not always the most engaging instructional method for the rest of the class, since they resemble lectures, except that they are typically shorter and are delivered by students rater than teachers.

Project-Based Instruction

In **project-based instruction**, which is another type of student-centered instructional approach, students engage in real-world problem-solving. Project-based instruction is typically seen as an effective teaching style or instructional method because it is engaging and hands-on for students. One example of project-based instruction might be a debate where students pretend to be members of Congress who need to make decisions about how to solve real-world issues. Another example of project-based instruction might be a contest to see which students can build the best waterproof shelter using materials found on a field trip to the beach. In project-based instruction, students practice solving a variety of real-world problems, either individually or in groups.

Seminar Method of Instruction

In the seminar method of instruction, which is also student-centered, students participate in a relatively formal discussion with their peers. Seminars are generally seen as an effective teaching technique. Seminars are more effective than lectures because students verbally participate rather than just listening. There are different ways of organizing seminars. Sometimes, the class may be divided into teams, where each team represents a different "side" of an issue and is required to argue for that side. Other times, different students in the class may be assigned different roles in the discussion, or assigned different aspects of an issue that they need to talk about, so that when everyone's work is put together, a complete picture is made. Free-flowing class discussions may also be useful, but structured discussions can provide students with opportunities to practice particular skills.