

Standards Portfolio  
October 24, 2007

#### Standard 4, Instructional Strategies

A Teacher must understand and use a variety of instructional strategies to encourage student development of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills.

##### Knowledge and Growth of the Standard:

In the last few months I have spent a good chunk of my time studying, observing, and practicing different instructional strategies. Although I know there are many different instructional strategies I will start by discussing six instructional strategies I have been working on as of late. The six instructional strategies I have been studying are: presentation, discussion, cooperative learning, discovery learning, concept attainment, and direct instruction. I have used several of these strategies myself in the classroom. There are certain things I like and dislike about each strategy. I like presentation because I feel like a good presentation has a lot of information in it, and if it is delivered the correct way it can be a lot of fun. However, the presentation strategy can be very boring and ineffective if it is not done carefully. You have to be careful that your presentation is not too dry or complicated otherwise you will lose the attention of your students. I feel presentation is also a good strategy because it really prepares high school students for college courses being that many college professors use this strategy the majority of the time. I really like the discussion strategy because it really promotes critical thinking. Well lead discussions can go on for quite some time and students can't wait until they are able to voice their opinion. On the other side of discussion is that they can often get off topic. If a discussion is not moderated carefully they are often fruitless. I have experienced discussions gone awry before. Often they are fun, but not entirely educational. Cooperative learning in my opinion is really a great instructional strategy. I love using this strategy when my students are reviewing information they have previously learned. I also feel students working together to achieve a goal is a great thing. Even the students like this strategy. When the students at [redacted] get to work on a project together they are so excited and want to get started right away. Discovery learning is an interesting strategy. I like that this strategy encourages students to go the extra step to find the answer, but I don't think it is often effective. Concept attainment is a great way to figure out exactly what a concept is and is not. I like the idea of making a list of examples for each. I feel like this strategy really looks at the whole picture of the concept which is more important than just knowing a definition. Direct instruction is one of my favorite strategies. I feel this strategy makes the most sense in music. For example in band rehearsal we all practice something together until it is right. If a certain part of a piece still needs work we work on it as a group, or individuals can work on it during their lessons. I believe I will be using direct instruction a lot in my future.

Why is it important to know about different strategies? This question has several answers. One answer would be for variety. Even in my own experiences if lessons are always the same it is no longer fun to come to class. If I as the teacher change how I teach by changing my instructional strategies from time to time it will make class less predictable, and thus more engaging and beneficial.

Another possible answer is that some students might better learn from one strategy than from another. This is really important in my individual music lessons. No lesson I teach in a day is the same as the one before it. The students might be playing the same music, but the message is often delivered in different ways. Also when dealing with a larger class if you know more strategies and blend them together you can try and accommodate more students. For example in one of my classes at [REDACTED] some students prefer when I am up in front of the room giving a presentation, while other students are quite bored and are just following along. But then in my lesson if I switch to a cooperative learning activity in the middle of my lesson sometimes the students that were not learning a lot from the presentation portion of the lesson really grasp a lot of ideas and concepts by learning in a different way. I feel like if I did everything the same all the time my students wouldn't get as much out of class.

#### **Evidence:**

For this standard I have included two pieces of evidence. This first is a lesson plan from a lesson I taught using the direct instruction method, and the second is some experiences I have had at [REDACTED] that pertain to instructional strategies. I included the lesson plan using the direct instruction method because this lesson was one of the best lessons I taught. I felt I used the strategy very effectively and had great results with my students. Students really enjoyed this lesson, and they learned a lot at the same time. This combo I feel is essential to learning. This lesson plan also demonstrates my knowledge of a possible instructional strategy I can use in the future.

The other piece of evidence I included is a paragraph talking about my experiences giving lessons at [REDACTED]. I included this because I felt it showed my ability and knowledge of switching instructional strategies often. When giving lessons I use a different instructional strategy for each student. When it comes to music some strategies are just more effective for students than others. If I used the same strategy for everyone I would be a bad teacher. I feel like this piece of evidence shows that I definitely do not use the same strategy for each student, but rather vary my instructional strategies.

#### **Goals for the Future:**

I have two goals for this standard. My first goal is that I want to become comfortable enough with the different instructional strategies so that while teaching I am able to flow easily from one to the other in the same lesson. I think a blend of instructional activities is best. I plan to achieve this goal by continuing to practice using different instructional strategies in my student practicum as well as my student teaching experience in the spring. I also plan on using multiple strategies in one lesson to better help me start reaching this goal. I will not start out using a blend of all strategies at once, but rather use several in one lesson and keep adding from there.

My other goal for this standard deals with my instructional strategies when giving students their individual lessons. After working with the students for awhile I have figured out what strategies are helpful to particular students. My goal is to shorten the amount of time it takes me to figure out what instructional strategy works best for each student. This is a hard goal to achieve, but I believe it is attainable. I plan to achieve this goal by asking my students more questions. Right away after trying a strategy I am going

to ask them if what I did helped, or if they would rather I tried something else. I believe asking the students questions like this and getting feedback from them versus just my observations will greatly help me achieve this goal. 