Concepts addressed:
Major Categories Advantages and Appropriate Uses of Instructional Strategies

Principles, Techniques, and Methods Associated with Major Instructional Strategies

Direct instruction and Student-centered Methods:

Many strategies can be done in a direct instruction model where the teacher comes up with the design and directs the students in creating a class model of the strategy. The teacher guides it. Used frequently in a more traditional approach based on "skills" and practice through "drills".

Similar strategies may be used in student-centered methods when the students think, share, and create the strategy. It is mind engaging and provides first-hand experiences.

The instructional strategies below, although effective in literacy, can be adapted to any content especially in K-8. (Language Arts, Social Studies, Math & Science Literature)

These strategies engage the learner in constructing and understanding concepts.

The instructional strategies are grouped in five categories identified by the main goal of the strategy:

1. Developing comprehension
2. Developing vocabulary
3. Developing writing
4. Developing discussion skills
5. Developing critical thinking

Instructional Strategies for Developing Comprehension:

1. Character Hand Portraits: a strategy for developing comprehension of narrative text. Character Hand Portraits may be used to help children understand how an author develops a character in a narrative text. Before the story, the teacher solicits students' predictions regarding the story content based on picture clues and title.
2. Literature Charts: a strategy for comparing story elements. The design of each literature chart is determine by how it will be used. Literature charts have been used successfully in discussing stories, and they remain displayed in the classrooms that students can refer to them when needed. When students use the chart interactively, they should be within students’ reach. (www.thekids.com)
3. Oral Story Retelling: a strategy for developing comprehension of narrative text. Children who are in the emergent or early stage of literacy development and who are in the early primary grades may not have had experience with the Oral Story Retelling strategy. If that is the case, story propos and illustrations can help in their initial stages of story retelling. After listening or reading a story, students us felt board cutouts and the flannel board to retell the story. In older students

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"book language" or the vocabulary of the author is more likely to show up in students' oral retellings.

4. Plot Profiles: A strategy for teaching plot development and relationships through graphing story excitement. This strategy may be used with longer stories that have chapter but can be used for picture books too. Through a grand conversation, students identify the level of excitement of each chapter or element or key events in the book and plot them on a chart. A line graph is then drawn to show the excitement profile of the story.

5. Read to Discover: a strategy for developing comprehension of text. This strategy invites students to use focus questions to guide their reading of narrative or expository text. (www.readwritethink.org)

6. Sketch-to-Stretch: a strategy that encourages an aesthetic response to literature. The purpose of this strategy is to offer students the opportunity to respond to a piece of literature in unique ways based on how they feel while reading the story or how to interpret the text because of their own related experiences. (http://picturingbooks.org)

7. Storyboards: a strategy for developing comprehension of narrative text. This strategy is an excellent tool for facilitating students' responses to both narrative and expository texts. Storyboards also enable students to develop schemata of narrative text and story grammar. Students process text before, during and after reading. This strategy can be modified for students with special needs or struggling readers.

8. Story Mapping: a strategy for teaching story elements. This strategy uses a graphic organizer to guide students in their oral or written retelling of a story.

9. Story Pyramids: a strategy for developing comprehension through teaching story elements. This strategy is a structured approach that encourages students to think deeply about the characters in the story along with story elements. Students are asked to describe the parts of the story using a specific number of words.

10. Weekly Reading Logs: a strategy for developing reading fluency. This strategy is an adaptation of the student's journal entries where they record their responses and reactions to reading. Students record title, number of pages read, time spend reading, interesting words, and short responses. (Tompkins, 2003)

Instructional Strategies for Developing Vocabulary

1. Interactive Word Walls: This strategy provides students with active learning experiences in exploring vocabulary. The number of words introduced each week depends on the age and level of the children.

2. Making Words: a strategy for developing word-solving skills. This strategy helps students develop decoding skills and to generate vocabulary. This activity can be done as a whole group, small group or individually.

3. Repeated Readings: A strategy for developing reading fluency. This strategy encourages students to read aloud until they can read the text fluently. Teachers use this strategy as a direct instruction. (www.readingcenter.buffalo.edu/center/research/tmgrr.html)

4. Semantic Mapping: a strategy for developing word meanings. This strategy is used for teaching students the relationship among words and their meanings. It is a graphic organizer that the teacher and students use to show the visual relationships among words. A word map is a diagram that organizes the related concepts under one or more categories and, through a series of lines, shows their relationships to other concepts.

5. Word Books: a strategy for developing word knowledge. The wordbook can be used as an extension activity during a literature study or a thematic unit. In this strategy, students create their own dictionary based on the book or unit of study.

6. Word Sorts: a strategy for developing word-solving skills. This strategy allows students to
expansion of their vocabulary knowledge by grouping words according to specific categories (Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton, & Johnson, 2000). When students are grouping words according to themes they are identifying common patterns.

Instructional Strategies for Developing Writing

1. Biography Writing: a strategy for developing critical thinking and writing. This strategy helps students interpret expository text and make personal connections. When students are researching their person's histories, they are speaking, reading, writing, and listening to expand their knowledge base. Biographical studies are also tools for students to learn about different cultures and ideas while improving their language skills (Taylor, 2002). This strategy should be modeled by the teacher before students work on it independently.

2. Family Heroes: This strategy integrates critical thinking and the language arts. It can be used across ages and grades, as students share their family histories. This strategy promotes respect among cultural differences. It should be model by the teacher before students work on it independently.

3. Guided Writing: a strategy for developing writing skills. It is a component of the Writer's Workshop, which is a period of time, usually at least one hour, for students to participate in sustained writing session (Calkins, 1991 & 1994; Fountas & Pinnell, 2001).

4. Language Experience Stories: a strategy for developing literacy through oral language. The students share an experience, such as a field trip or holiday, and dictate their text to the teacher; who acts as a scribe (Ashton-Warner, 1965).

5. Learning Journals: a strategy for developing writing of expository texts. It provides teachers with multiple opportunities to integrate language arts across the curriculum. Students use learning journals to construct meaning from the textbooks or reference materials they read.

6. Message Boards: a strategy for developing writing fluency for social interaction. It encourages students to interact with others through written messages and sketches or drawings. Message boards can be extended to e-mails.

7. Shared Pen: a strategy for developing writing skills in young children. This strategy is designed like the language experience approach, where students dictate their stories to the teacher. This helps students learn about conventions of print. As children learn more about writing the teacher invites the students to share the pen.

8. Story Impressions: a strategy for encouraging creative story writing. This is a pre-reading activity with a focus on the creative construction of writing stories through the use of key words selected from a story. Prior to reading a story, the students make predictions about it using teacher-selected key words or phrases from the story. Using the key words, students write their first impressions of the story. After reading the story, students then write summaries of it, comparing them with their first impressions.

9. Written Story Retelling and Note Taking: This strategy involves the retelling of a story that students have heard or read by writing the parts of the story that they remember. As an adjunct to students' recalling and organizing the parts of the story for written retellings, note taking has been added through the use of story mapping. There are many formats for story retellings—oral retellings, story illustrations, storytelling, and drama renditions of a story (Brown & Cambourne, 1987).

Instructional Strategies for Developing Discussion Skills

1. Connect IT! This strategy emphasizes the construction of meaning through teacher-led discussions before, during, and after reading. Text discussions are intended to help students make connections to the text. Readers connect to the story in three ways; personal connections,
text connections, and world connections.

2. Discussion Webs: This strategy structures classroom talk so that students focus their conversations on issues related to their reading. The three phases of the discussion web strategy lead the students' engagement in literate thinking around an instructional topic:
   - Phase 1: students are prepared to read the text through a student-led discussion that helps them set a purpose for reading or activate their prior knowledge
   - Phase 2: students engage in reading asking questions related to the text
   - Phase 3: Students use their readings to enter into a discussion that leads to position statements

3. Editor Interviews: This strategy requires students to work in pairs or groups as they outline their arguments.
   - The teacher selects an editorial from a magazine or newspaper
   - The teacher uses a graphic organizer to help students analyze the argument present in the editorial
   - In groups, students research a current event and plan an editorial
   - One volunteer from each group is the editor to be interviewed by the other students
   - After the interview, the whole class summarizes their current thinking about the topic

4. Instructional Conversations: This strategy focuses on factual topics rather than narrative ones. Graphic organizers are used to aid in the processing of the text. After the graphic organizers are done, students have conversations about key statements. After the discussion, students write a summary of their new knowledge as a result of this activity.

5. Socratic Seminar: This strategy helps students to actively engage in the processing of text. During Socratic Seminars, students use exploratory talk to process text material.
   - Teachers prepare questions to use during the seminar
   - Students work with a graphic organizer
   - Within their inner circle, students are given two tokens to speak. They place their token in the middle to take their turn.
   - The seminar is started by the teacher with a guiding question
   - The discussion is limited to 20 minutes.
   - After the discussion students form the outer circle comment on the seminar. Then they write a summary of their new knowledge.

Instructional Strategies for Developing Critical Thinking

1. Anticipation Guides: This strategy is designed to activate students' prior knowledge in preparing them to read (Readence, Bean, & Baldwin, 1998). Students are asked to think about debatable statements and to agree or disagree, based on their knowledge of the topic and personal experiences. Anticipation guides have also been referred to predication guides (Richardson & Morgan, 1997).

2. Data Charts: This strategy uses a graphic organizer to help students sort information from different text sources into categories. The use of questions by the teacher with data charts to assist students in gathering information also promotes their critical-thinking and problem-solving skills, as they are encouraged to locate and integrate new information in responding.

3. Literature Report Cards: This strategy facilitates students' ability to make inferences and can be used across ability levels. After finishing a story, the class brainstorms the main character's traits.
using a character web. After the brainstorming the students grouped in groups of 4 select the character traits they will use in their Literature Report Cards. Once the character traits have been selected the students assign a grade to the character and write a rationale including excerpt from the text. Present the work to the class.

4. Presenting an Argument: This strategy enables students to discuss both sides of an argument and then write a coherent, logical essay on the topic. Works best at Intermediate/middle School.

5. Think-Pair-Share: This strategy integrates questioning and responding to text to promote critical thinking. It engages the students in instructional conversations. It is a cooperative learning strategy.

Sources:


