

Our Top 10 Strategies for Helping to Inform Differentiated Instruction

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Note: Choice can be built into each of these strategies

1. Graffiti

Group students in 3 or 4, hand them out chart paper and markers.

Give each student a theme to write and draw about.



Examples for Religion:

Themes for Lent: Hope, forgiveness, temptation, suffering, love.

What do you think God looks like?



Example for Art: Colour Schemes

In groups of 4, students are given key question to respond to. Each group records on the chart paper using one coloured marker. After every 2 minutes the chart paper is passed on to the next group, until each group has recorded their thoughts about each key question.

At the top of each chart paper write:

What is a Monochromatic colour scheme?

What is a Complementary colour scheme?

What is an Analogous colour scheme?

What is a Neutral colour scheme?

What is a Primary Triad?

What is an Accented Neutral colour scheme?

Each group will have a different coloured marker and within each group each member will have their own same coloured marker.

Students are encouraged to define, summarize, illustrate and give examples of the heading.

When the exercise is complete we will have a class understanding of the question.

This gives us a starting point for new learning or a review for testing.



Example for Art: Opening activity

First day of the semester after going over the course overview I like to do a graffiti exercise with my students to alleviate anxiety. This is an excellent icebreaker as they can see that they are not the only one that has trouble drawing.

Each student is given an 8.5 x 11 sheet of paper. They print their name on the bottom left hand corner. Students are asked to draw what I say using a pen only. They have 60 seconds to complete their drawing before passing their sheet to the left. I give them specific instructions.

1 – Across your page draw the horizon line with a path starting from the left hand side disappearing into the distance in the center of the page.

Pass it on to the left

2 – On the path is a man with a hat.

Pass it on

3 – To his right is man's best friend.

Pass it on

4 – In the foreground there is a squirrel gathering nuts.

Pass it on

5 – To the left of the path is a tree.

Pass it on

6 –

Continue to describe the scene until the students have their 8.5 x 11 sheet returned to them.

This description of a scene can also be done on chart paper with markers. This will clearly illustrate to students that we all envision something different and we all have different drawing abilities and that is OK.

- Divide the class into three groups.
- Have each group line up one behind the other facing their chart paper.
- First student goes up to the board and draws on the chart paper.
- After 60 seconds, change the next student from each line goes up and illustrates the next step.

When you are finished you have three different perspectives of the same description. Students love this.



Example for Family Studies:

Grffiti is one of my favourite, creative brainstorming activities! I also use this for review before a test.

First, I place students into groups of three or four and provide each group with a large piece of paper and coloured markers (Mr. Sketch). I write a topic related to my lesson or to my unit, in the middle of each page. (This topic can be the same or different for all groups).

The students get 30 seconds to think, then 60 seconds to record their ideas on the paper. Each student writes or draws items at the same time. At the end of the time limit, either the students move to the next table or they pass their paper on to the next group (This depends on your space and on the students themselves).

Once each group gets their original paper back, they have the knowledge of the entire class on one topic.

Sample Activity: Introducing or reviewing Canada's Food Guide: Write the name of a Food Group on each chart paper. On a fourth paper, the topic could be "Guidelines for Healthy Eating". You could then display the chart papers around the class.

Sample Activity: Reviewing "Sharing Food Around the World": Questions at the Top or Middle of Each Page Could Be: "What do you know about "eating with chopsticks"?", "What do you know about "eating etiquette" in different countries?", "What are some of the staple foods that are eaten in different countries?", "What can be learned from sharing food from a common bowl?" etc....

2. Four Corners

Post up on the wall in each corner a sign that says Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree.

Read the students a statement and they walk to the corner that best describes their feeling on the topic. After they have chosen their corner, they have a few minutes to discuss amongst themselves their feelings on the topic, and then a spokesperson from each group tells the class the group consensus.



Examples for English, Media:

Can you sing a tune from a TV commercial?

Do magazine advertisements have an effect on the clothes you buy?



Examples for Art: Art History

I used this activity for art history.

Using PowerPoint and a projector display a work of art from a period and ask students to divide themselves into the four corners.

This is an excellent intro or review activity.



Examples for Family Studies:

Write a statement on the board, to simply state: "Modern Farming Destroys the Environment".

The students then choose a corner that reflects their perspective, view, or response (Agree, Strongly Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree). Students are given 30 seconds to think, then without discussion, move to their chosen corner. In Beyond Monet, it is suggested that once in their corner, they form groups of three or four, and share why they chose that corner. Students should be encouraged to make up their own minds and not to be controlled by others.

A lesson about farming and the facts can follow. The "four corners" activity can then be repeated at the end of a classroom discussion to see if opinions regarding farming have shifted.

3. Story Telling

Students can remember difficult terms or concepts when they can relate it to something. A story can help them with recall.



Examples for Art:

Colour schemes are often a challenge for students. A good way to keep them straight is by telling a story.

Monochromatic:

Mona Chroma loved to match everything; she wore a blue dress with dark blue shoes and light blue socks. She was monochromatic.

Analogous:

Ana Logus always wore colours associated with the sun in the winter because she thought it helped her to stay warm. In the summer she wore colours associated with the cool water because it helped her feel cool. These colour schemes are both analogous colour schemes.

Complementary:

People always face each other to pay a complement to each other -colours do the same thing. The cool blue complements the warm orange, the cool green complements the warm red, and the warm yellow complements the cool violet. These are complementary colour schemes.

You can make up stories or songs for just about anything.

4. Choice/Tic-Tac-Toe Board



Example for English:

For the students Independent Novel Study they have to complete a creative assignment. The students have a choice of three assignments in three different columns. Their chosen assignment must form a line from left to right or diagonal hitting one assignment in each column.



Example for Math:

The board is laid out so that one of the rows or diagonals has easier problems, so that every student can complete the task. See Appendix 1.



Example for Art:

Students must complete a line by completing the task in the selected area. Arrange the tasks in such a way that the student has opportunity to write, create and analyze.

Possible tasks:

Write a letter to an artist telling them why you like his/her painting.

Critique a painting using the 4-step critique sheet.

Write a journal of what the artist was thinking when he/she created this painting.

Create an “and then” version of the artwork. (What happened next?)

i.e. “Starry Night” you could depict the scene at dawn.



Example for Family Studies:

A choice board is a great way to present a culminating assignment. The following could be for Unit 3: Body Image:

Students must select three tasks from the choice board or students simply select one assignment out of nine. If they choose the “Wild Card”, they must get their idea approved by the teacher.

5. Identify Similarities and Differences



Example for Religion:

Put students into groups of 3-4. Assign each group two different religions practiced in Canada. Have student fill in t-chart finding the similarities and differences between the two Religions. Then have students present their findings to the class.



Example for Art: Art History

Master artwork prints are displayed around the room.

Students are challenged to critically examine each image and look for similarities and differences.

I find that selecting 4 to 6 images on the new concept works best.

1 – Students use a T chart to identify similarities and differences.

2 – As a class, complete a class T chart listing student observations.

Students are now ready to begin new learning and they are prepared for the lesson. This activity can also be used in conjunction with a Think Pair Share activity.



Example for Art: Element of Colour – Monochromatic Colour Scheme

Display photographs of 6 monochromatic landscapes. Ask the students to critically examine each photo and look for similarities and differences.

Student use a T chart to identify similarities and differences.

Complete the class T chart listing student observations.

Students gain a better understanding of what is a monochromatic colour scheme. This activity can also be done with analogous, complementary and neutral colour schemes. I like to organize the photos on the word board with the corresponding label.



Example for Math:

Use groups of two or three. Have each group give a similarity or difference. The expectation is that students learn that the general form of a quadratic equation is $y = ax^2 + bx + c$, $a \neq 0$. See Appendix 3.

6. Reflection



Example for English:

For the students independent novel study they need to complete a novel study report for each 1/4 of their novel. They can either complete this task by writing it down (written) by taping themselves saying it on a digital voice recorder (oral) or tape themselves on a video recorder (visual).



Example for Art:

Students are asked to submit a reflection on their creation work. They have the option to submit it in writing on lined paper, typed using the classroom PC, Digitally using the digital recorders or scheduling a student teacher conference.

Since providing my students with these choices I have noticed a notable increase in completion of the reflections and an increase in the quality of submissions. I would recommend that you prepare specific step-by-step procedures for the use of the recorders and where to save and submit them on laminated cards and posted in the classroom.

7. Exit Cards



Example for English:

Every day I focus on a short story term, for example protagonist, antagonist conflict. At the end of the class I ask the student to fill in an exit card pertaining to the term of the day.

Example:

Do you know what the term protagonist means? Yes No

Who was the protagonist in the story we read today?



Example for Math:

I find that the students treat the card like they would a test – they concentrate more. The answer is multiple-choice to make it a quick assessment. The comments help with the introduction to the next day's lesson. See Appendix 4 for example.

8. Placemat



Examples for Family Studies:

Great activity for students to gather their thoughts about any topic, or to come up with “key issues”.

A piece of chart paper is divided into pieces based on the number of members in the group, with a square or a circle in the middle. (This can be used with groups of 2 to 7 – depending on students’ experience with group work)

(Beyond Monet)

You can also use a regular size of paper, but chart paper allows more room and freedom.

Sample: You are beginning Unit #1 :Investigation of Food Choices. You want to know what the students already know. You ask them to write down individually what they know about why people eat. Each student writes this down in his or her space. Then you ask students to place their reasons in the middle space under one of two headings: Physical Reasons for Eating and Psychological Reasons for eating.



Example for Art:

1 – Individually

- a) Students are given a placemat (12 x 18 sheet of cartridge paper) divide the mat into 4 sections.
- b) In the center write the element investigated.
- c) In each area illustrate, identify and define the element

2 – In Groups of 4

- a) One placemat is given to each group (12 x 18 sheet of cartridge paper) divide the mat into 4 sections.
- b) In the center write the element investigated. i.e. element of colour
- c) Each section will examine a specific colour scheme
- d) Everyone in the group must contribute something in each section with illustrations, clippings, definitions...

9. Concentration



Example for Family Studies:

This is used for review for any unit test in any subject.

This activity is a variation of the old stand-by. I use it as a review before a test. Students are not ask to simply recall vocabulary but must try to find out the connections between the pairs.

On the board or on an overhead projector, draw a template of 20 or 30 squares, with numbers down the side, and letters across the top. The letters and numbers allow the students to easily select choices: eg. A 1 and E 4



Sample: (For a game of 20 squares)

Pairs:

- proteins amino acids
- carbohydrates provide body with its main source of energy
- vitamin C only found in fruits and vegetables
- cholesterol HDL is its healthy form
- transfat linked to a higher risk of heart disease
- 65g the amount of healthy fat for a teen
- reducing fat too much . . takes the pleasure and fun out of eating
- processed meats have been linked to certain types of cancer
- water make up most of your body weight
- scurvy disease caused by a lack of Vitamin C

The class is divided into two or three teams and students take turns asking for cards (2 at a time to be turned over). If a pair is found, a point is scored and cards are removed. If there is no match, the cards are placed back again.

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1						
2						
3						
4						

10. One Fact

When starting on a new unit the students are assigned to bring in one fact for the new unit.



Example for Careers:

The students are told at the end of class that tomorrow they must bring in one thing they must do for a job interview. They must bring in the fact and where they got the fact from (source) for tomorrow. When the students come in the next day, they put their fact on the chart paper at the front of the room and write down the source and sign their name.



Example for Family Studies:

The day before introducing a new topic or unit, assign the following task:
Each student must find out one fact about the required topic. They must also record their source (parent, TV, book, magazine, website, author if possible, etc.)
At the beginning of the very next class, students record their individual facts as well as their sources on the chart paper provided. The papers are then posted for a few days. It is amazing how much information this communal effort produces.

- Sample: "Find out one recent fact about "World Hunger".
- "Research one fact about the Raw Food Movement".

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Appendix 1

Grade 9 Locally Developed Math Tic-Tac-Toe

Calculate the values in one horizontal row or on the diagonal.

25% of 12 g	\$30 increased by 50%	50% of 44 L
75 L decreased by	13 % of \$14	\$60 increased by 25%
\$11.00 increased by 10%	200 g decreased by 25%	50% of 250 mL

Appendix 2

Family Studies

Create a magazine article that informs teenagers about the importance of a positive body image.	Develop a display showing how media portrays male and female body image differently in our society.	Create a talk show skit entitled "Changing Perceptions of Beauty"
Prepare a lesson on strategies for achieving a healthy well-being.	WILD CARD	Design a video that outlines issues relating to healthy food choices.
Write the lyrics for a song about body image and/or healthy eating habits.	Conduct a demonstration, showing us how to reduce unhealthy fats in our diets.	Write an investigative magazine article comparing various fad diets.

Appendix 3

Grade 10 Math Similarities and Differences

$$14x^2 = y + 3x$$

$$C = n^2 + 1$$

$$y = 3x + 2x^2 + 1$$

$$y = 4x - 2x^2$$

$$d = -4.9t^2 + 2t + 10$$

$$y + 1 = x^2$$

$$y = 3x^2 - 2x + 1$$

$$y = x^2$$

What is similar in all these functions?

– All responses that are true are valid, such as

- all have one equal sign
- all have letters (variables)
- all have two variables
- all have a power of two

What is different in all these functions?

- They don't all use the same variables
- Some have an extra x or t variable
- Some are written in a large font and some in a smaller font
- Some have "+" and some have "-"

Which are in the form $y = ax^2 + bx + c$, $a \neq 0$?

(all are or can be rearranged to be in this form)

This is the definition of a quadratic function.

Appendix 4

Grade 10 Math

Exit Card – Trigonometry

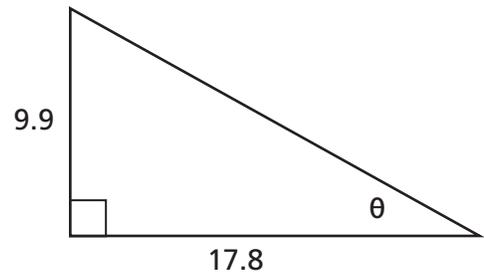
MFM2PC – Today's Problem Unit 2.3

Name: _____

Date: _____

What is the value of θ in this triangle?

- a) 61° b) 29° c) 20.4 d) 42°



I am having trouble with:
