**EDUC-R546**

**Task 2: No.3 Case Situation or Problem**

**Case 1: How to evaluate students’ competences interestingly?**

* **Background Information & Detail Concept:**

When I was a senior, I took a part time job in an English cram school in Taiwan. The English cram school was a kind of learning program that provided additional teaching after school to improve students’ performances in specific subjects. My students were in fifth grade, so that they had to learn some words that were used in daily life including nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions, and interjections. Additionally, they also needed to learn basic grammar such as how to make sentences in different tenses. The cram school demanded that teachers should provide tests for students in order to evaluate what did students learn. However, students feel stressful on taking tests. Therefore, they refused to attend the English classes. For instance, some of the students said they were sick so that they cannot join the class but I knew that actually they were “sick” to take a test.

* **Resolution:**

In order to solve my students’ reluctances, I combine the ideas of “say yes game”, “competed game”, and “monologue game” that are mentioned from *The Big Book of Motivation Games* into the instructional methods. (Epstein & Rogers, 2001). There are several motivational activities in the book but some of those activities are not really suitable for elementary level students. Therefore I select these three activities, which are appropriated for children, to come up with my own more interesting instructional strategy for evaluating students’ learning with more interests. The first activity from *The Big Book of Motivation Games* is the “say yes game”, which emphasizes on providing positive reinforcements to increase learners’ confidents as well as motivation. The second one is the “competition game” that aims to increase learners’ motivation and to improve a positive attitude for joining classes. The last activity is the “monologue game” that focuses on providing feedback to learners. In addition to the previous three activities from the book, I will to combine the twenty questions and cooperative learning skill to combat my students’ reluctances. The twenty questions is a game that participants should find out the answer only with limited clues.

Overall, my solution in this problem is an integration of the competed game and the twenty questions that learners work in groups for winning the game by answering questions correctly as well as quickly. Additionally, using positive feedback and saying “yes” are included as instructional methods to keep learners engaged. The goal of the competed game is to evaluate whether students memorize and understand these words as well as grammar that is taught in previous lessons. In addition, students can also review the instructional contents during the competed game. The following are the steps of the game:

1. Dividing students into three or four groups of no more than eight people. Therefore, every team has more opportunities to get points in each round of the competition.
2. Instructors making questions for the competed game by taking the twenty questions game. They provide some clues such as descriptions of the words so that students can try to articulate the correct answers.
3. Students in both groups should guess what the answer is. If students are on the right track to the correct answer, instructor should say “yes” to encourage them. If the learners are on the wrong track, instructors should not say “no” to students. Instead, they can provide feedback to students such like “that is close but maybe you can think more about…” or “that is a good guess but please try more on it” to increase students’ engagements.
4. The person who gets the correct answer can get one point for his or her team.
5. Afterward, two groups should assign one person who has to spell or to write down the answer on the black board. The one who make the correct answer most quickly can get one more point for his or her team. In addition, there is a rule that students in the same group should take turns on the blackboard.

**Case 2: How to design an activity that is suitable for students with various experiences?**

* **Background Information & Detail Concept:**

Kindergarten teachers usually encourage children to explore knowledge. They do not give limitations of thinking styles and searching answers during learning processes; instead, they do their best to support children on figuring out the answer with various methods. Sometimes, some children asked difficult questions such as “why it is raining from the sky”, “how rocket can fly to the space”, and “why leaves will turn red in fall.” Even though those questions are related to scientific theories that are taught in third grade or even higher, kindergarten teacher cannot resist answering those questions. Instead, they should explain it in different ways for assisting children to understand these theories. On the other hand, there are still some children who are not always curious with details. In other words, they are passive to learn and to find questions by themselves. Therefore, it would be a big but necessary challenge for kindergarten teachers to design activities that can satisfy each child since that everyone is not in the same knowledge level with same experience.

Two years ago, when I took intern in a kindergarten in Taiwan, I taught my student how to plant green beans. My students were curious on where bean sprouts come from when they once ate lunch in school. Hence, we started on the topic that how green beans turn to bean sprouts. At that time, I just used pictures to show growing process and then asked children to plant green beans by following the steps and using the specific materials. However, one of the children asked me “why can we only put green beans on tissue paper” and “why do you know how many water for irrigation.” Suddenly, I knew that I provide too many limitations to my students. Additionally, maybe some of the ideas are different with their experiences so that they might not be satisfied and ever have questions with the instruction as well as the content what they learned.

**Resolution:**

In order to provide more opportunities of explorations as well as deeper comprehension, Bloom’s taxonomy inspired me to design a sequence of activities that follow the six levels: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. I would like to apply the six levels as six steps of the instructional design. The instructional design that follows Bloom’s taxonomy will begin from warm up activity to self-assessment. Not only for my own previous experience about teaching planting green beans, Bloom’s taxonomy but also suit for all kinds of scientific learning. Following I use teaching growing beans as an example to demonstrate the instructional design that follows Bloom’s taxonomy for scientific learning in kindergarten.

1. Knowledge:

Knowledge is the first step of the series of activities that focuses on terms and theories of the subject. I will ask questions such as “where bean sprout comes from” and “Where you can find green beans and bean sprouts” to mention key words and main ideas of the topic. In addition, I will bring uncooked and cooked green beans and bean sprout in class so that children can see, tough, smell, and eat it in reality. Finally, I will emphasis that bean sprout is one kind of vegetable so that they grow up as similar as other planets.

1. Comprehension:

In the comprehension step, I will use pictures, videos, books, and stories to explain theories. For this example, first of all, I will like to tell stories about planting and the growing process of planets because children are generally interested in listening stories. Then we can discuss the content of the stories. During the discussion, children will learn the basic concept of planting and the growing process of planets. Afterward, I will use pictures, videos, or books to show the real growing process of planets. In addition, they can also share their experience in the discussion. Therefore, children can connect the concept with the real world and their own experiences.

1. Application:

This step focuses on experiments and practices. For the example, children have learned general growing process and planting methods from the comprehensive level. Hence, they start to plant bean sprout by themselves. Before planting, children can select materials and methods that they would like to use. For instance, some children can use tissue paper to plant beans, some children can use soil instead of tissue paper, and others can choose cotton as the material. In addition, they can control watering and decide the place where they want to locate their planets by themselves. Therefore, children can observe the planets that grow up with different conditions such as sunshine and wind. Children should record the process and result by drawing down or completing worksheets that including planting details such as how many water for irrigation. .

1. Analysis:

During the experiments and practices, learners might face some problems. Therefore, they are encouraged to find out the possible causes and resolutions in this step. Going back to the example, during the planting process, children will face some problems such as why my beans cannot sprout. Hence, I will encourage children to observe others’ works by reading others records as well as worksheets. Afterward, children start to think about the differences and the possible causes of the problems by comparing others’ works with their own works.

1. Synthesis:

Learners can discuss problems, experiments, and observation that are from previous steps with instructors and colleagues. Then, trying to come up a conclusion, best solutions or interpretation of the concept. In the example, most of bean sprouts have already grown up in a couple of days. Due to diverse materials and methods, some bean sprouts can grow very fast and tall but others cannot. Therefore, children start to discuss their results to others. Furthermore, they can share what they discovered during their own work or comparing with others work. They will find the differences by using various materials and methods. Then, they can come up a conclusion for the best way to plant bean sprouts.

1. Evaluation:

Evaluation is the final step of the sequence activities. Learners can do some self-assessment or peer evaluations in the step. In addition, they can also explore more critical phases of the concept such as opposed ideas and theories for rethinking and reversing their ideas. In this case, children can provide peer feedback to others. In addition, they can also do self-assessment for the whole learning process. Furthermore, I can also use a competition game, which is mentioned in the first case, to evaluate whether children learned and understand the concept or not.

**Case 3: How to minimize disparities of children’s engagement in groups work?**

* **Background Information & Detail Concept:**

In kindergarten, there are a lot of individual as well as team works activities. Team works are designed to increase cooperative learning skill and experiences; additionally, children can also learn some social skills during the process. However, we can found that there are some engaging disparities among individuals in a team. Some specific people engage positively in a group but others have less opportunity to show themselves.

Take my own teaching experience on decorating Christmas tree as an example. At the beginning, all my students were excited to the topic because everyone wanted to own their beautiful Christmas tree. However, some children felt frustrated during their team works since they had less confidence to share and discuss their ideas with other. Additionally, they either did not want to try making some decorations because they could not make it as good as others. Therefore, those children who were less confident might lose opportunities to practice and they also felt bored as well as frustrated to listen to others’ ideas and to engage in the group works.

* **Resolution:**

Following cooperative learning style, I would like to use “Jigsaw” as my instructional strategy for the case. Jigsaw is to form several cooperative teams and to assign various tasks to each member who is in the team. Afterward, learners who get the same task from different teams will discuss and work on the same thing together for completing the their common task. After they finish the discussion and the practices, they go back to their previous team for sharing their learning results and even teach other members. At the end of the jigsaw, each cooperative team will complete their projects. Additionally, instructors can make sure that each team member gets opportunities to engage in the learning or the working process. Using the jigsaw into my own experienced problem, there are four steps for the Christmas tree decoration activities.

1. Instructors divide all children into several teams. There are 5 children in a team since five people can work for five kinds of decorations so that thy can make their tree looks colorful and diverse. In addition, each team member can choose the task that they have to take responsibilities for. For instance, one person can do paper cutting, someone can do paper folding, the other one can draw pictures, and still an individual can make ribbon butterflies.
2. Learners who got the same task from different teams come together in a new group. They start to work together and share ideas to others for making their products. For instance, people who aim to do paper folding can share what they have tried or seen before. Then they can teach others what they can make. Additionally, they can look for paper folding books to get some new ideas and then try to make it together.
3. After a period of time, team members come back from the same task team to their previous cooperative team. Each team member should share what they did for his or her own task to others. Moreover, they can demonstrate and teach other teammates the skills of the task. For instance, children who work together in tying group can teach their old team members how to make a ribbon butterfly. At the same time, other team members can also provide some suggestions or brainstorm new ideas to the person who is sharing his or her work. For example, other children can provide some ideas to add more decoration on ribbon butterflies or maybe they can try to combine two or more ribbon butterflies as a supper decoration.
4. The final step is to decorate their tree by all team members. Children can discuss where they would like to put their decorations. In addition, they can wrap up the boxes together as presents that will be putted under Christmas trees, and then they can brainstorm more ideas for decorating their trees together such as put on Christmas light on their trees.

**References:**

Epstein, R., & Rogers, J. (2001). *The big book of motivation games*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.