

EFFECTIVE TEACHING STRATEGIES IN GEOGRAPHY

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Effective teachers use an array of teaching strategies because there is no single, universal approach that suits all situations. Different strategies used in different combinations with different groupings of students will improve learning outcomes. Some strategies are better suited to teaching certain skills and fields of knowledge than are others. Some strategies are better suited to certain student backgrounds, learning styles and abilities.

Henson states, that “strategies represent a complex approach to teaching which often contains a mixture of teaching methods, utilizing a number of techniques with each method”.

Students need to feel safe to learn effectively. Teacher needs variety in order to reach all the students in the class. Therefore, a wide variety of teaching strategies are essential in order to develop effective methods of teaching at the highest level.

- Effective teaching strategies help to activate students' curiosity about a class topic, engage students in learning, develop critical thinking skills, keep students on task, engender sustained and useful classroom interaction, and, in general, enable and enhance the learning of course content.

- One model of learning style divides learners into three modalities: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic.

- Commonly used teaching methods may include lecture, class participation, demonstration, project-based learning, or memorization, but some combination of these usually results in the most effective strategy; that is, a strategy that engages a diversity of learning styles through varied instruction.

- Effective teaching requires differentiated instruction—providing different materials, arrangements, and strategies for students with different abilities and needs.

- Differentiated classrooms have also been described as ones that are responsive to student variety in readiness levels, interests and learning profiles. It is a classroom where all students are included and can be successful. To do this a teacher sets different expectations for task completion for students based upon their individual needs.

Effective pedagogy, incorporating an array of teaching strategies that support intellectual

engagement, connectedness to the wider world, supportive classroom environments, and recognition of difference, should be implemented across all key learning and subject areas. Effective pedagogical practice promotes the wellbeing of students, teachers and the school community - it improves students' and teachers' confidence and contributes to their sense of purpose for being at school; it builds community confidence in the quality of learning and teaching in the school. In order to be an effective teacher, one must study the science of pedagogy and different teaching strategies.

Pedagogy the word comes from the ancient Greek *paidagogos*, a compound comprised of "paidos" (child) and "agogus" (leader). While the term is often used to mean the art of teaching in general, some prefer to make the distinction between pedagogy (teaching children) and andragogy (teaching adults).

Pedagogy is the art or science of teaching children or learner focused education for people of all ages. Pedagogy is the "how" the teaching and learning occurs. Students must construct their own understandings through our considered learning experiences.

Pedagogy means teaching. Specifically teacher actions that promote student learning.

Different subject teachers must use variety of teaching techniques, methods for effective teaching learning process.

Effective geography teachers use a range of approaches to support student learning.

By studying geography, students are able to recognise the responsibilities they have in relation to other people, the environment, and the long-term sustainability of the planet. Geography encourages students to think critically as they:

- investigate contemporary geographic issues and consider possible solutions
- explore the various perspectives of different groups of people
- investigate important issues of relevance to the wider world.
- Geography equips students with the knowledge and skills to interpret the world in

which they live.

Pedagogy can help geography teachers to plan strategically and respond to the effects of their teaching, that is, to **think about how you're teaching and whether it's working**. For example, is your teaching?-

- teacher-directed or is it student-directed?
- Is it whole class, group work or individual work?
- Is it text centered, discussion based or resource based?

- How are you monitoring student engagement? How do you get feedback?
- Do you informally conference with your students?
- Do you conduct class surveys?
- Do you recap the previous day’s work, if so how do you do this?
- They need to understand how their learning in geography can connect to and build

on other learning areas, and life outside and beyond school. When they do, it is a powerful tool to motivate, engage, and enhance the relevance of their learning.

Geography has particularly close links with history, education for sustainability, biology, agricultural and horticultural science, earth sciences, senior social studies, sociology, tourism and economics. Geography teachers must use different skills, variety of teaching techniques, methods for effective teaching learning process.

Geographic skills fall into several categories :

Geographic resource interpretation skills include: using maps, photographs, diagrams, cartoons, images, statistics, keys, graphs, text, models, internet, speeches, surveys, films, TV, video clips and GIS to explain geographic information.

Geographic resource construction skills include: drawing sketch and précis maps, diagrams, constructing models, taking photographs or drawing pictures, cartoons, constructing graphs, tables and using GIS layering to present specific geographic information.

Communication skills include: being able to present geographic information in a variety of forms such as essays, paragraphs, poems, visuals, models, films, PowerPoint presentations, speeches, games, puzzles, blogs and graphic organisers.

Social skills include: being able to work in groups and being empathetic, appreciating different values, perspectives and viewpoints on different aspects of geography, establishing and justifying personal value positions, contributing and participating in the community.

Fieldwork skills include: being able to gather information from the field using a variety of techniques such as surveying, questionnaires, field sketching, measuring, photographing, interviewing and observing.

Successful geography teachers combine many different methods of teaching to create a dynamic classroom where students will feel motivated to learn. Some of the most popular methods are positive reinforcement, independent learning, experiential learning, instructional grouping and lectures.

The most effective teaching methods are those that maximize instruction opportunities, keep

students actively engaged and minimize disruptions or off-task student behavior.

In order to choose an appropriate teaching method / strategy for group and subject, it is important that geography teacher is familiar with each.

Following are few methods :

Jigsaw Method: The basic idea is students are divided into groups which all have their own research topic to study. After research each topic group is split in such a manner that new groups have a single member from each of the old topic groups. After the new groups have been assembled each topic expert is responsible for integrating the knowledge of his/her topic specific knowledge into the understanding of the new group he/she is in. The jigsaw method is used to develop the skills and expertise needed to participate effectively in group activities. It focuses on listening, speaking, co-operation, reflection, and problem-solving skills.

Project-based learning is a pedagogical method in which students working as a team are given a "driving question" to respond to or answer, then directed to present their gained knowledge as writings, art, drawings, three-dimensional representations, videos, or technology-based presentations.

‘A’ method : This method put theory into practice. The five geographic skills (**ask** geographic questions, **acquire** geographic information, **arrange** geographic information, **analyze** geographic information, and **answer** geographic questions) enable students to *do* geography.

Modeling : Modeling is a type of visual aid for teaching as well as learning. It is a fact that the human brain absorbs more, and understands better, when visual aid facilitates explanation. This method works on 3 criteria- observing, retaining and replicating. The students learn more by observing the things, and acquire it by imitating it. This is also known as reinforced behavior. This type of learning has a very important role to play in the learning process, especially during the childhood, though it can happen in any stage of life. This helps the students to visualize things and then hypothesize the solution.

Inquiry-based learning is based on the [scientific method](#), this teaching method can be used for virtually all subjects. Using inquiry-based learning takes a lot of time, energy, and planning, but it is often very effective. Students practice [problem solving](#) and [critical thinking](#) skills to arrive at a conclusion. This teaching method is extremely student-centered and student-directed, and can be modified for students at any level, reaching them where they are. Teachers will generally need to start by modeling the process to the students.

Debate : Debates can be incredibly thought provoking and are great for developing students’

communication skills, but they are time consuming and staff skill is essential to facilitate the process. e.g environmental protection vs national development.

Individual learning: Reading / research / homework – self-motivated.

Group discussion: Students are actively involved in talking to each other about a certain idea or topic. The teachers’ job is to manage / facilitate the discussion so that learning takes place. Discussion is a good method for encouraging student participation.

In short a competent geography teacher should be aware of the various effective methods and techniques of teaching when preparing lesson plans and work to implement as many strategies as possible into practice.

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