

Subject: Special Education-MAP

Grade: 9th-12th

Module 3: Instruction for Active Learning: Teacher implements instruction in order to engage students in rigorous and relevant learning and to promote their curiosity about the world at large by using scaffolding techniques and other methods that have been researched, observed and modeled by my mentor and other special education teachers. This is to encourage more independence among the students in the classroom.

Selected Indicator: Varying the student and teacher roles in ways that develop independence and interdependence of learners with the gradual release of responsibility to students. 4.4

Goal:

My goal is to develop a greater understanding and improve the strategies and methods I use to actively engage the students during instruction, especially regarding teacher roles and student roles. I will do this by using research, such as books and articles by Marzano, Vygotsky and Bandura, consulting with my mentor and collaboration with my colleagues. I attended professional development workshops and implemented the skills that I learned and this has improved my instruction. I improved my knowledge and use of scaffolding strategies and teaching and implementing new skills. These scaffolding strategies and activities included the use of visual calendars and schedules, "hand over hand" and "hand under hand" techniques. I instructed the students to participate in activities with less support from their teachers and paraeducators, so that the students will gain more independence. The students will learn and improve self-advocacy skills and become better able to stay safe and be independent in several different environments because of the instruction provided by the teacher and the paraeducators.

Initial Summary:

I need to improve my instruction, by using scaffolding strategies such as hand-over-hand and hand-under-hand techniques, the use of visual schedules and calendars and breaking down tasks and skills to be more manageable for the students to comprehend and be successful at. This type of instruction will teach the students to become more self-reliant and

independent. I have learned to differentiate my instruction in order to adequately teach these skills.

I rely too much on my paraeducators to collect data and to assist the students in acquiring and improving these daily living skills, prevocational skills and community advocacy skills. Being new to the district and the school, I have been following the protocols and procedures of the previous teacher to assure a smooth transition for the students in my classroom. It is important for the students to gain more independence and to rely less on the paraeducators. I will set higher standards for independence in my classroom by using scaffolding strategies, such as hand over hand and hand under hand techniques and modeling expected behavior during my instruction, for the paraeducators and students in the classroom. I will use technology and create lessons that encourage self-reliance.

Currently, the students rely heavily on the teachers and paraeducators for assistance with everyday academics and functional daily living skills and activities. I will research ways to organize and implement lessons and model the expected behavior in my instruction that will encourage more student independence. I will encourage the students to rely less on their paraeducators. The students will gain more independence in functional activities and daily living skills. I will research and collaborate with my mentor to discover ways to use explicit instruction and modeling to show the students how to complete tasks and to function with more independence. The students will gain more independence and confidence by spending time with their non-disabled peers in the regular education classrooms. They will learn functional daily living skills and expected behaviors in the classroom by learning these new skills. They will rely less on their teachers and paraeducators to complete tasks and assignments because of the use of modeling and scaffolding in my instructional activities and lesson plans.

Reflection:

My mentor and I discussed how to engage students during instruction and how to create effective lesson plans. We discussed ways to create an environment where independence is encouraged and several different theorists and strategies that could be effective to implement into my lesson plans and classroom instruction, such as Vygotsky, Bandura, Erikson and Piaget. We looked at the Student Learning Objectives and Common Core standards and rubrics currently used in the school to determine how to encourage independence and what skills would be most beneficial for the

students in my classroom. We discussed learned helplessness and ways to discourage this and how to model more independence and self-advocacy skills for both the students and paraeducators. I learned about scaffolding strategies that will improve my instruction to encourage the acquisition of these skills and to improve their daily living skills, prevocational skills and community skills and self-advocacy skills in several different environments.

These skills are an important part of instruction, to teach the students to stay safe and to advocate for themselves across several different environments. These scaffolding strategies include modeling behavior, breaking down skills and hand-over-hand instruction, which is holding the student's hand and modeling the skill. My goal is for my lessons, classroom activities and my instruction to encourage more independence. I want to learn and implement scaffolding strategies into my instruction to teach functional daily living skills and pre-vocational activities that foster independence among the students in my classroom.

I have researched several different theorists, including Vygotsky's scaffolding theories and Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and Bandura's theories of intrinsic motivation. I have implemented these theories into my lesson plans and instruction by encouraging students to learn and to develop skills and complete tasks independently, before being assisted by the teacher or paraeducators. Scaffolding the learning has been a helpful and useful strategy that I have implemented into lesson plans, classroom activities and my instruction. These techniques have encouraged the students to do things independently and have helped keep frustration levels at a minimum. For example, some of the activities we do are pre-vocational activities, such as stuffing envelopes, sorting and folding laundry, setting the table and rolling silverware into a napkin, sorting silverware and completing other tasks such as putting together nuts and bolts, filling boxes, delivering mail and removing old posters from different areas of the school. Many of these tasks were done with the students using hand over hand instruction and modeling. After learning about scaffolding and ZPD, I encouraged the paraeducators to model the expected task or skill and then try to encourage the students to complete the tasks independently, instead of using the hand over hand technique. 3 out of 4 of the students were able to complete these tasks by using the modeling and scaffolding techniques. The first trial would be with hand over hand assistance, the second trial would be with less support, using the hand under hand technique and more modeling and verbal and gestural clues and prompts, the third trial was done independently by 3 of the 4 students.

This type of instruction has been an effective way to encourage more self-advocacy skills and greater independence. The paraeducators better understand what the students are capable of and have learned how to scaffold the activities and the learning that is taking place. By modeling these skills and asking the students to complete the skills with minimal help, the students have learned the expectations and outcomes of the skills needed to live a more independent life. Another area where this independence has been seen is in the students' daily living skills. After studying Piaget and Erikson and discussing child development with my mentor, I decided that self-reliance and independence are important skills for my developmentally disabled students to acquire.

An example of this is eating independently. A student in my classroom has learned how to feed himself. When I first began teaching in this classroom, the paraeducators or teacher would feed this student. I encouraged the paraeducators to try to see if he was capable of feeding himself. I modeled the expected behavior, by providing a spoon with a larger handle and showing the paraeducator how I expected the student to try scooping his food independently, by using the hand-under-hand technique that I learned about at a professional development workshop. The student was able to do this independently after only 5 trials. Food appears to be an intrinsic motivator for this student. We began by introducing the spoon to him and assisting him hand-under-hand, so he would know how to scoop. After assisting him five times we handed him the spoon and held onto the bowl of food to stabilize the bowl to reduce frustration levels. We asked the student to "scoop his food and eat" and the student was successful with this task and able to do it independently. He opened his mouth on his own when scooping independently, where before this was difficult for the student and difficult for the paraeducator to judge when he was ready for another bite of food. He learned very quickly and is currently eating and scooping his food independently. The intrinsic motivation was his hunger and the ability to feed himself independently. It was a success for both, the student and the educators!

After meeting and consulting with my mentor and other special education teachers I have incorporated small group learning centers into my classroom routines and lessons. These center activities include learning the letters of their names, counting, using money and sorting and matching objects by function, classifications and features. They also include using switches for communication and making choices. This has encouraged more independence because the learning is done using scaffolding

strategies and I am able to model the expected outcomes for both the paraeducators and the students.

Seven out of nine of the students have improved their skills in these activities. The small group setting has been ideal for this type of learning experience and has encouraged more independence and fewer opportunities to enable the students. All of the students have begun to do more daily living activities independently, including toileting and hand-washing skills. They are using classroom tools more independently too. One student is able to use scissors and cut along lines, when modeled for her. Another student is able to use the iPad independently and will ask to use it, which is a newly acquired skill for her. Previously she would not ask to use certain tools or do certain tasks without it being offered to her. Now she is making her wants and needs known to the teacher and the paraeducators. This type of instruction has improved the daily living skills for all of the students in the classroom.

I am still looking for ways to incorporate more choice making among the students in my classroom. Because most of my students are non-verbal and have fewer communication skills this has been difficult. I have been using a PEC system for the non-verbal students to communicate their wants and needs. I have also incorporated the use of switches for some of my non-verbal students to better communicate with us and I have seen some success with the use of these tools and communication devices. We are trying to incorporate the use of American Sign Language (ASL) as another form and tool to communicate wants and needs among our non-verbal students. This has also been met with some success, as one student will now indicate that she wants more of something and will also use ASL when she needs to use the bathroom. These are all steps towards self-advocacy, self-reliance and independence. After completing a Professional Development workshop I learned more ways to incorporate schedules and calendars into the classroom routine. I have researched student portfolios, which are part of the transition program in the school district. I will be incorporating these tools and strategies into my lesson plans and into our daily classroom routines. I have recently begun using a tracking sheet to see what the students are working on daily and the progress they are making. I implemented a task analysis sheet and assessment to monitor student progress and to assist the paraeducators in fostering more independence and self-reliance. These data sheets are used to see if the students are able to complete a task independently(I), with a verbal prompt(V), with a gestural prompt(G) or with Hand over/under Hand assistance(H). These data sheets have helped the paraeducators

better understand what it means to be independent and self-reliant. I have seen an improvement in the amount of tasks that are performed independently among 7 out of 9 students. I continue to make appropriate adjustments to these tasks based on the daily data sheets. It has been an excellent learning experience for everyone in the classroom, students, teachers and paraeducators.

I was able to observe a class that my mentor was teaching. This observation helped me understand the value of modeled learning and scaffolding activities. It incorporated the theories of child development of Piaget and Erikson. The class I observed was a Child Development class, which is taught by the high school students and includes preschoolers. My mentor is there to assist the high school students and to model the expected learning outcomes; however, the students are expected to teach the class and activities independently.

I met with my supervisor for a post conference meeting after a formal observation. She was able to give me some excellent and valuable feedback and constructive ideas to use within my classroom during instruction. These ideas include developing a more rigorous calendar and schedule with relevant activities for my students. These activities should include daily living skills and prevocational activities that will encourage self-advocacy and independence, such as, incorporating the use of the calendar and using their class schedules to reinforce concepts during my instruction and learning. These activities will reinforce and review the learning of skills that are already taking place within the classroom.

She advised me to use concepts that can be used across content areas, such as, learning the days of the week, the letters of the students' names, letter sounds and daily living activities, first, next and last, and sequencing. She said that these concepts should be used throughout my instructional time and this will increase my instructional time with the students and create higher expectations and outcomes for both the students and the paraeducators in my classroom.

I have learned the following strategies about planning and instruction: the use of scaffolding, by breaking down a task, as a useful technique and strategy to use in my lesson planning and instruction. It helps the students gain independence by acquiring skills in smaller pieces and to help them complete tasks and gain a sense of accomplishment with less frustration. I came up with plans using different techniques to encourage self-advocacy and independence. I learned how to better differentiate my lesson plans and instruction to meet the needs of each of the students in my classroom. I've used parent and student surveys to create student portfolios and to

discover what my students are interested in. I've used these surveys to create plans that will engage the students, so they learn in many different environments, because each student learns things differently. Some students are auditory learners and others are visual learners. I have learned to differentiate and to incorporate these different learning styles into my lesson plans, by using visual calendars and discussing our classroom schedules and expectations in the classroom. I have also learned that the use of small groups and center-based project learning is another effective strategy to encourage independence. The students are able to feel a sense of accomplishment when they can complete tasks independently and advocate for their wants and needs.

Resources that I used to gain this understanding, is the use of a lesson plan template called "Understanding by Design" by Wiggins and McTighe. This template was useful as a tool for planning because it encourages the use of differentiated instruction and student-led goals and instruction based on the needs of the students in your classroom. Another resource was the "Depth of Knowledge Levels" chart, which was put out by the Wisconsin Center of Educational Research by Norman Webb. This chart encourages different levels of planning and instruction by encouraging different levels of thinking, such as Recall, Skill use and concepts, Strategic Thinking and Extended thinking. These levels help to develop lesson plans and instruction which will encourage deeper learning and thinking and more independence, which I have included in my instruction and teaching.

A third useful resource was an article about Lev Vygotsky's theory of Zone of Proximal Development or ZPD. This theory explains how to scaffold learning to make students more independent and successful in their learning. It explains how learners are able to accomplish more by themselves when a task is modeled by a more skilled learner. The article states that "Essentially, ZPD is about developing a child's growing cognitive skills that are still being developing and which could be advanced with the help of a more skilled person, whether that person is a teacher or a parent." (Scaffolding in Education by Lev Vygotsky).

Another useful theory that I researched was about self-efficacy. This research was useful in my planning and instruction because it discussed ways to include self-efficacy in lesson planning and instruction by using "mastery experiences, social modeling, social persuasion and psychological responses to gain self-efficacy." This theory is useful to incorporate into my planning and instruction to encourage more independence. It is also a vital skill set to be taught and learned and

discussed and made me understand how important self-efficacy is for my students to become independent learners with the abilities to advocate for themselves in many different environments, including the educational settings that they are involved in and the community and social environments that they come into contact with.

Finally, the meetings with my mentor and other special education teachers and the Professional development workshops that I have attended were extremely helpful in learning how to incorporate these theories in my planning and implement them into my instruction in the classroom. Small group learning and center-based instruction has been vital to my planning and instruction. This has had a positive influence on my students because they have gained more independence and self-advocacy skills, as seen by the student who is now able to feed himself and the other students who have gained self-advocacy skills that they didn't have before. It has also had a positive effect on the paraeducators in my classroom, because they have a better understanding about how important self-advocacy skills are and how important it is for our students to be as independent as possible.