

Jacob Javits Grant: Project North Star Module Four

Professional Learning Module Four: Practicing Responsive Teaching

Introduction

Students impacted by poverty have academic and social-emotional needs resulting from the economic circumstances of their lives. In the classroom, the war against poverty starts with effective teaching that specifically addresses these needs. Thus, for students of poverty, effective teaching includes responsive instruction. Basically, this means that the choice of instructional strategy applied in the classroom must be responsive to the unique needs of target students. This does not mean that there are teaching strategies that should be used only with students of poverty. Instead, it is the fit between the current needs of the student and the selection of instructional strategy that is most significant. Therefore, a teacher's selection of appropriate instructional strategies based on student needs due to the cultural dynamics of rural poverty equates to responsive teaching.

Rationale

Once educators understand the impact of rural poverty on students, it is critical to develop culturally responsive pedagogy and practice in the classroom. This simply means that teaching must reflect the diversity and related needs of students. Teachers must use instructional approaches that directly respond to the diverse learning profiles of their students. This module includes common pedagogical practices that typically support students impacted by rural poverty.

Professional Learning Goal

Educators develop a responsive classroom for children impacted by rural poverty.

Learning Objectives

1. Educators provide learning environments that demonstrate awareness and understanding of students' diverse needs.
2. Educators assist students in developing identities commensurate with their intellectual and socio-emotional needs.

Modules Session

1. Warm-Up
2. Using Learning Contracts for Extensions and Alternate Activities
3. Let them choose

4. Building Language
5. A Problems-Based Approach to Learning
6. Final Reflection

Required Resources

Place participants at tables (round preferred) in preparation for small group activities.

Part	Module Materials
1	Project the Maya Angelou quote for participants to view
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to technology to show videos with sound • Viewable copy of the Learning Contract Template in Appendix A
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to technology to show videos with sound • Viewable copy of the sample spelling choice board (see Appendix B) • Copies of Choice Board Template (see Appendix C)
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to technology to show videos with sound • Chart paper
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to technology to show videos with sound • Viewable copy of problems based learning (PBL) Seven Steps

Directions: Place participants at tables (round preferred) in preparation for small group activities.

Part One: Module Materials

1. Project the Maya Angelou quote for participants to view
2. Access to technology to show videos with sound

Part One: Warm Up (15 minutes)

1. Have participants discuss the Maya Angelou quote about the power of a teacher. How does her quote relate to the notion that it is imperative that educators are aware of their students' learning profiles AND select pedagogies that respond to students' needs? Ask them to provide examples of how they are doing this in their classrooms.

“This is the value of the teacher, who looks at a face and says there's something behind that and I want to reach that person, I want to influence that person, I want to encourage that person, I want to enrich, I want to call out that person who is behind that face, behind that color, behind that language, behind that tradition, behind that culture. I believe you can do it.”

—Maya Angelou

Part Two: Using Learning Contracts for Extensions and Alternate Activities (90 Minutes)

1. A learning contract is a written agreement between student and teacher in order to be responsive to the individual needs of a student. The contract outlines an assignment, learning experience, or project. Typically, learning contract components include: intended outcomes, learning process, timeline and deadlines, and assessment measures. Any of these components can be modified or adapted to address the student learning profiles.
2. There are multiple purposes for using learning contracts with students impacted by poverty, including:
 - a. To extend the basic or core curriculum
 - b. To provide alternative activities based on students' readiness, interests, or learning preferences.
 - c. To scaffold a rigorous learning experience

Video Source: https://youtu.be/nOG3HH_2aHI

Video Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PH30SHIOe4s>

Video Source: <https://youtu.be/gFP71I-bu0I>

3. Several benefits exist for using learning contracts with students of poverty.
 - a. Helps to motivate students
 - b. Scaffolds a daunting learning task rendering it more manageable
 - c. Encourages independence in learning
 - d. Allows students to work on a product given learning preferences or interests
4. In small groups matched for grade level and discipline, participants will create a learning contract using the template in ([Appendix A](#)) based on one of their current lessons. The learning contract must address one or more of the benefits for students of poverty.

Part Three: Let Them Choose (60 minutes)

1. Student choice refers to students deciding how they learn and express what they have learned through a performance or work product. Choice can empower students, move them toward independence in learning as well as build their confidence. Show the video on choice for student empowerment.

Video Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L08wNizulOY&feature>

2. The most typical strategy for choice is providing a menu or choice board, consisting of squares. The content of each square provides students a choice in how they learn, what they learn, how they perform or develop a work product, and the level of learning. These choices should be based on a teacher's comprehensive understanding of student differences and related needs. This information emanates from student learning profiles. See [Appendix B](#) for sample template.
3. Show the participants a video on using choice to differentiate learning.

Video Source: <https://youtu.be/DJkU-OiUhF0>

4. Provide a viewable copy of the sample choice board ([see Appendix B](#)). Have small groups of participants discuss how the choice board is addressing students' needs.

5. Provide a copy of the choice board ([see Appendix C](#)) for each small group of participants. Have them create a product choice board based on one of the local My Way Surveys completed in Module One. Have the groups share their choice chart and discuss the reasons for the choices.

Part Four: Building Language (120 Minutes)

1. Children's poverty is related to their family's economic circumstances. Thus, students impacted by poverty often have less experience with language and thus, know fewer words that can help them succeed. Less experience with language or a deficit vocabulary can lead to a 'word gap' for students of poverty. Language development is critical to readiness to learn. Play a video that provides an explanation of the word gap.

Video Source: <https://youtu.be/779aFxFqrq4>

2. Three types of language development needed.
 - a. Academic language and language of school success (literacy language)
 - b. Oral language is the ability to speak about topics and issues so that others understand
 - c. General vocabulary or number of known words
3. Students need practice with words in order to gain a full understanding. Practice can involve repeated use of words in conversations with teachers, their peers, and at home with family members. Other ways to gradually build vocabulary includes: associating new words with pictures, creating semantic maps that show relationships among words, playing word games, and when appropriate, linking new words to students' native languages (David, 2010).
4. Word acquisition is important for students of poverty. Strategies for building students' vocabulary include:
 - a. Play games with words.
 - b. Introduce new words by attaching real-world connection
 - c. Students practice explaining the meaning of vocabulary in their own words
 - d. Independent reading and reading to students increase students' vocabulary
 - e. Students engage in learning through conversation with the teacher, experts, and each other
 - f. Use advanced organizers with key discipline specific vocabulary at the start of new units of study
 - g. Use word walls and other word lists to remind students of important vocabulary
 - h. Choose Read-A-Loud books with dialogue among characters
 - i. Ask students open-ended questions that require conversation using key vocabulary
5. In small groups, have participants take one of the strategies above and brainstorm ways to use the strategy in their classrooms. Each group should be assigned a different strategy. Ideas should be posted on chart paper and shared with the entire group.

Part Five: A Problems-Based Approach to Learning (60 Minutes)

1. Problems-based learning (PBL) is a teaching method that uses real-world problems to facilitate learning. In fact, the problem is the "starting point" for a unit of studies. The problem is an incentive used to motivate students to engage in the content in order to solve the problem. Often, it is referred to as active versus passive learning and reflects student-centered teaching. PBL can be differentiated by having students work together according to similar learning preferences or interests. An example of this can be seen the video below.

Video Source: <https://youtu.be/65y6twSaSpc>

Show participants two videos that provide an overview of problems-based-learning (PBL) and its use in the classroom.

Video Source: <https://youtu.be/RGoJIQYGpYk>

Video Source: <https://youtu.be/UpukYVuruqk>

2. The PBL process includes seven steps. Share the chart that contains each step in the process ([see Appendix C](#)).
 - a. Clarify terms and concepts to be studied.
 - b. State the problem
 - c. Analyze the problem
 - d. Research knowledge
 - e. Investigate solutions
 - f. Present and support the final solution
 - g. Reflect on the process and solution
3. PBL can be taught at most grade levels and in any discipline. Show participants examples in the following videos.

Video Source: https://youtu.be/J63e_YSntuo

Video Source: <https://youtu.be/vDe74bOxXLw>

Part Six: Final Reflection (10 Minutes)

Have each participant reflect on which of the responsive strategies presented in this module they intend to use first and why. Have them generate ideas for using one or more pedagogies in their next curricular unit. Share with the large group.

Professional Learning Extensions

1. Have teachers demonstrate best practices in responsive teaching for their peers.
2. Create work groups for teachers to create master learning contracts and choice boards by grade level and discipline.
3. Hold specific workshops on problem-based learning and vocabulary building.
4. Provide a book club studying Eric Jensen's book, *Engaging students with poverty in mind: Practical Strategies for Raising Achievement*.

References

David, J. (2010). What research says about closing the vocabulary gap, *Educational Leadership* 67(6), pages 85-86.

Appendices

Appendix A

LEARNING CONTRACT

Learning Objectives	Learning Resources and Activities	Learning Product Description	Assessment Criteria	Due Dates

Appendix B

Spelling Choice Board

Spelling Choice Board Choice 1	Spelling Choice Board Choice 2	Spelling Choice Board Choice 3
<p>Spelling Word Find</p> <p>Create a word find using the “Spelling Word Find” sheet. Give to a classmate to solve.</p>	<p>Secret Agent Words</p> <p>Give it to a classmate to solve. Convert ten of your spelling words to a secret code. Use the “Secret Agent Words” sheet to complete this task. Give it to a classmate to solve.</p>	<p>Hide the Words</p> <p>Draw a picture of your favorite place and illustrate it with at least seven colors. Hide your words in the picture. Give it to a classmate to solve.</p>
<p>Pyramid Words</p> <p>Write all of your spelling words one letter at a time in the form of a pyramid.</p> <p>Example:</p> <p>d do dog</p>	<p>Make a Set of Flashcards</p> <p>Create a set of flashcards using the “Flashcards” sheet. Review your spelling words with a classmate.</p>	<p>Make a Comic Strip</p> <p>Make a comic strip using at least ten of your spelling words.</p> <p>Use the “Create a Comic Strip” sheet to complete this task.</p>
<p>Sort it</p> <p>Use the “Sort it!” sheet to sort your spelling words into three groups. Label your groups by name.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <p>vowel sounds, parts of speech, number of letters, etc.</p>	<p>Write it Right!</p> <p>Write all of your spelling words five times each in your best handwriting.</p>	<p>Make a Collage</p> <p>Create a collage of all of your spelling words using art supplies or magazines. Find pictures or illustrate examples for each word.</p>

Appendix C

Choice Board Activity

Unit/Theme: _____

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3