**Instruction and Delivery Reflection**

Monday, March 18, 2013

Today I had very lecture-based instruction that was supplemented by a powerpoint. This was mainly due to the time-crunch my mentor teacher has me under. My students must learn two and half chapters of material within the next four days. However, I believe this instructional strategy to be less effective. This is due to the fact that many students were not engaged in the topics we were covering. Many students were bored and were slow to participate in quick discussions I did present. In addition, based upon the number of wrinkled faces, students did not fully understand all the topics since there were so many presented to them in one day. For the future, I would not plan to cover so many topics at once. In addition, I would break up the lecture with some hands-on activities or engaging videos. These strategies will better engage student interest and thinking about the topics discussed.

Tuesday, March 19, 2013

Students were provided with guided notes with which to fill in as we talked about the different Evolution topics. These would help students organize the sheer amount of material they are expected to learn and to help students study for their upcoming test. Powerpoint slides supplemented today’s instruction, which had answers for students’ notes. Because students’ attention and focus were on copying statements from the powerpoints, it was difficult to fully engage them in discussion about Evolution. For this reason, I found guided notes presented in this way an ineffective strategy. In the future, I would present powerpoint with few words on the slide, just keywords and pictures. This is so students do not get bogged down in needing to copy every single word for their guided notes. In addition, note-taking strategies should be reviewed periodically during the school-year so that students can learn that they can easily take notes by writing down key phrases or words. Another alternation would be to give students a choice in how they take their notes rather than providing the framework for them. This modification will allow students to take notes in a way that works best for them.

Wednesday, March 20, 2013

Because I am still in a time-crunch for presenting a large amount of material to students, my instruction has still been largely lecture format with a powerpoint supplementing it. However, as a result of the last two days, I decided to incorporate a short, reinforcement-building activity on genetic drift using playing cards. In this activity, students were broken into groups of four. The suit of the card represented an organism’s allele. Students calculated the allele frequency of a population of 20 birds and the allele frequency of 10 birds (after a natural disaster). They compared these values and responded to discussion questions. The class went really well. All students participated in the activity and there was much more response during class discussion of the activity. From their responses, I could tell they understood the definition of genetic drift, why the activity modeled the bottleneck effect, and that I needed to again cover the difference between natural selection and genetic drift. This activity allowed me to get a much better idea of what students had mastered and with what they were still struggling. In addition, it allowed students to become more engaged in the topic and discuss ideas within a group. For this reason, I would classify this instructional activity as a highly effective one.

Thursday, March 21, 2013

During today’s class, I decided to focus on incorporating more probing questions within my instruction, especially since today was partially a review for their test tomorrow. I started out with a quick series of review questions to multiple students in the class. Because I did not rely on raised hands, students needed to be prepared and engaged. Furthermore, I allowed student answers to build on one another. When one student got stuck, I allowed another to take over. In addition, I asked a variety of questions while also lecturing. This increased student participation. It also gave me an idea of how well students understood the material. Because my class much more active than Monday or Tuesday’s lesson, I would classify the use of probing questions during lecture as a highly effective instructional strategy.