

Policy Statement 94

This We Believe About New and Emerging Instructional Strategies

As our world becomes more globally connected through dynamic technological advancements, business education students must increase their critical-thinking and problem-solving abilities to remain competitive in the workplace. Emerging and evolving instructional strategies equip an increasingly diverse student population for active engagement with course content and prepare them for advanced learning and career success.

Many emerging instructional strategies are being used in business education. These instructional strategies—including the flipped classroom, mobile learning, and quest-based learning—promote digital literacy, inventive thinking, and effective communication skills needed in the ever-changing workplace. Based on extensive discussions in the current literature, three evolving instructional strategies are addressed below.

FLIPPED CLASSROOMS

The flipped classroom is a student-centered, blended approach to teaching that requires students to actively engage in the learning process. In the flipped classroom, students acquire content knowledge prior to attending class (e.g., videos, webinars, podcasts, blogs, vlogs, online lectures, reading assignments, and quizzes). Class time is then used to deepen learning through applications such as collaborative learning experiences, in-depth discussions, case studies, project-based learning, peer instruction, reflection, and evaluation.

Two advantages of the flipped classroom include the students being responsible for their knowledge acquisition and analytical skill development so class time can be used more efficiently to address individual learning needs and project-based activities. Two potential disadvantages of the flipped classroom are the substantial investment of time in initial preparation of course materials and the intensified digital divide.

The following scenario uses the flipped strategy in the context of a business education course. Students read the textbook, take online quizzes, and participate in webinars or online lectures outside of the classroom. During class time, students have the opportunity to ask questions, get more in-depth information from the instructor on the topic, and complete project-based activities (e.g., create company logo, write a mission statement and value statement, and present completed projects for peer evaluation).

MOBILE LEARNING

The widespread use of mobile learning (m-learning) technologies around the world represents a significant opportunity in education. While m-learning is currently in the early stages of implementation in education, many teachers and students are beginning to realize its potential for enhancing teaching and learning. M-learning provides a customized approach to education, which enables the learning process to transpire anytime and anywhere.

Handheld computers, e-readers, smartphones, and tablet computers are possible mobile devices used to access course content and activities. Accessing learning management systems and integrating, creating, and uploading podcasts, videos, and presentations for project-based learning are among the many uses of mobile devices in the m-learning environment.

Several advantages of m-learning include its low cost for schools, device and content portability, potential for equitable access, and the appeal to digital learners. However, potential drawbacks of m-learning include small screen size, need for increased network infrastructure, and safety and security issues.

The following application uses the m-learning strategy in the context of a business education course addressing professionalism. Outside the classroom students watch a podcast on how to dress for an interview and then take pictures of people dressed appropriately and inappropriately for the interview process using mobile devices. Students make an electronic presentation on this topic in class.

QUEST-BASED LEARNING

Quest-based learning, also known as gamification, is an instructional approach that uses game mechanics and gaming communities to provide student choice in completing course objectives. Students are engaged and empowered in quests (assignments) covering required course content that offer individualized and flexible options as they earn points toward a final grade. Quests provide multiple pathways to learning through what was once sequential course content.

Several advantages of quest-based learning include students using critical-thinking and problem-solving skills to master a concept and to move to the next level, accepting failure as part of the learning process; choosing quests to satisfy their curiosity by exploring required course topics in a manner that interests them; and receiving immediate feedback and results, level achievements, or incentives. Disadvantages may include student procrastination without formal deadlines within quests and extensive preparation for the quests and game design by teachers.

The following application uses the quest-based learning strategy in the context of a business education class addressing emerging technologies. Students begin with no points and earn points toward their grades. Students must master basic skills before moving on to more advanced skills. Students can submit quests as many times as needed in order to achieve the skill. Students earn badges and rewards as they progress toward their ultimate point goal. The course syllabus details grade requirements with the only deadline being the one at the end of the semester.

SUMMARY

Although only three examples of emerging instructional strategies have been discussed above, other new and repurposed strategies that engage today's diverse and global learners may be identified through current literature and professional development opportunities.

Emerging and new instructional strategies and the role of business teachers have resulted in a paradigm shift that will continue to change the process and environment in which students learn. Teachers remain instructional leaders in the classroom regardless of the tools or strategies used and should continue to carefully select appropriate strategies and technologies that engage the student and enrich the learning process.

WE BELIEVE...

Emerging instructional strategies enable students to engage with content.

Business teachers must continue to embrace emerging and evolving instructional strategies and technologies.

Business teachers should assess the needs of a diverse student population before implementing an instructional strategy.

Business teachers must utilize instructional strategies that prepare students to work, live, and contribute to their societies and communities.