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When determining the three most important learner differences, I kept the goal of “respecting time” in mind. I try to keep this in mind when I plan lessons because if it isn’t worth my time, or the students’ time, it really isn’t worth teaching. Keeping this mentality has helped me create more meaningful, understandable, and practical lessons.

Academic Motivation

Regardless of the preparation that goes into a lesson, if the student enters a classroom with complete disregard for the subject, or for learning in general, the lesson could fail. I feel this to be most important to me as a first year teacher. I am working hard on classroom management, and planning lessons that truly respect my student’s time. Without a regimented curriculum, I usually have the flexibility to teach the students what I want, how I want. I truly want my students to leave my room with the greatest amount of knowledge; however, because I am operating a library, I want to maintain a good relationship with the students so they can appreciate the library and visit it throughout their educational career. In order to walk this tightrope, I try to teach meaningful lessons that keep students coming back for me.

In order to incorporate this learner difference into my lesson, I try to accommodate for all interests. For example, when I teach my unit on copyright, I discuss a lot of copyright violations for celebrities, music artists, and television shows they are familiar with. I might talk for five minutes before saying “Family Guy”, but the instant I do, five more heads turn my direction and start listening. Trying to find information that will keep the students interested takes more

preparation on the instructor's part, but it is definitely worth it when you hear students claim, "You know, Avril Lavigne was sued for this song, Ma". Another reason motivation can effect a lesson is because the students that continually struggle with academic motivation are usually the students who have a tendency to try and get other students off task.

Prior Knowledge about the Topic

I work in a 6-8 grade middle school with students coming from 5 different elementary schools. In addition, our district has an extremely high transient rate. Therefore, prior knowledge plays a large role in planning and executing a lesson. Some of the elementary schools operate on a different schedule than the others, and some elementary schools have teachers who would bring their students to the library for collaborative research lessons more often than others. There were also some elementary schools that had an incredible amount of more technology than the others. All of these factors added to the varying background knowledge the students displayed in my class.

A lot of the information I teach builds upon what is discussed in elementary school (both in library class and other content area classes). For example, dictionaries. I do not "teach" dictionaries. This is something that was covered in depth in elementary library and ELA classes. However, there is a large enough amount of students that are still on the outs, that I felt it necessary to cover it. I chose to do this during my copyright/plagiarism unit when I discuss effective ways to avoid plagiarism. If students are really struggling with ways to paraphrase, they can use the thesaurus to help them come up with other words to express their information. I use this time to review the dictionary, and give students some "review" or introduce the dictionary to others. This too takes a lot of additional preparation on the part of the teacher.

General Learning Preferences

When considering the learning approaches students prefer, I try to incorporate all of them within each lesson. I do this for multiple reasons: 1. By transitioning from group work, to lecture, to independent work, students stay on task longer and I can deliver more information, 2. If students didn't understand the content the first way, they will hopefully pick up on the material as it is presented the second way, and 3. I do not have one method I prefer. This helps me reach my students with special needs, my English as a Second Language students, and any student who is struggling with comprehending the content.

I address learning preferences both during the planning of a lesson and the execution of a lesson. There will be cases in which I will change my original teaching plan if I see the students are responding well to one form of instruction. For example, during discussions students may be asking exemplary questions and the class will be very focused. Instead of stopping the discussion to show the video clip, I will most likely allow the discussion to continue if I feel it is going to benefit the students greater than the video clip.