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IDEAL Strategy

EDU 372 – Educational Psychology

IDEAL Strategy

The IDEAL strategy consists of five steps: Identify problems, Define goals, Explore possible strategies, Anticipate outcomes and Act, and Look back and Learn. Identifying problems can be more than just what we see in our text. As a matter of fact, our text tells us that these are usually more than questions that are given to us and incorporate challenges that we face on a day to day basis (LeFrançois, 2011). In a classroom, educators may face problems such as the child who wants to act out, or the one who really just doesn't understand the material. Once we have identified the problem, we need to know what our goal is. By defining goals and representing the problem, we eliminate any useless information while determining what our end-state will be. For educators, this can involve identifying that some students who aren't getting the material will require more help. Exploring possible strategies involves looking at different ways in which we can get from point A to point B. Educators will need to explore different ways in which they will be able to help their students. Anticipating outcomes generally means to conduct a hypothesis (LeFrançois, 2011). Educators will have to guess whether or not their selected strategies will be useful. Once they've drawn their hypothesis, they will have to implement it and put their strategy into action. Finally, looking back and learning can be one of the most useful steps of the IDEAL strategy. "It's important to evaluate the appropriateness of each and by so doing, learn things that might be useful in the future," (LeFrançois, 2011, para 6.7). You can take everything that you have learned during your previous issues and apply it to new problems that arise.

Solving the Problem and Reflection

The problem seems simple; Bobby doesn't like group activities. Since he is bright and is able to fully engage in assignments independently, we can draw a record of his work. This is

important because we see that he can complete tasks as an individual, but not so much in a group setting. This record may be useful if we need to approach his parents or utilize some other sort of intervention in the future (Nunn & McMahan, 2000).

Obviously, the goal in this circumstance would be for Bobby to learn how to work in a group. Not only that, but he will also need to learn how to not get angry if he isn't being listened to at the moment. The end state that we desire is for Bobby to not only learn the material and accomplish the tasks, but also to be able to work in a group without getting frustrated.

In forming possible strategies, I feel that it would be important to speak with Bobby's parents to see if they know anything that could possibly help. Also, if there is a school psychologist, they would probably be a good starting point too. There's always the heuristic of trial-by-fire. We can continue throwing him into group activities, hoping that he will learn what he needs to. Of course, we will probably need to provide guidance and correction when needed to keep him on track. Another, more reasonable, strategy would be to reduce the number of members in his group. Start him off in a group with one other person. Once he is able to complete his work and is acting in accordance with our standards, then we can add another child to his group.

The first strategy provided will likely not work out well. We will continue throwing him in the group setting in hopes that he learns from it. This hasn't been working, which has led to this whole dilemma in the first place. Continuing down this path will likely reinforce poor behavior and Bobby's education will suffer as a result. The second strategy seems like the more likely candidate. By starting him off in a group with one other person, it will eliminate the total amount of time that he is not listened to, which causes him to grow angry and pout in the corner. Once he is able to handle a group with one other child, then we add another. We keep him in

this group until he is able to perform and not get angry if he isn't listened to. We will still need to provide guidance and correction for behavior in this setting, but it will not be nearly as drastic as throwing him into a group of four or five other students all at once.

Looking back and learning from this scenario will be pretty vital, especially in the inclusive environments that we are seeing more and more of in today's education. Bobby is just one child, but there are likely dozens of children with similar problems in each school district around America. Bobby won't be the last time we see this exact, or pretty similar, issue.

I personally found this strategy to work pretty well for this scenario. Especially if we are able to involve the child's parents or a school psychologist, we will be able to better cater our plan of action towards the needs of the individual child (Nunn & McMahan, 2000). By doing this, we aren't just taking a canned remedy and applying it to any child that exhibits similar problems.

Classroom Implementation

While the IDEAL problem solving strategy can be used in almost any circumstance, I feel that it will be relied on heavily in science classes. In a science lab, you can pretty much tailor the entire lab to the IDEAL strategy. Typically, you're already going to identify what the problem is, what outcome you're looking for, identify ways that you'll conduct the experiment, and form a hypothesis all before you even begin the experiment. Afterwards, you'll analyze and compare your results and record what you've learned.

Aside from science labs, I feel that the IDEAL strategy will facilitate just about any lesson. You can apply these steps in determining how you will present the material to a given group of students. For example, you might have two classes going over the exact same lesson. However, due to certain personalities in each class, you decide that you may have to present the

information in different manners. Using the IDEAL strategy, you can determine how you will present the information to each class. Afterwards, you'll have another useful tool in the toolbox for future classes.

On the other hand, this might not work at all. By anticipating outcomes, you leave it up to chance. Granted, the chances are in your favor after completing the first four steps, but there is still a chance that you are selecting the wrong course of action.

Conclusion

As we've discussed, the IDEAL strategy is fairly simple to follow. By identifying the problem and defining goals, you lay out what the problem is and what you want the end state to be. By exploring possible strategies, anticipating the outcome, and acting, you analyze different courses of action, pick the best one, and put it into action. Afterwards, you look back and learn from the whole experience. Whether good or bad, you will learn and be able to deal with similar situations in the future.

In Bobby's case, we identified that he doesn't work well in groups, and that our goal is to get him to accomplish his tasks in a group setting. We looked at two courses of action after (hopefully) speaking to his parents and a school psychologist. One was obviously not going to work, while the other was more likely to show success. We chose a course of action in which Bobby would be slowly introduced to a larger and larger group.

Finally, we looked at how easily the IDEAL strategy would be applied in a science class, or more specifically in a science lab. We also looked at how the IDEAL strategy seems to be useful in any class, given different requirements dictated by personalities within the classes. We ended the discussion by addressing that the IDEAL strategy has a downside due to "guessing" which course of action is the most appropriate for your situation.

References

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