Self-Evaluation of the Instructional Unit

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1. Select the learning objectives where your students were the most successful. Provide two or more reasons for this success (Be specific and provide evidence). Consider your objectives, instruction, and assessment along with student characteristics and other contextual information under your control. Were Focus Students A and B successful? Why or Why not?

Students were most successful with diagramming rhythms, labeling solfege, and defining score markings. The reason the students were so successful is because it is somewhat of a review objective and is one of the lowest levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy. Students have been guided through the basics of these skills in choirs they have been in previously. I chose to include this as an objective because they have not had to demonstrate these skills with literature as difficult as the Brahms piece, especially independently and at the beginning of the school year. Students were also very successful at applying the skills used in objectives 1, 2, 3, and 5 to put on a performance they could all be proud of. Part of this is because the students in this class were all experienced, high achieving students who were self-motivated to learn the music well to put on a great performance. The level of the performance was also impacted by my focus in rehearsal on making sure the technical aspects of the performance were correct. Focus Student A was very successful because she met all of the objectives, plus applied her knowledge to help teach other students. Although Student B did not meet all of the objectives at the time of assessment, he was successful at demonstrating them by the end of the unit with some extra help from his peers in cooperative learning groups and extra help I gave him outside.

2. Select the learning objectives where your students were least successful. Provide two or more reasons for this lack of success (Be specific and provide evidence). Consider your objectives, instruction, and assessment along with student characteristics and other contextual information under your control. Explain any mid-unit adaptations you made to enhance learning for all students. Discuss what you could do differently or better in the future to improve your students’ performance. What would you do differently for Focus Students A and B?

Although marginally successful, students were least successful at composing the board work exercise. This was partially due to my not spending much time working on composition technique with them and just expecting them to create within the parameters of the key and time signature. I also think my directions were not clear enough for them.
to quite understand expectations. Looking back, I was really looking more to assess their ability to evaluate themselves and identify what they are struggling with, rather than ability to compose. If I were to teach this again, the composition assignment would not be an objective, but an activity for the evaluation objective. Both Student A and Student B were successful at achieving this objective and had compositions that used the correct clefs, time signature, and key signature and were based upon an area of struggle for their specific sections.

3. Discuss how and in what context you have communicated with students, parents, and other professionals about your decisions regarding students’ learning and assessment. You must address all three.

I made a point to give students a lot of specific constructive feedback and specific praise during rehearsals. I also handed assignments and rubrics back in a timely manner with specific individual feedback and ideas for how to improve through practice. I spoke with parents at parent teacher conferences about student performance and behavior and helped create plans for improvement, as needed.

4. Demonstrate that you understand the School Improvement Process in use in your school and explain how your efforts as a professional fit into it. How can you contribute to achieving the school’s School Improvement Process goals?

The school’s improvement goal was to improve critical thinking and reading skills for their next MAPS test. I used rhythm diagramming, solfege, and count singing as music reading strategies as we sight-read the piece. Students were required to use critical thinking skills when I asked them to think-pair-share about my reasons for stopping in rehearsal. They also had to use critical thinking strategies when making musical decisions about dynamics and phrasing.

5. Reflect on possibilities for professional development. Describe at least two professional learning goals related to your professional strengths and weaknesses revealed by teaching this unit. Identify two specific activities you will undertake to improve your performance as a teacher in the critical areas you identified.

Throughout this unit, my biggest weaknesses were assessment and objective writing. I need to find a way to make my assessments more authentic, student-centered, and easy to evaluate. Most of the valuable information I gained about what students knew that I used to guide my instruction was through informal evaluation during rehearsal, which is not easy to document or quantify. A lot of this had to do with my objectives being written more as activities than as concepts to evaluate. In order to improve, I plan to attend professional development events such as KMEA and KCDA to attend sessions in these areas. I also plan to find someone I trust to give me feedback on my unit objectives and assessments before I begin teaching them.