

Incorporating ESLRs into Lesson Plans

Cooperative Learners: Respect and Value Diversity

Introduction:

Teacher begins on the first day of class by setting a tone of tolerance and respecting diversity. “There will be many levels of ability in this class. It is important that every student feels comfortable in participating, despite their level of expertise. After all, those of you that are very proficient now were once beginners. Let’s respect each person’s performance and encourage one another to learn, despite our differences in abilities.”

Examples:

Academic Subjects: There may be a great difference in grade levels between some learners. More proficient learners can tutor others, or small groups can work together.

Exercise and Fitness: Some students may be proficient at the exercises, others will need to do only part of the routine until their fitness level improves. Teacher encourages all levels.

Arts and Crafts: Some learners may be very talented in watercolor painting. Others have never held a brush before and will need help from other students and the teacher to get started. In quilting, some students will love traditional quilting that is hand quilted. Others will want to do quicker wall hangings that employ fast, strip-piecing methods. “There is room in the quilting world for all of these methods.”

Computer education: A few students may have taken part of the course before or other related courses. They will need less attention from the teacher while he/she helps new students on a one-to-one basis.

Student In-Put:

Ask for student testimonials about how they’ve improved. A student might respond: “I was SO BAD when I first started this Western dancing class. I hardly knew my right foot from my left, but I really wanted to learn to do this. Others in the class would just ignore my mistakes and kept encouraging me when I did something right. Now, I feel confident enough to go out on Saturday nights and have fun in the line dances. Don’t get discouraged if you are a beginner. Just keep coming back to class, and you will get the hang of it! I did!”

Conclusion:

Teacher stresses the fact at the end of the class that diversity is not only tolerated but is valuable to education. “If we were all at exactly the same level or participated in the same way, it would be a pretty boring class. I want you to bring to this class your unique abilities. Diversity is valuable and enables us to learn from each other.”