

Strategies in Action

Volume II

Applications in
Today's Diverse
Classrooms



**Sneak
Peek**

152 pages

ISBN 978-0-9797280-3-7

\$19.95

Strategies in Action

Published by Just ASK Publications & Professional Development

2214 King Street

Alexandria, Virginia 22301

Toll Free 1-800-940-5434

FAX 1-703-535-8502

email info@justaskpublications.com

www.justaskpublications.com

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Printed in the United States of America

ISBN-13: 978-0-9797280-8-2

Library of Congress Control Number 2011927440

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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Each section listed below includes multiple examples of classroom application and page references to *Meeting the Needs of Diverse Learners*, *Instruction for All Students*, and *Why Didn't I Learn This in College?*

Entries in each section start with preschool or primary examples followed by upper elementary, middle school, and high school examples. Multiple content areas are featured throughout the book.

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Introduction

Strategies in Action Volume II: Applications in Today's Diverse Classrooms is a collection of classroom applications of strategies found in ***Meeting the Needs of Diverse Learners, Instruction for All Students***, and ***Why Didn't I Learn This in College?*** The descriptions of classroom use presented here are representative of the work of thousands of educators across the country as they participated in **Just ASK** workshops and institutes.

The 25 school districts represented in the April 2011 printing are:

- Appleton Area School District, Appleton, Wisconsin
- Archdiocese of Los Angeles, California
- Bedford Central School District, New York
- Berlin-Boylston Public Schools, Massachusetts
- Chittenango Central School District, New York
- Evanston Township High School, Illinois
- Greece Central School District (GCSD), Greece, New York
- LaFayette School District, New York
- Lexington Public Schools, Massachusetts
- Marcellus Central School District, New York
- Needham Public Schools, Massachusetts
- New Trier High School Township District #203, Winnetka, Illinois
- Newton Public Schools, Massachusetts
- OCM BOCES, Syracuse, New York
- Prince William County Schools (PWCS), Manassas, Virginia
- Public Schools of Northborough-Southborough, Massachusetts
- Solvay Union Free School District, New York
- Shrewsbury Public Schools, Massachusetts
- St. Vrain Valley School District, Longmont, Colorado
- Stoneham Public Schools, Massachusetts
- Southampton School District, Massachusetts
- Tully Central School District, New York
- Waltham Public Schools, Massachusetts
- Watertown Public Schools, Massachusetts
- West Irondequoit Central School District, Rochester, New York

Readers should send a special thank you to all the teachers represented here who used these strategies in their own classrooms and then analyzed and reflected on the implementation, effectiveness, and possible adaptations of these strategies. Their work and thoughtful analysis can help all of us help more students learn more, more of the time.

Anchoring Activities

Meeting the Needs of Diverse Learners: Pages 135-138

Instruction for All Students: Pages 213-214

Why Didn't I Learn This in College?: Pages 237 and 242

Elementary: A Collection of Anchoring Activities

PowerPoint Problems

The children create their own math problems on a PowerPoint Presentation page and provide the answer on a text message box that they program to enter the page when selected. Children love using this program and become quite creative with the animation options given in the program.

Crossword Puzzles

Children may easily create crossword puzzles and word-search puzzles for the class spelling words, vocabulary units, or any topic being studied. Several websites are available to teachers and can be bookmarked for class use. All puzzles may be printed for class use.

Mad Libs

Students may use the Wacky Web Internet site and follow the online prompts to enter random nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, etc. Their words are inserted to create a silly story. Of course Mad Lib books are ideal, also. I have a puzzle book center in my room with a variety of activity books that address many academic skills. One good website is Wacky Web Tales at www.eduplace.com/tales

AlphaSmart Swap Stories

This is an old idea with a new twist. Children love to add to stories that have already started and they love using Alpha Smart Word Processor. I have six Alpha Smarts in my room being used by my students during writing time and on their free time. For the next school year, I am going to set aside one of the AlphaSmarts for this use only.

Students may begin a story on any of the eight document files of this one Alpha Smart. Other children may begin a new story in a new file or continue a story started by a classmate. When story beginnings have been entered on all eight files, students will continue to add to the stories until an ending is given to each. As stories are ended they may be printed and collected in a class notebook of Swap Stories and new stories may begin on those files.

Class Quilt

Paper or felt squares and permanent markers, or the Kid Pix software program can be used for creating a class quilt on any topic being studied. Children work on a quilt square whenever they have the time to illustrate facts they have learned. This could be an ABC quilt on a certain topic. At the end of the unit, all the squares are taped or glued together to create a class quilt to be displayed.

Homework

Meeting the Needs of Diverse Learners: Pages 82-84

Instruction for All Students: Pages 141-148

Why Didn't I Learn This in College?: Pages 147-149

High School Math: I have my students in groups of two or three compare homework answers together and check for any discrepancies. While they are doing this, I am circulating around to answer any questions that the students can't clear up on their own. If the entire class has a question on a specific type of problem, I go over that question for the entire class. I think that this method is much more effective than the standard process of going over homework where only the teacher would answer questions.

Nadine Drexler, LaFayette School District, NY

Middle School Language Arts: The strategy I implemented and continue to use is the **Incomplete Assignment Log**. I used the template in ***Why Didn't I Learn This in College?*** and photocopied it onto blue paper so it would stand out.

I introduced the log to my students a week before a big project was due. I let students know that I understand that sometimes projects don't get handed in on time for whatever reason and they needed to be prepared to tell me why they don't have their assignment, but more importantly, what their plan is to complete it. I also let my students know that I would be calling home over spring break to let their parents know that a student has missed an deadline and should be working on their projects. I explained that I wasn't calling to get anybody in trouble; I just wanted someone at home to know that the project was not finished and that there are plans to get it done. On the due date of the project, I asked students to fill out the **Incomplete Assignment Log** if they did not have their projects to turn in.

Over spring break, I called eleven homes. This gave me the opportunity to talk with parents and guardians about the project. All the parents were glad for my call because they didn't know about this project. It also gave me the opportunity to give parents an update on the student's progress in my class. Additionally, I learned more about students through my conversations. The icing on the cake is that although eleven projects were not turned in on time, I received ten immediately after the break!

Barb Babauta, Prince William County Schools, VA

Journals

Meeting the Needs of Diverse Learners: Pages 248-252

Instruction for All Students: Pages 14, 143-146, 225-225, and 257

Why Didn't I Learn This in College?: Pages 81-84, 150, 214, and 226

Elementary Students with Autism: I had never thought to use **Journals** in my classroom before as it seemed to me that they required a lot of writing. Free writing is not a strong area of my students. Instead of doing free writing, I bought each of my students an **Illustration Journal**. The students are given a topic that we are working on and asked to draw and label a picture of it. An example is that when we were discussing proper ways to do introductions, I asked my students to draw the right way to introduce yourself. One of my students drew a picture of herself smiling and walking up to a friend. She also drew a speech bubble and wrote, "Hello. What's your name?" in the bubble. I was happy to see my student had learned the skill and was able to show me her mastery through the use of pictures and some words. We use our **Illustration Journals** about two times a week. The students really enjoy working in their journals and I enjoy seeing their mastery of curriculum goals.

Jessica Polak, Prince William County Schools, VA

Elementary: All the students have **Journals** at their desks. We use them for math, language arts, social studies, and science. We use the **Journal** daily for the morning message and math warm-up. Then if I would like them to do something for any subject area, I can ask them to use their **Journal**. I have really appreciated the **Journal** because I have a complete, organized, chronological set of examples for parent-teacher conferences and, as needed, data for child studies. Next year I want to take more time modeling the journaling process early in the school year; I may also get the **Journals** with dotted lines for primary printing so that we can practice our handwriting more. I may also glue in a popsicle stick as a divider so that the journal is divided into subject sections.

Julie Inch, Prince William County Schools, VA

Elementary Math: I used to teach third grade, and when I did, I frequently used **Journals**. When I moved up to middle school, I abandoned the journal idea, as none of my colleagues were using them at the time. This year, however, I decided to go back to using a journal as a way to process information. When setting up their math binders last month, I had students label one of the sections **Journal**. I use the journal in several different ways. Sometimes they have to respond to a particular concept or lesson. Sometimes they use it to write any questions they have about concepts or even homework. If they get stuck on a problem at home, they are supposed to identify the problem in their journal and explain what they tried and where they got stuck. The use of the journals has been eye-opening for

Learning Buddies

Meeting the Needs of Diverse Learners: Pages 175-176

Instruction for All Students: Pages 99-100

Why Didn't I Learn This in College?: Pages 252-253

Middle School ESOL: I teach ESOL level 3 and level 4 both in the same classroom, at the same time. Besides having two different levels together, I also have three different grades at times, in the same class period. I displayed the template of **Clock Buddies** and explained to the students that they were going to be making appointments at different times so that they could meet with everyone in the classroom. I couldn't handle the chaos that this activity could bring, so I did as I was told to avoid that by making two lines and having them move to the sides. Everyone made their appointments. They were very excited about it and couldn't wait to have a pair activity. Then the first pair activity came. I had the students staple their clocks to their notebooks, since they are to bring their notebooks to class everyday. They took their notebooks out and awaited the appointment time to be announced. Then I announced that they would meet with their 3 o'clock appointment. I had students that were glad about who their partner was and others that were begging me to change to a different time. It was then that I realized how much it helped to pair the students without having to think too much or explain to them why I wanted them to be with that partner. It was so much simpler! Now things get done faster because I don't have to discuss who works with whom or deal with students who would prefer to work only with their friends. They are excited about meeting with different partners and work a lot better. It is amazing how much easier collaborative work has become.

Maricelis Pimentel, Prince William County Schools, VA

Elementary Special Education: I am a 3rd grade special needs teacher who works in an inclusive setting. I have used **Learning Buddies (Clock Buddies)**, specifically) throughout several curriculum areas. I have noticed that it works very well when playing math or language arts games, practicing math facts, reviewing spelling, and peer editing. This learning component is helpful in breaking up students who always pair up with each other. It also helps to pair different styles of learners together and those higher academic students with students who may need support. I feel this strategy helps students process, summarize, and use what they learned in meaningful ways.

Stacey Clarkin, Lincoln Public Schools, MA

High School Learning Center: There are two students in the same period in the learning center on IEPs who take the same biology class. These two students have very different levels of focus and motivation with respect to school work. One student struggles with higher level understanding, making inferences, and analyzing material. However, he has a very strong work ethic and is very organized,

Realia, Props, and Simulations

Meeting the Needs of Diverse Learners: Pages 206-207

Instruction for All Students: Pages 118, 171-173, and 204

Why Didn't I Learn This in College?: Pages 101-103

Elementary Social Studies: To introduce a new unit on Kenya, I decided to try something I felt timid about but would really excite my students. I put together a mystery box packed with Kenyan **artifacts**. I included products grown as cash crops in Kenya (pineapple, tea, coffee beans, cotton) and products grown for Kenyans (bananas, sweet potatoes, cashews). I also included some laminated pictures of African animals, African necklaces, a soccer ball, a flag, a card with the word “equator”, a camera, a map of Africa, and books about Africa. However, the most out of character move I made was to wrap myself up in African-type cloth during recess and wait for my students to return to class.

When they returned, there were buzzing voices and awed looks. My students were eager to find out why I was dressed like that. Without saying anything I removed one item at a time from my box. I started with the least obvious items (the foods) and progressed to the most explicit African artifacts until I ended with the map. I never said a word. I just enjoyed hearing all the speculation about what each item meant as I theatrically pulled it from the box. Student interest was at a maximum. Even my most sophisticated student was guessing and speculating what connection these items had to the class. As we neared the end of my artifacts, someone whispered “Africa,” and then more and more students began to see the clues as relating to Africa. There was a high level of excitement and interest in the room as students made the connection that we were about to begin our 1st grade study of Africa.

Kaaren Gray, St. Vrain Valley School District, CO

Middle School French: My French students were studying Paris, so I took them on an **imaginary bus tour** of that beautiful city. The chairs were arranged as seats on a bus, and the view out the front windows was provided by PowerPoint slides. While “le guide” (the teacher) explained the sights they were seeing, the students added notes to a teacher-prepared outline. The narration was entirely in French and the students were required to write only in the target language. After each ten-minute segment, the students were told that they could use English to compare notes and ask each other questions while the bus drive/guide took a break (**10:2 Theory**). At the sound of the horn, the narration began again and no English was spoken.

When I have done this activity in the past, I did not take the two-minute breaks after each ten minutes; I just lectured on and on. When I did the exercise that way, students became frustrated and my narration was disrupted by people whispering to ask each other questions or catch up on the notes. The **10:2** process eliminated

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