

Instructional Strategy Cafe

Lindsay Hawkins, Lindsay Williams
Published by *K20 Center*

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons CC BY-SA 4.0 License

Time Frame 50-60 minutes

Essential Question(s)

- How do instructional strategies enhance student learning?
- How do instructional strategies fulfill components of authenticity?

Summary

In this session, participants will be given a menu of instructional strategies to "taste test." Each of these strategies is research-based and supports components of authenticity. Once strategies have been chosen, the session will be built around a three-course meal of participants' chosen strategies. Each strategy option on the menu is accessible to any grade level and adaptable to any content area. Participants will leave with hands-on tools that they can implement immediately in any class.

Learning Goals

- Participants will explore and identify how authentic instructional strategies presented can be used for engaging, formatively assessing, and extending students' learning.
- Participants will recognize authentic components within the instructional strategies.

Standards

InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards (K-12th)

1e: The teacher understands that each learner's cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical development influences learning and knows how to make instructional decisions that build on learners' strengths and needs.
1j: The teacher takes responsibility for promoting learners' growth and development.
2n: The teacher makes learners feel valued and helps them learn to value each other.
3i: The teacher understands the relationship between motivation and engagement and knows how to design learning experiences using strategies that build learner self-direction and ownership of learning.
10p: The teacher actively shares responsibility for shaping and supporting the mission of his/her school as one of advocacy for learners and accountability for their success.

Attachments

- Authentic-Lesson-Reflection-Tool.pdf
- Data Never Sleeps Infographic 2024.pdf
- Instructional Strategies Cafe Menu 2025 1.pdf
- Instructional Strategy Note Sheet - Instructional Strategy Cafe.docx
- Instructional Strategy Note Sheet - Instructional Strategy Cafe.pdf
- Presentation Slides-Instructional Strategy Cafe.pptx
- Strategy Harvest Note Sheet - Instructional Strategy Cafe.docx
- Strategy Harvest Note Sheet - Instructional Strategy Cafe.pdf

Materials

- Presentation Slides (attached)
- Instructional Strategies Cafe Menu (attached)
- Authentic Lesson Reflection Tool (attached)
- Instructional Strategy Note Sheet (attached)
- Data Never Sleeps Infographic (attached)
- Strategy Harvest Note Sheet (attached)
- Markers, pens, and pencils
- Sticky notes
- Poster paper (with one of six "Menu" choices as heading)
- Scratch paper

60 minutes

Engage

Presenter's Note: Preparation

Before beginning this session, have all handouts and materials available on a table for participants. Also, be sure to prepare one or two posters for the following activity by creating six columns across the page(s). Label the columns with the six strategies from the Instructional Strategies Cafe Menu handout.

Welcome participants and introduce yourself and the session using the attached **Presentation Slides**. **Slide 2** identifies the presenters and **slide 3** itemizes the micro-credentialing courses available to take at K20.

Pass out the attached **Instructional Strategies Cafe Menu**. Ask participants to look through the menu and choose three instructional strategies they would like to explore further. Display **slide 4** to introduce the Sticky Bar activity. Once participants have selected three instructional strategies from the list, ask them to engage by taking one sticky note and placing it on the Sticky Bar poster paper, creating columns above or below the name of the strategy they would like to explore further. The three strategies that the majority of the group has chosen will be used throughout the exercise.

Once the participants have selected their strategies, share the session objectives with participants found on **slide 5**, which will provide a road map of where you will go together during the session and will let participants know what to expect.

Presenter's Note: Participant Choice

You may ask participants to choose one strategy from each "course" on the menu ("Starters," "Entrees," and "Desserts"), or you may allow participants to choose any three strategies from the six strategies listed.

Optional Technology Integration

You may use an online tool to gather participants' votes electronically. Mentimeter.com is one example of an online tool you could use (the site is https://www.domo.com/learn/infographic/data-never-sleeps-12). However, it is always good to have a back-up strategy like Sticky Bars in case the internet or website does not work appropriately.

Inform participants that several new strategies will be introduced to them throughout the session. These strategies are tools used to support and guide higher order thinking in an authentic way. Make sure each participant has a copy of the attached **Instructional Strategy Note Sheet** and encourage participants to use it to jot down their ideas for personalizing a strategy to be used as an instructional tool in their classrooms. Before breaks and after the strategies have been modeled, the presentation will allow time for participants to reflect on how to use these strategies.

Presenter's Note: Strategy Slides

Be aware that from this point forward, you should skip the slides that were not selected by participants during the Sticky Bar activity. The strategy slides are as follows: Strike Out (slide 6), Create the Problem (slides 7-8), Strategy Harvest (slide 9), GramIt (slides 10-11), 3-2-1 (slide 13), Synectics (slide 14).

90 minutes

Explore

Strike Out strategy: Show **slide 6**. Have participants get into groups of four with proximity partners. Ask the question, "What skills do you need for college readiness?" Instruct the participants to list as many skills as they identify in their small groups. Then, pass papers to the group on their right. Based on the answers given, strike out one item that does not meet the criteria or that is the least important. Participants will continue to pass papers to the right, and groups will continue to mark off one item from the list until only the most important skills remain. Allow groups time to share out the skills that are remaining on their lists.

Create the Problem strategy: Show **slide 7**. Present this instructional strategy, letting participants know that they are going to use the information on the next slide to create a problem that would result in the given solution. Use the information on **slide 8** to create a problem.

Presenter's Note: Encouraging Creativity and Flexibility

This strategy allows for creativity in subjects that often just present one type of problem for each given answer. Instead, Create the Problem switches around a normal problem and allows for the answer to be the catalyst for a multitude of possible problems. This strategy lends itself to math but can be used in other subjects as well. In social studies, teachers can name the solution to any kind of disaster, economic problem, or war and ask students to come up with the problem(s) that necessitated a solution.

Strategy Harvest strategy: Show **slide 9**. Present the problem on the slide and instruct participants to solve the problem and record their strategy on the attached **Strategy Harvest Note Sheet**, found either on the table or in their folder. After a couple of minutes, ask everyone to find an Elbow Partner and share the strategy they used. Participants will take turns sharing and recording the new strategies on their note sheets, "harvesting" the strategies others used. Participants will continue to find a new partner one or two more times and record the new strategies shared each time. Bring the group back together and have a few participants share out either their own strategy or a new one they learned and might use in the future.

Presenter's Note: Purpose

The solution to the problem presented on slide 9: "I drew a picture to show the 12 on the top, and I knew that, by making an array for 3 x 4 and 2 x 6, the side would either be two, three, four, or six.

Strategy Harvest is similar to allowing students to share out how they solved a particular problem in a whole class setting. This strategy enables students to explain their strategies multiple times, which reinforces learning and provides an opportunity for students to view the processes of others and compare them to their own. While students observe other processes, it allows for the new strategies to build and connect to their own prior knowledge, thus creating a deeper understanding of the content being taught.

Optional Activity

If time allows, you may instruct participants to “revive” one skill they feel is important for college readiness. This is something teachers need to do with their students. It provides an opportunity to critically think about what is most important to the topic being discussed or taught. What one item would hold its own or fit best with the items that survived the strike-out portion?

GramIt strategy: Show **slides 10-11**. Participants will write an opinion statement about the concept presented in the infographic found on slide 11. It must contain fewer than 140 characters and include a hashtag. Read the example from the slide: *Students today must learn how to move beyond basic comprehension. #CriticalThinking*

You can use a website like Padlet to create a forum so that participants can post their GramIt statements for all to see and scroll through simultaneously.

Move to **slide 12** and identify the infographic “Data Never Sleeps,” located either in participants’ folders or on the table. Participants will use this infographic to write their comments and share them with the whole group.

Possible Response

"Teachers today must be trained and knowledgeable in technology. #InformationOverload"

3-2-1 strategy: Show **slide 13**. Introduce this slide as the Engage portion of a lesson that could be used when teaching about the Dust Bowl. Inform participants that they are using the 3-2-1 strategy with a picture deconstruction. Ask participants to write down three things they notice about the picture, two things they can infer based on their prior knowledge of the Dust Bowl, and one question they have about this picture.

Possible Response

3: "Three things I notice about the picture are a woman and two children. They are sitting down, and they seem to be sitting under a fabric used as protection from the weather elements, supported by a large branch or small log."

2: "I presume they are traveling west because their land is no longer able to produce crops. Also, they may have lost their husband/father on their travels due to the hardships of traveling during that time."

1: "Will they survive their westward journey?"

Presenter's Note: Strategy Versatility

The 3-2-1 strategy can be altered for use in many contexts, to fit any lesson or content area. It can be used as an Engage piece or as an Exit Ticket during the Evaluate portion of a lesson. It can be used in class for students to gather information and questions while reading a passage or excerpt. It is a quick strategy that doesn't take much time to complete or explain. Students are always encouraged to share out part of what they have written.

Synectics strategy: Show **slide 14**. Explain that this is a science strategy, but it can be adapted to any content area. It is similar to making a simile or metaphor in Language Arts—but it uses things you wouldn't normally compare and explains the connection between the two objects or ideas.

Use the example on the slide for participants to explore: *A cell is like a* _____ *because* _____. Ask participants: *Is it most like a shopping mall, a bowl of gelatin, a brick wall, or an iPod?*

Participants will choose one of the four answer choices and then write an explanation of why a cell and the chosen object are most alike. After participants have written their explanations, have them share out what they wrote.

Presenter's Note: Strategy Versatility

The Synectics strategy can be used in all content areas. It is a great strategy for the end of a unit or lesson to assess how a student can make connections to their learning. It also can be used to jumpstart learning and engage students in a creative way to link prior knowledge to new information.

30 minutes

Explain

Show **slide 15**. Now that three instructional strategies have been presented, have participants find someone in the room they haven't talked to yet and share one idea of how they would use each strategy to enhance student learning and achievement in their classrooms. Have partners share out each other's ideas. Repeat this process two or three times.

Possible Responses

Answers will vary depending on the represented content areas and the instructional strategies presented.

30 minutes

Extend

Use the attached **Authentic Lesson Reflection Tool** to support participants' answers. Ask the group: *Which of these four components of authentic teaching do you see represented in the use of these three instructional strategies?*

Possible Responses

Answers will vary depending on the three strategies that were explored.

- "Construction of knowledge or higher-order thinking is part of each of these strategies. We ask students to use their prior knowledge to build and connect new knowledge, based on discussion and discourse, throughout the task and activities the strategies present."
- "There is also value beyond school in all of these strategies. In one way or another, they present opportunities for students to create and communicate ideas based on their prior knowledge. Some of them also allow for the assistance of others to help explore new meanings and real-world applications."
- "These strategies allow for student ownership and shared control of the learning environment."

After the discussion of authenticity and authentic teaching, give participants time to fill out the Instructional Strategy Note Sheet. Explain that the note sheet provides an opportunity for participants to dig deeper and individually reflect on how they might use the strategies in their own classrooms.

Slide 16 provides the LEARN instructional strategies link for participants to explore and use in their classrooms.

30 minutes

Evaluate

Presenter's Note: TREK

TREK evaluations will be used in place of the evaluation activity when available. If you don't have access to a TREK evaluation, continue with the activity below.

Go to **slide 17**. As an Exit Ticket at the end of the session, ask each participant to use a sticky note to explain how they will use one strategy they learned about in their own classroom by the end of the week.

Go to **slide 18**. Have participants briefly explain (on a sticky note) how they will implement the strategy in their classrooms. Participants should post their sticky notes on the wall or poster paper for all participants to see as they leave the session.

Research Rationale

Instructional strategies engage and provide opportunities for students to make connections to new information using their prior knowledge as a foundation. They make thinking visible to themselves, peers, and teachers (Keeley& Tobey, 2011, p. 171). Teachers can use instructional strategies to gain an idea of what the students know and need to learn. By doing this, they can target instruction and provide opportunities to build on students' prior knowledge. Instructional strategies can be used as a formative assessment, quickly assessing the students' understanding and providing teachers with a guide to develop further instruction and support as needed, and they can help students identify and monitor their own learning throughout lessons and units. Instructional strategies create an authentic learning and teaching environment for all students.

Resources

- Domo. (2024). *Data never sleeps 12.0* [Infographic]. Domo. Retrieved July 7, 2025, from https://www.domo.com/learn/infographic/data-never-sleeps-12
- K20 Center. (n.d.). 3-2-1. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/117
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Bell ringers and exit tickets. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/125
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Create the problem. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/149
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Elbow partners. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/116
- K20 Center. (n.d.). GramIt. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/2554
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Sticky bars. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/129
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Strategy harvest. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/135
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Strike out. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/d9908066f654727934df7bf4f5062cdf
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Synectics. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/136
- Keeley, P. & Tobey, C. (2011). *Mathematics formative assessment: 75 practical strategies for linking assessment, instruction, and learning*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.