

Attention to Meaning Common Pitfalls

Novice teachers fall into four common pitfalls when trying to draw students' attention to meaning.



#1. Activity Driven Planning — Instruction driven by the goal of engagement through “fun format,” such as games, centers, or group work, rather than designed around the learning goal.



#2. Differentiation Overload — Differentiation based on learning styles myth, or in such a way that struggling students don't experience meaningful learning aligned to the objective.



#3. Questions ≠ Objective — Instruction is so open-ended that the aim of the activity is unclear or unachieved. Personal connections or fun facts may take precedence over content.



#4. Unambitious or Scattershot Content— Instruction may be content-focused but inappropriate for grade-level, or attempting too many objectives for a single lesson, resulting in shallow or superficial learning.

Vignette: Attention to Meaning

In a 7th grade Social Studies class, students are studying ancient Greece. The standards for grade 7 require teachers to address concepts like government, economics, and culture of this era. The teacher planned a 5-day unit:

Scope of Ancient Greece Unit

Day 1: Students will understand Greek culture at a high (maybe vague) level.

Day 2- 4: Students will use various materials to construct an urn. Students will represent their personalities through paint design and the shape of the urn.

Day 5: Students will match and learn ten vocabulary terms.

Through these activities, students will experience how culture influences day-to-day life.

Which pitfall did this novice teacher fall into?

Click [HERE](#) to check your answer.