

Two case studies of Mr. Blue & Mrs. Green

What are the differences and similarities of these two “Do Now” activities?

Participants were asked to compare and contrast these two opening activities and brainstorm what the qualities of a first-rate “do now” were.

One has a great opening routine that has purpose, is assessed, is efficient and the other is the exact opposite. What are the characteristics of a well executed opening activity? **Purpose** and **accountability** are key. It has to matter!

Characteristics of a Successful “Do Now”: *

- **timed-** warning before time is up
- short (can't be a whole lesson)
- accountable- assessed
- clear and realistic (doable)
- motivating

* Marzano, R.J. (2003). Classroom management that works: Research-based strategies for every teacher. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

CASE STUDY A

Mr. Blue

Mr. Blue has just finished a lesson on experimental design and would like to assess whether or not his students comprehend the material. He didn't get the feeling that his students were really "getting it" during his lecture the previous day and is curious to evaluate the situation.

Mr. Blue makes the decision to create a "Do Now" that will assess his students' knowledge. He finds an experiment in a workbook and decides to use it. It is about 1 ½ pages long and contains about 15 questions about growing yeast in Petri dishes.

As students arrive to class he is writing the questions on the board and tells them to sit down and copy what he is writing. After he finishes writing on the board he then takes attendance. It is about 10 minutes into class and many of the students have started talking and have not yet started to work on the problems. He decides to give them 5 more minutes to work on the problems and hands back old homework assignments during that time.

After the 5 minutes have passed he notices that most students have only answered two or three questions. There are a few students who attempt to work on more of the problems, but begin to get frustrated and cannot finish the entire handout. Finally, Mr. Blue goes over the problems on the board and begins his next lesson about 30 minutes into the period. He did not get a chance to check the do nows and noticed that most students copied the answers off of the board, but left their papers behind at the end of class.

CASE STUDY B

Mrs. Green

Mrs. Green uses "Do Now" activities as warm-up exercises the first 5 minutes of each class period every day. She keeps track of the time and always gives the class a one-minute warning before the 5 minutes is up. Today Mrs. Green distributes a "Do Now" handout to each student. As students enter the room, she reminds them to start working. The worksheet is printed with several different quadrilaterals contained inside a rectangle and the directions are to name as many different types of quadrilaterals as you can from the picture below. She wants to assess whether her students can identify the different types of quadrilaterals before beginning a unit on Properties of Quadrilaterals.

While students are working she circulates around the room to check that each student is working on the problem and to answer questions, recording on a seating chart whether or not students complete the exercise. She uses the information to keep track of "Do Now" points that are part of each student's final grade and also to make note of which quadrilaterals students can identify. Mrs. Green lets the class know that there is 1 minute left. At the end of the five minute period, Mrs. Green calls on students to share the types of quadrilaterals they found. She then transitions to her lesson.