

Say it Like You Meme it: Advocating for Health and Wellness

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Abstract

Promoting behaviors that prevent infectious disease is a primary curricular aim of school health education. Enabling students to advocate for influenza prevention using social media is a teaching approach consistent with this aim. *Objectives:* Students will be able to: 1) identify and describe strategies for influenza prevention; 2) describe and implement steps to advocating for influenza prevention; and 3) construct and share a flu prevention meme using social media.

Primary Audience: Students in grades 9-12.

Introduction

It is estimated that 9 out of 10 teens use social media. Instagram is the most used social media site among American teens with 72 percent of all teens using the site. *Snapchat* is the second most popular social media platform (69%) used by teens followed by *Facebook* (51%) and *Twitter* (32%) (Anderson & Jiang, 2018). Most social media-using teens post pictures (91%) and share personal interests (84%) (Perrin, 2015). One common method for sharing thoughts and opinions on social media is the use of memes, typically a humorous image, video, or piece of text that is copied and easily spread by users. Meme, derived from *mimeme*, meaning imitated thing, was first used in print by Richard Dawkins in his book *The Selfish Gene* to explain the viral spread of information, behaviors, styles, and other cultural phenomena among groups (Dawkins, 1990). Appropriately named, Internet memes include concepts and catch-phrases typically imbedded with a photo, video, or hashtag that spread ideas virally from person to person via social media networks.

Influenza (flu) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. The flu can cause mild to severe illness including hospitalization or death. Each year since 2010 the United States has experienced an estimated 9.2 to 35.6 million cases of the flu, leading to 31.4 million doctor visits, 140,000-710,000 hospitalizations, and 12,000 to 56,000 deaths (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2018a; Molinari, 2007). In 2016, influenza-related illness was the 8th leading cause of death for Americans of all ages and the 9th leading cause of death for junior high and high school-aged students (CDC, 2016; CDC 2017b). While older people, younger children, and those with special health conditions such as

asthma, chronic lung diseases, heart disease, obesity, diabetes, and those with a weakened immune system are at highest risk for influenza, annual vaccination against seasonal influenza is recommended for all persons aged six months and older in the United States (CDC 2018b). According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the single best way to prevent the flu is by getting vaccinated each year (CDC, 2018c). Despite this recommendation, it is estimated that only 46.8 percent of the U.S. population received the flu vaccination in 2016-2017 flu season (CDC, 2017a).

The *Characteristics of Effective Health Education Curricula* identified by the CDC's Division of Adolescent and School Health (CDC-DASH), includes the inclusion of strategies to personalize information and engage students (Joint Committee on National Health Education Standards, 2007). Instructional strategies which are student-centered, interactive, and experiential increase engagement and learning. One such teaching strategy is a cooperative approach termed a jigsaw (Cinelli, Symons, Bechtel & Rose-Colley, 1994). The jigsaw approach typically includes two groups, one in which students gain new learning or become "experts," and another in which they share with a group of peers this new learning (Sahin, 2010). In this way students are responsible to each other, first in gaining new knowledge or becoming an expert, and second in clearly sharing that new knowledge with others. Student learning becomes interdependent and interactive during a jigsaw while the teacher is able to observe and intervene with groups where needed.

The National Health Education Standards (NHES) include concepts students should learn and understand as well as specific skills students should develop and practice for the achievement of healthy behavior outcomes. Standard 8 of the NHES addresses advocacy skills and emphasizes the need for students to identify ways that health messages and communication techniques can be altered for different audiences (Joint Committee on National Health Education Standards, 2007). The following teaching idea incorporates a jigsaw technique in providing students the opportunity to advocate for influenza prevention including influenza vaccinations (flu shots) by creating and posting an Internet meme to a social media platform.

Objectives

This teaching idea will enable students to do the following things:

1. Identify and describe strategies for influenza prevention.
2. Describe and implement the steps to advocating for influenza prevention.
3. Construct and share a flu prevention meme using social media.

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These objectives are designed to address the following National Health Education Standard (NHES) and performance indicator:

- NHES # 8 – Students will demonstrate the ability to advocate for personal, family, and community health.
- Performance Indicator 8.12.4 – Adapt health messages and communication techniques to a specific target audience.

Materials and Resources

The following materials are needed to implement this teaching idea:

- Handouts for jigsaw activity (Figures 1-4)
 - o Influenza and the Flu Vaccine Infographic (Figure 1)
 - o Flu Prevention Tips Infographic (Figure 2)
 - o Advocacy Infographic (Figure 3)
 - o Social Media Infographic (Figure 4)
- Smartphone, tablet, or computer with Internet access
- Photos for meme creation or access to an online meme generator
- Classroom/Teacher managed social media account (i.e., Instagram or Facebook) or email account
- Projector and screen (preferred) or paper copy of several Internet memes.
- Flu Prevention Tips Assessment (Figure 5)

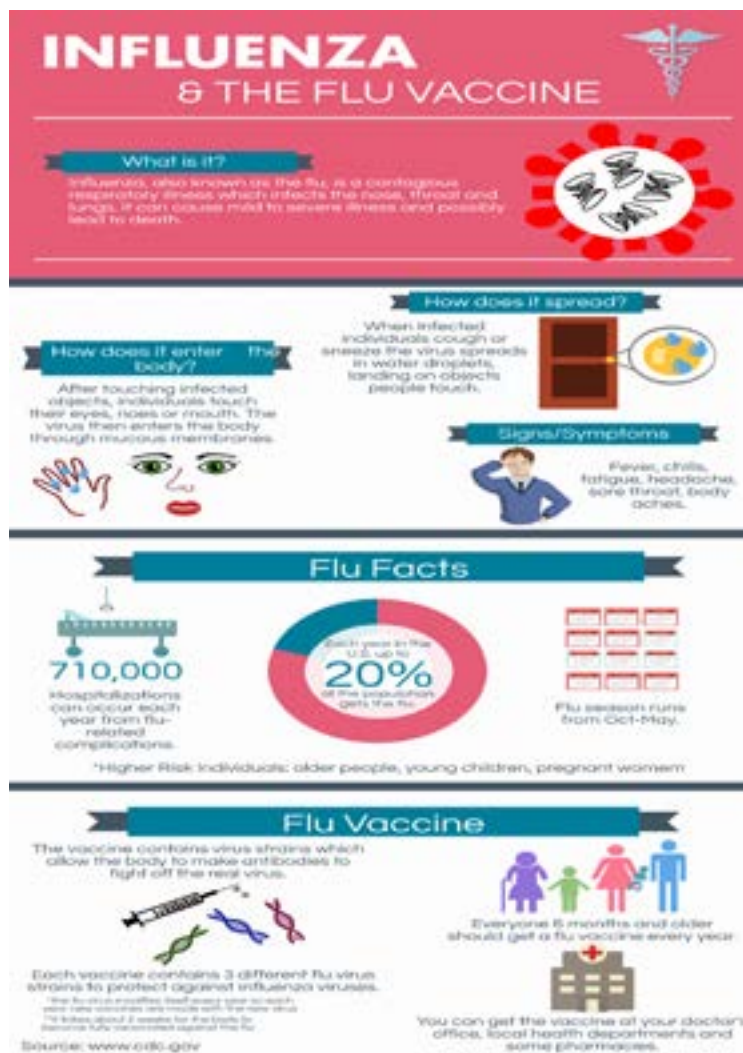


Figure 1.

Influenza and the Flu Vaccine

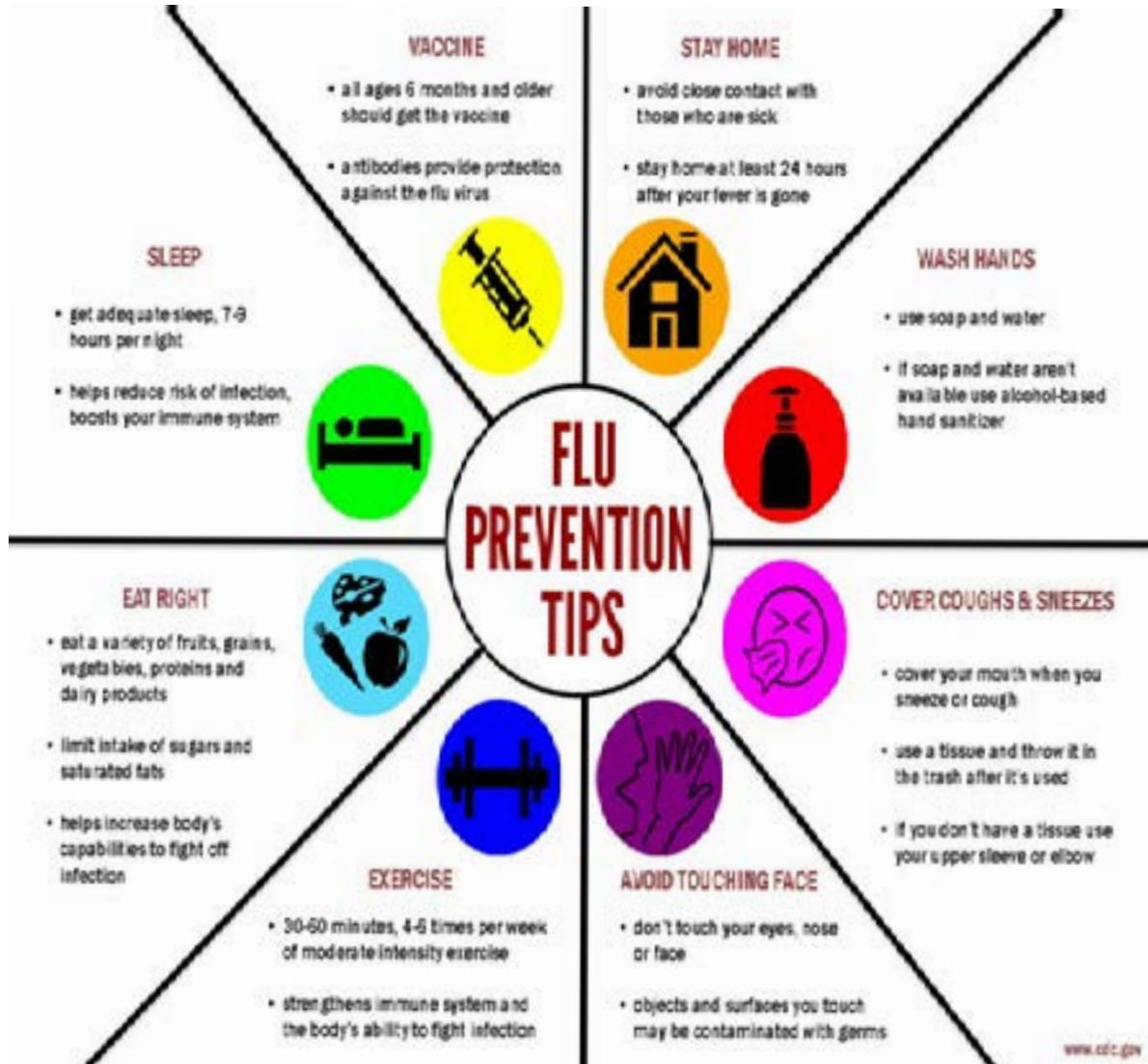


Figure 2.

Flu Prevention Tips Infographic

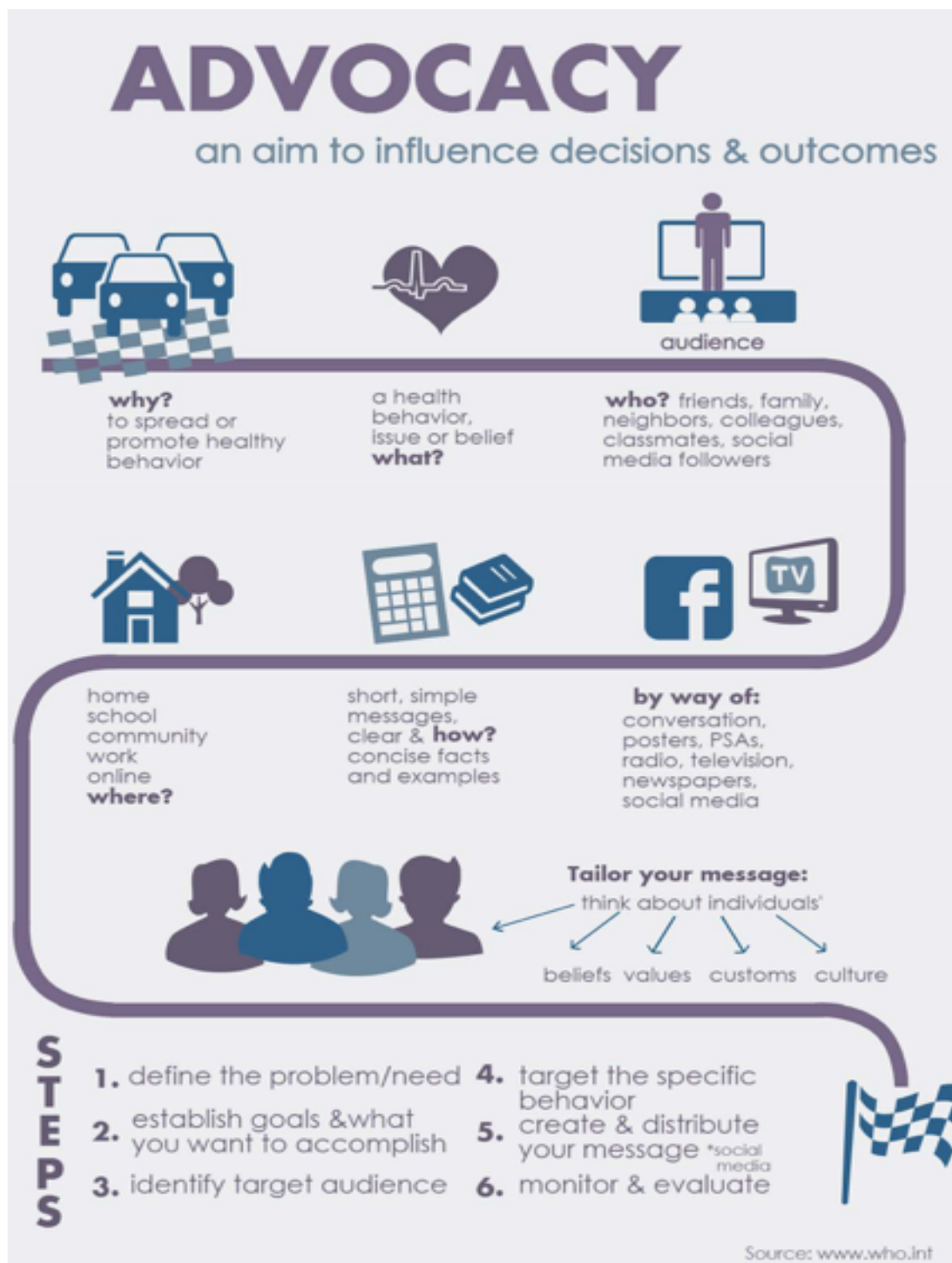
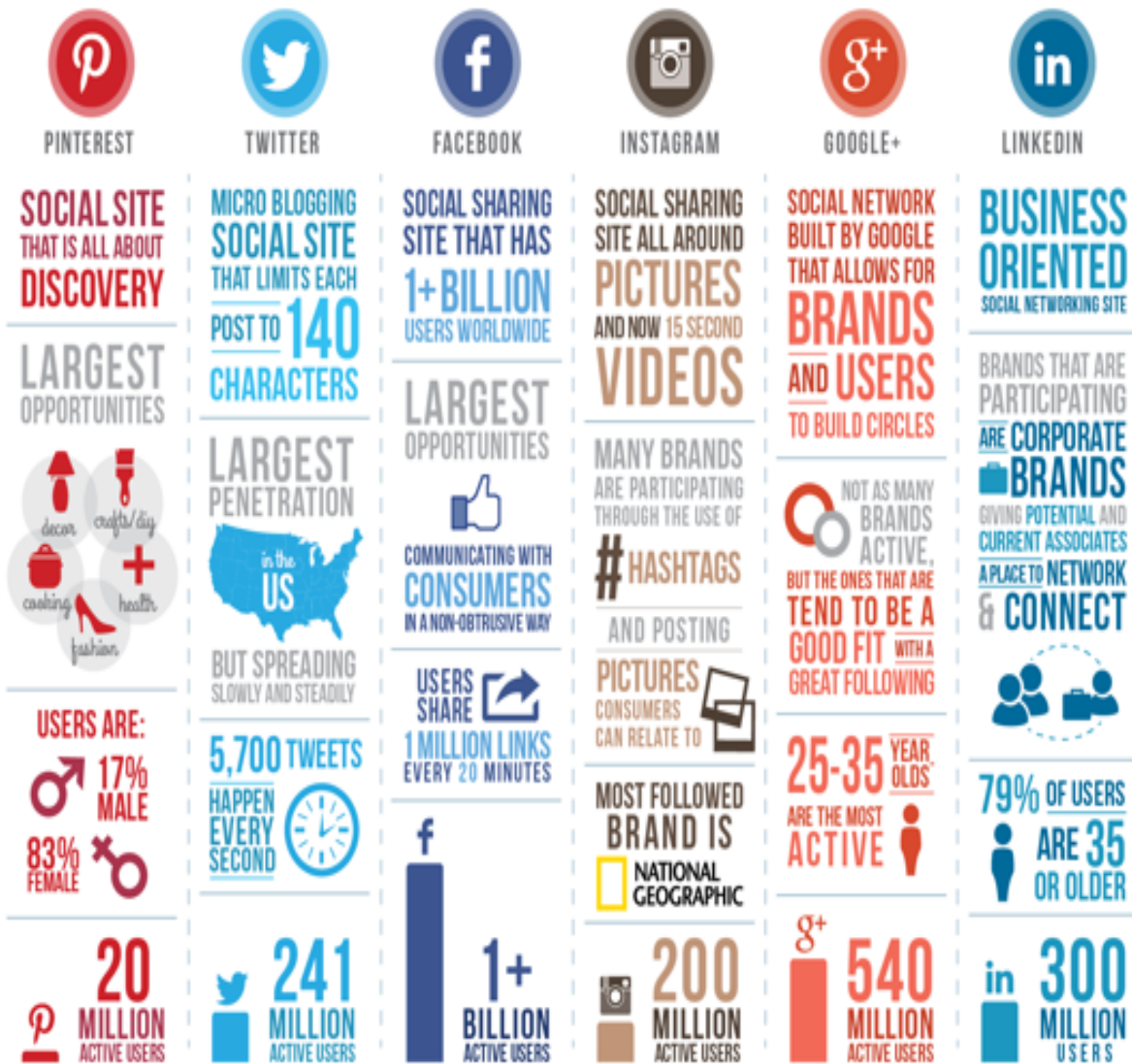


Figure 3.

Advocacy Infographic



Statistics as of 4.25.2014. Designed by: Leverage - leverageinsightmedia.com

Figure 4.

Social Media Infographic (blog source: <http://blog.plunkus.com/5-infographics-that-will-increase-your-traffic/>)

Name: _____

FLU PREVENTION TIPS

VACCINE

- all ages (1) and older should get the vaccine
- (2) provide protection against the flu virus

STAY HOME

- avoid close contact with those who are sick
- stay home at least (3) after your fever is gone

WASH HANDS

- use (4) and (5)
- if soap and water aren't available use alcohol-based (6)

COVER (7) & (8)

- cover your mouth when you sneeze or cough
- use a tissue and throw it in the trash after it's used
- if you don't have a tissue use your (9) or (10)

AVOID TOUCHING FACE

- don't touch your (11) (12) or (13)
- objects and surfaces you touch may be contaminated with germs

EXERCISE

- (14) minutes (15) times per week of moderate-intensity exercise
- strengthens immune system and the body's ability to fight infection

EAT RIGHT

- eat a variety of (16) (17) (18) (19) and (20)
- limit intake of sugars and saturated fats
- helps increase body's capabilities to fight off infection

SLEEP

- get adequate sleep (21) hours per night
- helps reduce risk of infection boosts your (22)

Self Check: Describe two preventive strategies you intend to improve upon and how you intend to improve.

- 1.
- 2.

www.cdc.gov

Figure 5.

Flu Prevention Tips Assessment

Primary Audience

This teaching idea is designed for students in grades 9 through 12.

Procedure

Implementing this teaching idea requires one 45- to 55-minute class period. For schools with longer class periods, this teaching idea can be added to other personal health and wellness instructional activities. The teacher should implement the following steps:

1. The teacher will introduce basic information about communicable diseases. This brief introduction (3-5 minutes) should help students distinguish the difference

between communicable and non-communicable diseases as well as basic pathogens including bacteria and viruses.

2. The teacher will introduce a basic jigsaw activity, which will include forming and working together in two small groups of approximately four students. Prior to forming these groups, the teacher should clearly explain the following:
 - a. The first grouping will include students each reviewing the same infographic handout and be referred to as the "same topic" group. In this group students will first read the infographic handout independently and then discuss together the main points in their group. Each member of the "same topic" group should summarize this discussion and main points in their notes. Students can organize these notes by folding an 8.5' X 11' piece of

notebook paper in half two times, once vertically and once horizontally, to create creases dividing the paper into quadrants. Quadrants can then be labeled to correspond with each of the infographics used during the jigsaw activity: 1) Influenza and the Flu Vaccine; 2) Flu Prevention Tips; 3) Advocacy; and 4) Social Media.

- b. The second group will be referred to as the “different topic” group and will be comprised of at least one member from each of the four “same topic” groups. For example, each “different topic” group will consist of at least one student who previously studied the *Influenza and the Flu Vaccine Infographic* (Figure 1), at least one student who previously studied the *Flu Prevention Tips Infographic* (Figure 2), at least one student who previously studied the *Advocacy Infographic* (Figure 3), and at least one student who previously studied the *Social Media Infographic* (Figure 4). Each member of the “different topic” group will take turns sharing the main points from their infographic handout examined and discussed within their “same topic” group.
3. The teacher will check for student understanding of the activity by asking one or more students to explain the procedures. This is also a good time to have all students fold a paper into quadrants for recording the main points presented by each member of the “different topic” group.
4. Having fully explained this jigsaw activity, the teacher will organize students into “same-topic” groups and provide each member of the group with a copy of the same handout, either the *Influenza and Flu Vaccine Infographic* (Figure 1), the *Flu Prevention Tips Infographic* (Figure 2), the *Advocacy Infographic* (Figure 3), or the *Social Media Infographic* (Figure 4). As class sizes vary, some groups will be larger than four students, but none should be smaller. For example, when there is an odd number of students, two or more students can be paired together in the “same topic” group and remain together as they move to the “different topic” group. If the class has at least 32 students present, then two groups can be formed for each of the infographic handouts.
5. The teacher will again instruct each “same-topic” group to first study their assigned infographic independently and then discuss as a group the main points presented therein. Each student should have the opportunity to share and discuss her thoughts with the group before recording the main points in her notes. The teacher can encourage participation and engagement in this process by reminding students that each “same-topic” group member will soon be teaching students from the other “same topic” groups the content included in their infographic.
6. The teacher will monitor each “same topic” group to determine when each group has read and discussed their assigned infographic. Once each “same topic” group has completed this phase of the activity, the teacher will instruct each “same topic” group member to separate and form a “different topic” group consisting of one member from each of the four “same topic” groups.
7. With the “different topic” groups formed, the teacher will then instruct each “different topic” group member to share with this new group the main points from the infographic

discussed in their “same topic” group. Each member of the “different topic” group should carefully record these main points in the corresponding quadrant in their notes. The teacher will monitor each “different topic” group to determine when this phase of the jigsaw is complete. When it appears that each group has finished sharing and discussing the main points, the teacher will instruct students to return to their regular seating arrangement.

8. The teacher will begin a whole-class discussion by asking students to explain what an Internet meme is. Using either a paper copy or an electronic copy with the help of a screen and projector, the teacher should show several examples of Internet memes. The teacher will next explain that each class member will create an Internet meme advocating for influenza prevention, including flu shots.
9. The teacher should show sample memes and explain that each student will need to design a meme of their own following the advocacy steps presented in the *Advocacy Infographic* (Figure 3). The teacher may choose to provide students with several photo options for meme creation, allow students to use a photo of their own, or may use one of many online meme generators.
10. The teacher will instruct students to post their memes to a classroom social media account such as Instagram or Facebook. Students may also post their memes to personal social network sites and accounts of their choice. Alternatively, students can be instructed to email their meme to the teacher who can review them prior to posting to the classroom social media page.

Assessment Technique

This teaching idea aims to help students meet three specific objectives: 1) identify and describe strategies for influenza prevention; 2) describe and implement the steps to advocating for influenza prevention; and 3) construct and share a flu prevention meme using social media. Assessing student achievement of the first objective can be accomplished using the *Flu Prevention Tips Assessment* (Figure 5). This assessment requires students to complete or fill in the missing information from the *Flu Prevention Infographic* (Figure 2) and identify two prevention strategies they intend to improve upon together with a brief description of how they can improve. There are a total of 30 points possible with 22 fill-in-the-blank spaces each worth 1 point and two short answer questions each worth 4 points. Correct answers to the fill-in-the-blank questions are: 1) 7-9; 2) immune system; 3) 6 months; 4) antibodies; 5) 24 hours; 6) soap; 7) water; 8) hand sanitizer; 9) coughs; 10) sneezes; 11) upper sleeve; 12) elbow; 13) eyes; 14) nose; 15) face; 16) 30-60; 17) 4-6; 18) fruits; 19) grains; 20) vegetables; 21) proteins; 22) dairy products. The two short answer questions each require students to indicate a prevention strategy they wish to improve upon (2 points) and how they intend to improve (2 points). Answers to these questions will vary according to individual student need and are best assessed using a pass/fail approach where students receive full-credit for answering each part of the question, and no credit for failing to answer the question. The second and third objectives are assessed by the teacher in reviewing student memes. Teachers may choose to have students report orally or in writing how they addressed each of the following six steps in creating their meme: 1) Did

the student succeed in clearly defining the problem?; 2) Did the student establish goals and what they wanted to accomplish?; 3) Did the student identify a target audience?; 4) Did the student target a specific behavior?; 5) After creating her meme, how and where was it distributed?; 6) Has the student been able to monitor and evaluate feedback received? Whether reporting orally or in writing, students must indicate that they have addressed each of these questions related to advocacy. Each step is worth 1 point. Teachers may also choose to have students print their memes and display them in the classroom or in other locations around the school. Presenting students with awards such as “Best Use of Statistics,” “Funniest Meme,” “Most Likely to Get Likes,” or “Strongest Advocate” for their efforts can increase the quality of student work and overall engagement for this teaching idea.

Adaptations

This teaching idea may be adapted to meet individual student need and ability. Students may be paired together strategically, where a higher functioning student can assist a classmate who would benefit from additional peer-support and guidance. In locations where this lesson’s objectives are not included in the curriculum or not prioritized in the instruction, teachers may modify lesson elements to create greater alignment with local goals and objectives. Additionally, teachers should feel autonomous in adapting the steps and procedures presented here to match their individual teaching style and the learning needs of their students.

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