

Lesson Planning For Effective Teaching

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Abstract- Lesson Plan- effective Teaching- instructional experience- Determine the purpose of the lesson- Create space for student thinking and discussion- Be prepared to push that student thinking further- Make time for reflection- Incorporate student interests into your lessons- Make your lessons relevant- Select purposeful activities and assignments- Share lessons with your colleagues- Refine lessons based on feedback- Establish a positive classroom environment- Begin lessons by giving clear instructions- Maintain student attention- Use appropriate pacing- Provide suitable seatwork- Evaluate what has taken place in your lesson- Make a smooth transition into next subject- Develop positive teacher/student relationships

Keywords- Teaching Techniques- Student interests- Positive Relationships- Student attention- Purposeful- Clear instructions

I. INTRODUCTION

My intention is to show that a lesson planning is a key feature of effective teaching. Good lesson planning is essential to the process of teaching and learning. A teacher who is prepared is well on his way to a successful instructional experience. The development of interesting lessons takes a great deal of time and effort. As a new teacher one must be committed to spending the necessary time in this endeavor. This reflection focuses upon issues fundamental to all teaching which includes the aims, the delivery, the learning processes involved and evaluation mechanisms. An effective lesson gets students thinking and allows them to interact and ask questions, tap into their background knowledge, and build new skills. This article offers practical tips for planning engaging lessons that will help your students retain more of what they learn.

"A lot of approaches to lesson planning are content-driven, giving teachers some boxes to fill in," says Peter Brunn, director of professional development at the Developmental Studies Center in Oakland, Calif., and author of *The Lesson Planning Handbook: Essential Strategies That Inspire Student Thinking and Learning*. "While these approaches include what we want to teach, they don't often

contain how we're going to teach it." It's the "how," says Brunn that makes all the difference in whether students actually learn. Effective lesson planning requires the teacher to determine three essential components: the objective, the body, and a reflection.

A lesson plan is a framework for a lesson. If you imagine a lesson is like a journey, then the lesson plan is the map. It shows you where you start, where you finish and the route to take to get there. Essentially the lesson plan sets out what the teacher hopes to achieve over the course of the lesson and how he or she hopes to achieve it. Usually they are in written form but they don't have to be. New or inexperienced teachers may want to or be required to produce very detailed plans - showing clearly what is happening at any particular time in the lesson. However in a realistic teaching environment it is perhaps impractical to consider this detail in planning on a daily basis. As teachers gain experience and confidence planning is just as important but teachers develop the ability to plan more quickly and very experienced teachers may be able to go into class with just a short list of notes or even with the plan in their heads.

Many teachers will find themselves having to use a course book. There are advantages and disadvantages to having a course book - but although they do provide a ready-made structure for teaching material, it is very unlikely the material was written for the teachers' particular students. Each class is different and teachers need to be able to adapt material from whatever source so that it is suitable for their students. A course book can certainly help planning, but it cannot replace the teacher's own ideas for what he or she wants to achieve in a class.

II. THE LESSON PLANNING PROCESS

Before the actual delivery of a lesson, instructors engage in a planning process. During this process, they determine the lesson topic. From the topic, derive the lesson objective or desired results- the concepts and ideas that learners are expected to develop and the specific knowledge and skills that learners are expected to acquire and use at the end of the lesson. Objectives are critical to effective

instruction because they help instructors plan the instructional strategies and activities they will use, including the materials and resources to support learning. It is essential that the objective be clear and has to describe the intended learning outcome. Objectives can communicate to learners what is expected of them- but only if they are shared with learners in an accessible manner. Instructional objectives must be specific, outcome-based, and measurable, and they must describe learner behavior.

Learner assessment follows from the objectives. Based on the principles of backward design developed by Wiggins and Mc. Tighe (1998), instructors identify the lesson objective or desired results and then decide what they will accept as evidence of learners' knowledge and skills. The concept of backward design holds that the instructor must begin with the end in and then map backward from the desired result to the current time and the students' current ability/skill levels to determine the best way to reach the performance goal.

The relationship of the objective to the evaluation keeps the lesson focused and drives instruction. By creating the evaluation activity at the beginning of the lesson, the teacher has a clear destination for the lesson and a roadmap to get there. Instructors can then select materials and activities that will best prepare students to successfully complete the evaluation activity in the lesson. The process is repeated for each learning objective. Lesson planning is an ongoing process in which instruction flows from one objective to the next. This cyclical process is repeated for each learning objective.

To be effective, the lesson plan does not have to be an exhaustive document that describes each and every possible classroom scenario. Nor does it have to anticipate each and every student's response or question. Instead, it should provide you with a general outline of your teaching goals, learning objectives, and means to accomplish them. It is a reminder of what you want to do and how you want to do it. A productive lesson is not one in which everything goes exactly as planned, but one in which both students and instructor learn from each other.

To start, come up with an active objective. Instead of, "Today we'll discuss the causes of the Globalization," try reframing it so that the lesson seems a little more engaging. "Today we'll explore different reasons for the Globalization" may seem like a subtle change, but rather than signaling that you are going to lecture, it allows space for the students to figure it out together with you.

Once you have an active objective, it's time to plan the body of the lesson. Brunn suggests writing down open-ended questions and deciding how you will ask them and what you will do if your students don't or can't answer these questions. How will you probe their thinking? You need to continually facilitate the lesson to keep students focused.

Judy Sheldon, an instructor in methods in secondary social studies and the field supervisor for student teaching at Syracuse University, encourages teachers to create opportunities for higher-order thinking. "Find ways to let them reveal things, and put that into your plan. You might want them to interpret a map, analyze a document, and so on. Always make sure they are building their skills," Sheldon says.

Next, it's reflection time. Ask students what they learned academically and socially and what they think you could have done differently. Brunn says the answers will help you close the lesson thoughtfully. If you try to get teachers to ask a lot of open-ended questions for students to discuss, your lessons become more strategic.

It's challenging to switch from the traditional sage-on-the-stage teaching method to taking a backseat and letting lessons be a bit more ambiguous, but only if you believe strongly in making the change. "You lose a bit of control, but when the kids take charge, they retain a lot more of what they learn".

Determine the purpose of the lesson. If you have a clear expectation, so will your students. "They need to learn how to take ideas they hear and come up with new and creative ideas. Our lessons need to provide those kinds of opportunities."

Create space for student thinking and discussion and be prepared to push that student thinking further. It helps to have prompts in your plan. How will you take them to the next level? How will you reach the ones who aren't getting it? Students must have an opportunity to apply their thinking independently. This should be part of the lesson and can be whole-group, mini-group, or individual work.

Make time for reflection. This is the time when you come together with your students and summarize what worked and what didn't. By listening, you will know if you have met your goals and determine if any changes need to be made. And of course, be sure to listen to your students and encourage them to do the same for one another.

To help teachers learn how to create safe, collaborative classrooms, guide them in building communities that address

all levels of learners. Encourage teachers to think with the end in mind, asking, what are my students gaining in this learning? Will they be able to transfer it or apply it to something?

- Lesson plans help to be clear about what you want to teach. Teachers need to make wise decisions about the strategies and methods they will employ to help students move systematically toward learner goals.
- Lesson plans may also include a room for unpredictable events. This helps teachers to be ready to cope with whatever happens.
- Lesson plans give your teaching a framework, an overall shape.
- Lesson plans may also play the role of a reminder for teachers when they get distracted.
- Lesson plans suggests a level of professionalism and real commitment.

In addition to the above reasons, it is worthwhile mentioning that lesson plans will have positive impact on both the teacher and the learner. They don't have to think on their feet. They don't lose face in front of their learners. They are clear on the procedure to follow. Further they build on previous teaching and prepare for coming lessons

Planning ahead to identify a course of action that can effectively help learners reach their goals and objectives is an important first step in effective instruction. Lesson planning communicates to learners what they will learn and how their goals will be assessed, and it helps instructors organize content, materials, time, instructional strategies, and assistance in the classroom.

III. TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE LESSON PLANS

Incorporate student interests into your lessons. "People learn what they want to learn," says Melinda Schoen Feldt, a professor in the Department of Elementary Education at Ball State University. "If you discover their interests and work them into your lessons, they'll pay attention and learn more." Take your students' needs into consideration. "Your lessons must reflect the cultures of the kids; they must see themselves in the room." "When I was young, I told my mom I wanted to be a girl because my teachers read stories about girls who had adventures while boys giggled on the sidelines. Children need to see themselves in the literature, in the pictures you put on the wall, and in the examples you give." Select purposeful activities and assignments. The best activities keep kids actively engaged and involve as many senses as possible. They must also match the needs of the learners. Make your lessons relevant. Write down the reason the lesson is relevant. "You need to figure out how to link the

lesson to what is happening today. Find a way to make it timely- even if it's a bit of a reach."

Share lessons with your colleagues and Refine lessons based on feedback. Talk about ways to improve those lessons. That way, everyone benefits. Teachers should aim for continuous improvement. "Sit down and analyze the results of what happened

Expect the unexpected! Things don't always go to plan in most lessons. Experienced teachers have the ability to cope when things go wrong. It's useful when planning to build in some extra and alternative tasks and exercises. Also teachers need to be aware of what is happening in the classroom. Students may raise an interesting point and discussions could provide unexpected opportunities for language work and practice. In these cases it can be appropriate to branch away from the plan.

Engaging students is important for the learning process. Every lesson usually needs to have some kind of language focus. The study element of a lesson could be a focus on any aspect of the language, such as grammar or vocabulary and pronunciation. A study stage could also cover revision and extension of previously taught material.

Effective lesson planning is the basis of effective teaching. A plan is a guide for the teacher as to where to go and how to get there. However - don't let the plan dominate - be flexible in your planning so that when the opportunities arise you can go with the flow. I conclude that lesson planning is a creative process which provides a framework for purposeful learning.

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