

Lesson Planning

The Basics of Lesson Planning

- A goal without a plan is only a dream. If you have a goal of teaching your students something, but no concrete plan for how you're going to get there, your chances of actually achieving your goal are greatly diminished.
- When planning a lesson, don't simply ask yourself, "What will we do tomorrow?" That question leads to activity-based learning (for example, "we'll read from our readers" or "we'll complete a worksheet"). Instead, ask yourself, "What will my students learn?" This focuses on teaching a concrete body of information or a new skill.
- Lessons should begin with some sort of "hook" to draw the students into the lesson and ignite their interest. It may be a short demonstration, question, joke or funny anecdote, interesting fact, object or prop that relates to the lesson, etc.
- Many taught lessons naturally follow a pattern of direct instruction (you as the teacher presenting information or teaching a skill), guided instruction (giving the students an opportunity to work with that information or skill in a structured and supported way), and independent practice (allowing each student to work with the new concept on their own). Another way of framing this is thinking in terms of "I do, we do, you do."

Objectives

- Making objectives is very important in lesson planning. An objective is a written statement of what the students will learn as a result of your teaching.
- Objectives can be written in terms of "The student will be able to . . ."
- Bloom's Taxonomy is a helpful tool in writing objectives. It provides a framework of six cognitive processes, listed in order from lower order thinking skills to higher order thinking skills: remember, understand, apply, analyze, evaluate, create. In each of the six categories, there are suggested verbs you can use in your objectives to most accurately describe what you want your students to be able to do by the end of the lesson.
 - The following resource may be helpful in using Bloom's Taxonomy: [Bloom Writing Objectives - The Dock for Learning](#)
- Lesson objectives must begin with the end in mind. Before you can plan an effective lesson, you need to think about where you're planning to go. Know exactly what you are trying to teach your students and what you're going to do to get there.
- Objectives keep you from generating a lot of activity without a purpose. Instead of just doing things and hoping that some of them will be productive, planning your objectives allows you to focus your energy in a specific direction.
- Follow the three M's of objectives (borrowed from Doug Lemov):
 - Manageable: the objective should be written in a way that it can be achieved in one day's lesson.

- Measurable: the objective should be written in a way that your students' success can be determined. At the end of the lesson, can you tell whether the objective has been met?
- Made first: the objective should be determined before you decide how you're going to reach that objective. You should know *what* you want to teach before you decide what activity or assignment you're going to use to teach it.
- Textbook publishers often provide their own objectives, but you may need to adapt those to fit your classroom and students.

Assessments

- Another component of lesson planning is knowing how you will assess whether or not you have met your objectives.
 - Assessments may come in the form of written assignments, group work, worksheets, etc. An assessment is any way that you can check for student understanding.
 - Objectives ask "What will the student know?" Assessments ask, "How will I know whether or not they know it?"

Other Advice

- Whenever possible, try to connect new knowledge to students' previous knowledge. This builds a scaffolding of learning that makes learning new information more intuitive and leads to better retention.
- Whenever possible, avoid planning each day's lesson in isolation the day before you teach it. If you can think in longer sections of what you're attempting to teach, it will enable you to build lessons off each other and connect to previous learning in ways that will strengthen your teaching and greatly aid your students' understanding.

Sources

- [The 4 M's of Effective Objectives: Common Mistakes and How to Avoid Them - The Dock for Learning](#)
- [Bloom's Taxonomy, Revised - The Dock for Learning](#)
- [What Do Teachers Do? Focusing Your Lessons with Objectives - The Dock for Learning](#)
- [Daily Lesson Plans - The Dock for Learning](#)