

Lesson Planning  
in the  
Elementary  
Classroom

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# Introduction

- Lesson planning and student teaching
- Types of lesson planning
- Perspectives on lesson planning
- Importance
- Strategies and methods
- Pitfalls and recommendations

# Types of Lesson Planning

- Yearly, term, unit, weekly and daily
- Similarities
  - Goals, sources of information, forms or outlines, criteria
- Differences
  - Yearly and term planning is framed around state or district recommendations or curriculum guides
  - Unit, weekly and daily planning permits a wider latitude for teachers to develop their own plans

# Perspectives on Lesson Planning

- Rational-Linear Model:
  - Focus on goals and objectives as the first step.
  - Then select strategies to accomplish goals.
- Nonlinear Model:
  - Start with actions that produce outcomes and summarize and explain their actions by assigning goals.

# Perspectives on Lesson Planning

- Detailed outlines vs. sketchy outlines
  - Less experienced vs. more experienced
- Mental Planning:
  - The reflective thought prior to the actual writing of long term or daily plans
  - Done along-side more formal planning
  - Helps teachers imagine lessons before they teach them

# Importance of Lesson Planning

- Lesson planning improves results
- Research favors instructional planning over undirected events and activities
- Provides a sense of direction
  - "Focusing effect"
- Fewer discipline problems and interruptions
- Important to also be flexible with plans and sensitive to student needs

# Steps and Strategies for Lesson Planning

- There is no one ideal format!!
- Modify suggestions to coincide with personal teaching style and suggestions of school and district

# Steps and Strategies Cont.

- Begin by thinking about what to teach
  - Curriculum content and skills
  - Guides and frameworks play a significant role
  - Standards
- Essential questions and enduring understandings
  - Questions that reflect the big ideas in any subject
  - What is important to know and do and what is worth being familiar with?



# Strategies and Steps Cont.

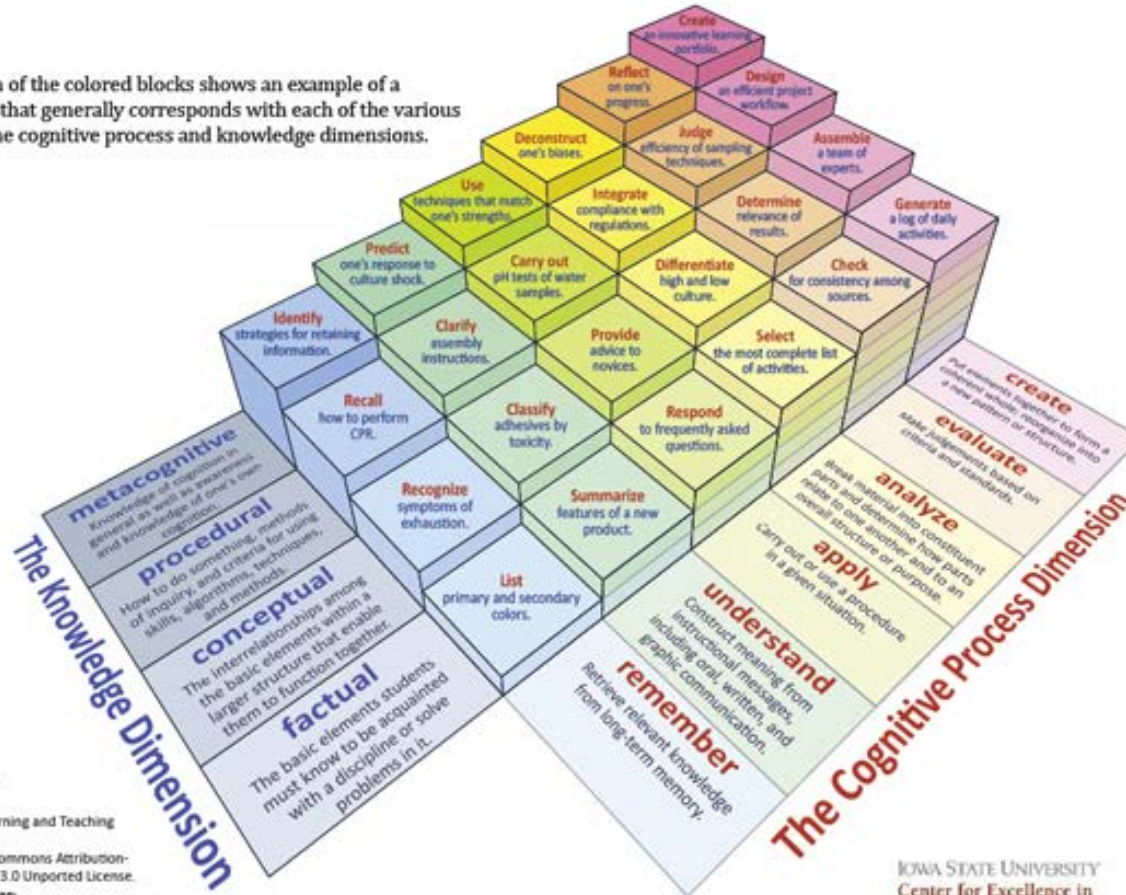
- Objectives
  - Similar to road maps
  - What they want students to learn
  - Backbone to a lesson
  - Need to be shared with students
- Mager Format of Behavioral Objectives
  - Three part format
  - Student behavior, testing situation, performance criteria
  - Precise language that is not open to interpretation

# Strategies and Steps Cont.

- Objectives can be written in more general terms
  - Are open to a wide range of interpretations
  - May more clearly communicate the educational intents of many teachers
- Bloom's Taxonomy
  - Create objective using a verb and a noun
  - Verb: Cognitive process
  - Noun: Knowledge that students will be expected to acquire
  - Two dimensions: Knowledge and cognitive process

# Bloom's Taxonomy

In this model, each of the colored blocks shows an example of a learning objective that generally corresponds with each of the various combinations of the cognitive process and knowledge dimensions.



Model created by: Rex Heer  
 Iowa State University  
 Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching  
 Updated January, 2012  
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 For additional resources, see  
[www.celt.iastate.edu/teaching/RevisedBloomsL.html](http://www.celt.iastate.edu/teaching/RevisedBloomsL.html)

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 Learning and Teaching

# Steps and Strategies Cont.

- After objectives have been developed, lessons and activities can be planned
- Instruction is organized into units and weeks and then into daily plans
- Unit plans
  - Link together a variety of goals, content and activities
  - Determines overall flow for a series of lessons over several days, weeks or perhaps months
  - Often detailed

# Steps and Strategies Cont.

- Unit plans are then broken down into daily plans
- Daily plans
  - Outline what content is to be taught, motivational techniques to be used, specific steps and activities for students, needed materials and evaluations processes
  - Novice teachers need detailed daily plans
  - As teachers gain experience their plans become less detailed

# Pitfalls in Lesson Planning

- There are several pitfalls that novice teachers make
- These examples were taken from a study done by Karrie A. Jones, Jennifer Jones and Paul J. Vermette
- The study was done in 2010

# Pitfall #1

- Having unclear learning objectives
  - Spend too much time on a useless set of inert facts
  - Try to cover everything
  - Teachers feel overwhelmed
  - Cover information poorly
  - Students feel frustrated and confused

# Solution

- Use learning targets
  - Provide a powerful way for teachers to provide their students with a clear understanding of the lesson objectives
- Frame learning targets using “I can . . . ” statements
- Share with students and display in a place where students can see them
- Allow students and teachers to be better prepared to focus their efforts



## Pitfall #2

- Students do not understand the assessment or the assessment is completed outside of class
  - Novice teachers may skip summative assessments
  - May use homework as an assessment tool
  - May use discussion as their sole means of assessment

# Solution

- Use authentic assessments as part of the instructional process.
  - These require students to create a tangible product of what they have learned
  - Assessment becomes an active and visible process that helps students link the material that they have learned to the intended learning objectives
  - Natural and powerful part of the learning process

## Pitfall #3

- Assessment does not match the learning objective
  - Included activities that did not enhance or relate to students understanding of the larger concepts

# Solution

- Can also be avoided through the use of learning targets
- Well defined targets of intended outcomes allow teachers to develop assessments that reflect what they teach and define what they expect students to learn
- Begin lesson planning with a clearly defined statement of what students will be able to do at the end of the lesson

## Pitfall #4

- Being unsure how to start the lesson
- Attempt to introduce the lesson with an anticipatory set
- Instead begin lesson with brief activities with little or no meaningful student engagement
- Leaves students and teachers unfocused
- Does not impact student motivation or prepare students for learning task

# Solution

- Shift focus from a simple, several minute activity to an extended anticipatory set call the exploratory phase
- Grabs student attention, elicits prior knowledge, helps students generate basic understandings needed during the lesson
- Involves several activities instead of a simple and quick activity
- Allows students to explore new ideas and be better prepared to assimilate new concepts

## Pitfall #5

- Students are passive recipients of knowledge
  - Students are seen as a passive audience
- Teachers use PowerPoint presentations and lectures
  - Students are expected to sit quietly and listen
- Lessons are not engaging and do not give students the opportunity to apply new knowledge

# Solution

- Intentionally discuss the lesson planning and delivery decisions being made
- Allows for reflection
- Gives opportunity to change how teachers view effective instruction
- Allows teachers to become more effective educators



# References

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