



# Session I: Planning Instruction

## **OBJECTIVES:**

Staff will be able to plan meaningful instruction by understanding their students' development, by applying their knowledge of content, and by crafting valid objectives and assessments to inform instruction.

## **QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER**

- Why is it important to understand students' development? How will this help in the planning of instruction?
- In what ways can you enlarge your knowledge of your content area? What are some resources for the new teacher?
- What is a learning objective? What are some guidelines for writing learning objectives?
- How are assessments tied to learning objectives?

## **OVERVIEW**

### **KNOWLEDGE OF STUDENTS' DEVELOPMENT**

Understanding students' physical, social, emotional, moral and cognitive development and how these factors influence learning will help teachers create developmentally appropriate learning opportunities for their students.

#### Ages 2-7

According to Piaget, children between the ages of 2-7 are in the preoperational stage of learning. At this time, they learn best when they can associate new learning with something already familiar to them. That is why it is important to tie new learning to children's previous knowledge, and to create hands-on learning experiences.

Some guidelines for this age group:

- Create learning experiences that children can relate to by using their previous knowledge or experience.
- Include new vocabulary, but use pictorial or graphic representations so children can understand and learn the new vocabulary. This is especially important for second-language learners.
- Use songs, games, and repetition to improve vocabulary and to appeal to different types of learners.
- Develop activities to help children classify information.
- Plan hands-on activities for which children have to use many of their senses: touch, sight, smell, taste, hearing, etc.
- Be aware that children's gross and fine motor skills develop at different rates.

### Ages 7-11

At this age, children are actively reacting to their environment. Their reasoning may be limited to concrete objects or events, especially their own experiences. As they get older, they begin to use inductive and deductive logic and to hypothesize, all the while using what they know as a base. As with all age groups, it is important to tie learning to your students' previous knowledge and experience.

Some guidelines for this age group:

- Create learning experiences that children can relate to by using their previous knowledge or experience.
- Help your students develop critical thinking skills by linking what they are learning to real-world situations.
- Include hands-on learning experiences in your instruction.
- Plan instruction where students can discover differences and similarities, which is an important classification skill.
- Encourage social development by planning collaborative activities for your students.

### Adolescence

Students in middle school are better able to process information, as their memory is better and they have a wider knowledge base. They also think more abstractly, so their higher-level thinking skills are more developed. At this age, students can compare, synthesize and analyze information. This is not true for all students, as all children develop at different rates. At this stage, most students are introspective and keenly aware of where they stand with their peers.

Some guidelines for this age group:

- Create learning experiences that children can relate to by using their previous knowledge or experience.
- Although many of your students will think more abstractly at this age, plan activities for those students who still think concretely.
- Use cooperative grouping so children can develop positive relationships with their peers. Plan your groups carefully so all children feel comfortable in them.
- Use interdisciplinary units to help students make correlations and to develop higher-level thinking skills.
- Develop lessons where students can solve problems and make decisions.
- Structure your lessons so that students can relate to the theme, topic or skill you are teaching.

Though students differ at various ages, there are still some guidelines that apply to effective instruction. Your instruction should be authentic and relevant to students, build on their prior knowledge, engage students, and help them develop problem-solving skills. Instruction should also appeal to a variety of learning styles, and take into account that not all students may speak English. Include in your planning activities that are culturally sensitive to the diversity in your classroom.

## **KNOWLEDGE OF CONTENT**

Knowing your content will make planning your lessons easier. But there are situations when teachers need to research a topic further. In this case, it is important to use appropriate resources, such as the internet, books, magazines, etc. Other teachers who have taught the content before are probably the best resource for new teachers. Grade-level teams or subject-matter teams are also an important source of information for new teachers.

In addition to knowing content, the beginning teacher must become familiar with national professional **standards**, as well as state and local standards. These standards define what a child should know and be able to do at certain grade levels. A teacher also needs to be familiar with **performance standards**, which define how well a student must learn the content standards.

Most schools have **curriculum guides** that are tied to state standards, as well as to the community's values. These guides can provide an important framework for the beginning teacher. They may provide a time frame for different learning goals, list assessments, and include recommended materials. New teachers can rely on these guides, along with the advice of fellow teachers or mentors, to create a roadmap of their students' learning for the year.

It is up to you to research information you don't know, and to adapt the curriculum to the different learning styles of your students. This may take time and experience, so don't be afraid to ask for help if you need it!

## **CRAFTING VALID OBJECTIVES AND ASSESSMENTS**

Creating valid objectives starts with the broad standards. From there, teachers can correlate these standards with the school district's curriculum guide, which typically will include a scope and sequence chart. Scope and sequence charts advise the new teacher as to what and when to teach the material. Grade level objectives define what specific knowledge students will obtain, and the behaviors they must exhibit to show they've gained the knowledge. Through assessment, a teacher can determine if students have met the learning objectives.

**A learning objective** defines what a teacher expects students to accomplish. In simple terms, a learning objective defines what the teacher will teach, and what the student will be learning. Your learning objectives should be tied to a specific student outcome, or performance, as well to your assessments. An example from the 5<sup>th</sup>-grade math lesson in the video would be: *Students will be able to apply their knowledge of fractions by putting the fractions in order.* This states specifically what the students were able to do. In this case, the teacher informally assessed the students by going around the class and by checking the whiteboards.

In writing your objectives, focus on the key aspects of the lesson. It is useful to use **Bloom's taxonomy of learning** when writing objectives. Bloom divided learning into six parts: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Bloom provided a list of verbs for each category which demonstrates that the students have accomplished the objective. These performance outcomes, or what you expect the student to do, set the criteria for assessment of your objective, and also inform your instruction. Students can also help write their own learning goals. This helps them focus their learning.

In the lesson where the 3<sup>rd</sup>-grade teacher was using the Venn diagram to compare French and American schools, her objective might have read: *“Students will compare the similarities and differences between a French school and an American school.”*

**Assessment of student performance** is closely tied to your learning objectives. Your assessments should reflect the student performance outcomes you have set. Assessments should answer the question: Have students demonstrated through a specific outcome that they have met the learning objective? *In the example above, the students were going to write a paragraph about qualities typical to a French school, a paragraph about qualities typical to an American school, and a paragraph about the similarities. The Venn diagram was their roadmap.*

Here are some questions to ask yourself as you write objectives, or as you reflect back on your lesson:

- Have you used your curriculum guide to help you?
- What exactly are the students expected to do?
- What are the criteria for acceptable student performance?
- Were most students able to meet the performance outcomes you set?
- Was your assessment related to your performance criteria?



## **SESSION I:** Planning Instruction Discussion/Activity

Divide into small groups, either by grade level or by subject matter. Your objective is to write a specific learning objective for your students that identifies observable student behavior. Also describe what assessment you will use to evaluate your student's performance. Before you write the objective, discuss with your group your students' developmental stages, as well as your state or district standards. Compare your responses with the other groups when you are finished. Use some of the verbs from Bloom's taxonomy provided below:

**Knowledge:** identify, list, match, memorize, name, spell

**Comprehension:** describe, summarize, explain, sort, rewrite

**Application:** demonstrate, draw, give an example, show, solve, apply

**Analysis:** analyze, differentiate, debate, compare, classify

**Synthesis:** create, predict, write, plan, invent, construct

**Evaluation:** choose, compare, decide, evaluate, judge, select

### **OBJECTIVE:**

LIST ASPECTS OF STUDENTS' DEVELOPMENTAL STAGE THAT COULD AFFECT YOUR OBJECTIVE:

WHAT CURRICULAR GOAL IS YOUR OBJECTIVE TIED TO?

WHAT BEHAVIOR DO YOU EXPECT STUDENTS TO PERFORM?

HOW WILL YOU ASSESS THIS BEHAVIOR?

## **TEST FOR SESSION I: PLANNING INSTRUCTION**

1. Why is it important to understand your students' development?
2. Give a few examples of some guidelines for creating developmentally appropriate learning opportunities for students ages 2-7:
3. Give a few examples of some guidelines for creating developmentally appropriate learning opportunities for students ages 7-11:
4. Give a few examples of some guidelines for creating developmentally appropriate learning opportunities for adolescents:
5. List 3 resources for the new teacher to broaden his/her content knowledge:
6. Describe the purpose of a learning objective:
7. List some guidelines for writing an effective learning objective:

# STANDARDS CORRELATIONS

Objectives for Session I: Planning Instruction	INTASC STANDARDS	ACEI/NCATE STANDARDS	NBPTS STANDARDS
<p><b>Understand students' development</b></p>	<p><b>Principle 2-Child development and learning theory</b>-The teacher understands how children learn and develop and can provide learning opportunities that support their intellectual, social and personal development.</p>	<p><b>Standard 1-Development, learning and motivation</b>-Candidates know, understand and use the major concepts, principles, theories and research related to development of children and young adolescents to construct learning opportunities that support individual and students' development, acquisition of knowledge and motivation.</p> <p><b>Standard 3.2-Adaptation to diverse students</b>- Candidates understand how elementary students differ in their development and approaches to learning, and create instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse students.</p>	<p><b>Standard 1-Knowledge of students</b>- Accomplished teachers draw on their knowledge of child development and their relationships with students to understand their students' abilities, interests, aspirations, and values.</p>
<p><b>Develop understanding of content</b></p>	<p><b>Principle 1-Making content meaningful</b>-The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry and structures of the discipline(s) he/she teaches and can create learning experiences that make these aspects of subject matter meaningful for students.</p>	<p><b>Standard 2-Central concepts, tools of inquiry and structures of content</b>-Candidates know the central concepts, tools of inquiry and structures of content across the grades and can create meaningful learning experiences that develop students' competence in subject matter and skills for various developmental levels.</p>	<p><b>Standard 2-Knowledge of content and curriculum</b>-Accomplished teachers draw on their knowledge of subject matter and curriculum to make sound decisions about what is important for students to learn within and across the subject areas that comprise the curriculum.</p>
<p><b>Craft valid objectives and assessments to inform instruction</b></p>	<p><b>Principle 7-Planning for instruction</b>-The teacher plans instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, students, the community and curriculum goals.</p> <p><b>Principle 8-Assessment</b> - The teacher understands and uses formal and informal assessment strategies to evaluate and ensure the continuous intellectual, social and physical development of the learner.</p>	<p><b>Standard 3.1-Integrating and applying knowledge for instruction</b>-Candidates plan instruction based on knowledge of students, learning theory, subject matter, curricular goals and community.</p>	<p><b>Standard 5-Instructional resources</b>-Accomplished teachers create, assess, select and adapt a rich and varied collection of materials and draw on other resources such as staff, community members and students to support learning.</p>

# **ANSWER KEY FOR TEST FOR SESSION I: PLANNING INSTRUCTION**

(Answers will vary)

## **1. Why is it important to understand your students' development?**

Understanding students' physical, social, emotional, moral and cognitive development and how these factors influence learning will help you create developmentally appropriate learning opportunities for your students.

## **2. Give a few examples of some guidelines for creating developmentally appropriate learning opportunities for students ages 2-7:**

- Incorporate students' previous knowledge or experiences.
- Use pictorial or graphic representations so children can understand and learn new vocabulary.
- Plan hands-on activities where children can use all their senses.
- Be aware that children's fine and gross motor skills develop at different rates.
- Help children develop cognitively by planning classifying activities.

## **3. Give a few examples of some guidelines for creating developmentally appropriate learning opportunities for students ages 7-11:**

- Incorporate students' previous knowledge or experiences.
- Link what students are learning to real-world situations.
- Plan activities to develop higher-level thinking skills, such as classification, making comparisons, etc.
- Include hands-on learning opportunities.
- Encourage social development by planning collaborative activities.

## **4. Give a few examples of some guidelines for creating developmentally appropriate learning opportunities for adolescents:**

- Incorporate students' previous knowledge or experiences.
- Create learning opportunities that students can relate to their personal lives.
- Use cooperative grouping to develop social skills.
- Plan interdisciplinary units and problem-solving activities to help students make correlations and to develop higher-level thinking skills.

## **5. List 3 resources for the new teacher to enlarge their content knowledge:**

1. curriculum guide;
2. other teachers;
3. books, internet, magazines, etc.

## **6. Describe the purpose of a learning objective:**

A learning objective defines what a teacher expects students to accomplish. It defines what the teacher will teach, and what the student will learn.

## **7. List some guidelines for writing an effective learning objective:**

- Focus on the key aspects of the lesson.
- Use Bloom's taxonomy of learning, and pick appropriate verbs for each category.
- Define what you expect the student to do in terms of performance outcomes.
- Set the criteria for assessment of your objective.

## RESOURCES

American Federation of Teachers  
<http://aft.org/>

Association for Childhood Education International  
<http://www.acei.org/>

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development  
<http://www.ascd.org/>

ERIC (Education Resource Information Center)  
<http://www.eric.ed.gov/>

International Reading Association  
<http://www.reading.org/>

Interstate New Teachers Assessment and Support Consortium  
<http://www.ccsso.org/>

National Association for the Education of Young Children  
<http://www.naeyc.org>

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards  
<http://www.nbpts.org/>

National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing  
<http://www.cresst.org/>

National Central Regional Educational Laboratory  
<http://ncrel.org/>

National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education  
<http://www.ncpie.org/>

National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education  
<http://www.ncate.org/>

National Education Association  
<http://www.nea.org/>

National Parent Teacher Organization  
<http://www.pta.org/>

Teachers.Net  
<http://www.teachers.net/>

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