



POLAR Preparation for Teaching

Planning, Organizing, Learning, Assessing learning, Reflecting and developing

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Planning

Planning is a crucial element in successful teaching. Thinking ahead about the content that will be taught is important, but once that is determined, the next most important element to consider is what specific learning outcomes are being expected from the learners. Knowing what the learning outcomes should be will help directly inform how a lesson can be taught.

1. Determine the scope of the content. How much information should be covered in each lesson.
2. Generate an essential question for the unit. Determine goals and levels of understanding expected of the students.
3. Determine what type of activities would best promote the learning of the material in the time and space available. Plan the lesson to meet a variety of learning styles: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic (doing).
4. Think about how the room arrangement will enhance the learning.
5. Design an instrument to use for assessing the level of students' learning. Bear in mind higher level thinking skills than just recall.
6. Have a backup plan in case the initial plan doesn't accomplish the goal.

Organizing

1. Prepare a lesson plan that clearly outlines the goals, steps and materials needed for the lesson.
2. Survey the setting where the lesson will be taught to determine the best arrangement for furniture and where the center of attention will be.
3. Gather all the materials needed before the lesson is to be taught.
4. Prepare all technical equipment needed including knowing how to use them.
5. Conduct a mock presentation to determine time needed for each step.
6. Prepare an evaluation form for students to give feedback. This will help with the reflections later on.

(over)

Leading

1. Introduce the lesson to the students and help them see relevance to their lives.
2. Follow lesson plan to teach the lesson, unless an opportunity arises to improve the value of the lesson – even if it means departing from the lesson plan.
3. Encourage interaction with students and among students if that will further the learning experience.
4. Model strategies for students to use if needed.
5. Check with students to be sure clear communication has been established.
6. Be encouraging.

Assessing Learning

1. Journal student behaviors during lesson if possible, and/or right after the lesson.
2. Read students' evaluation forms to help determine effectiveness of lesson. Look for feedback that indicates concepts that were not clearly communicated.
3. Review or grade the work turned in by the students and give encouraging comments in areas that need strengthening and affirming remarks in areas that show good effort. Bear in mind any feedback from the students indicating concepts that were not clearly communicated and try to bring clarity through specific comments.
4. Evaluate assessment instrument (what the students turned in) to determine students' mastery of the lesson as a whole. Make notes of areas that could be improved.
5. Notice basic recall skills and look for higher-level thinking skills that are evidenced.

Reflecting and Developing

1. Make notes on the planning sheet of things that could have been done better.
2. Make notes from student evaluation forms.
3. Look over the assessment tools that were turned in to see patterns of strong understanding or weak understanding and make notes of ways to present that material better the next time.
4. While the lesson is fresh in memory, brainstorm follow up activities that could reinforce the learning.