



## A really **COOL** framework for helping kids teach better

**Settings:** Same-age peer teaching (group-work, collaborative/cooperative learning tasks, informal tasks such as learning stations, group projects, etc.); cross-age peer teaching (after-school tutoring, summer camp, coaching in sports, etc.)

### Things to remember:

**A**ssessment of kids' teaching can be meaningful. Such techniques as rubric-supported observation on a simple framework, understandable to students, can reveal specific areas of strength and opportunity.

**R**eflections of your teaching appear in kids. People generally teach as they were taught and *selectively* imitate their teachers' instructional behaviors. Training and successful experience offer effective alternatives. Therefore, periodically discuss good teaching techniques with students and give the techniques professional labels.

**C**ollaborative/cooperative learning, group- and pair-work provide the most powerful support for the development of teaching skills. Group-learning skills can be distinguished from teaching skills. It is assumed that teachers will strengthen students' group-learning skills in addition to their teaching skills.

**T**eaching skills are good for all students because teaching something aids learning. Students headed for teacher certification programs in college will have pedagogical content in addition to POLAR+.

**I**ndividuals differ in the ways they interact with others, solve teaching problems, and create learning in real situations. Therefore, teaching is personal, especially in kids. **This is the "+" in POLAR+.**

**C**reativity is key. Teaching is a creative act, and students can show their creativity through teaching as well as in other ways.

**Content:** The POLAR sequence on the next page provides a simple way to help novice teachers improve their effectiveness. Novice teachers tend to view their instructional experience holistically, and most need a simple framework to help them improve. By focusing on one aspect of a teaching sequence at a time, mentors can empower novice teachers, in turn, to focus their efforts to improve the next teaching episode by scaffolding the skills that successful teachers use.

**Teaching sequence (basic skills required in each teaching event; teachable)**

**P** = plan lesson or presentation; decide on content, behavioral goals, and means of assessing learning.

**O** = organize and prepare the lesson for presentation; make lesson plan or outline, gather and prepare materials, practice for modeling of skills.

**L** = lead the instruction; teach the class, small group, or another student

**A** = assess learning or achievement (both formative and summative)

**R** = reflect on POLA; develop ideas for improving next teaching episode

**Teaching ecology (varying levels of teacher control, effect predictability, and potential for improvement)**

**B** = behavior management/goals; extent of unity of purpose

**E** = environment (physical setting) of the classroom or other learning space

**A** = age of learners; physical/cognitive/moral stage of development

**R** = relationships among peers and with teacher; "group spirit"

**Institutional influences (Subject matter/content, curriculum, and program are responses to the need for purpose, direction, and frameworks for teaching.)**

