

The Center for Teaching and Learning

Teaching Matters

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Lesson Plans: The Foundation of a Course in the Age of Accountability

Have you ever made plans on a Thursday for the weekend? If so, then you must have deemed an event important. If the goal of a person's weekend is to attend a favorite music concert, then attending this event gives that person a direction of where their weekend is heading. However, what steps will an individual take in order to arrive at the music concert? The person can develop certain objectives, which will allow the person to meet the goal of

attending the music concert. Several general objectives can determine if success occurs: (1) ask someone to go (if applicable), (2) buy the ticket(s), (3) make reservations for dinner, (4) obtain directions to concert and restaurant (5) show up at the dinner, and (6) arrive at the concert hall. If the person is sitting in the concert and tells about it on Monday, then this person met the goal and probably had an enjoyable weekend. The importance of goals and objectives in weekend planning is to alleviate the feeling a person gets on Sunday night that they should have followed through on their plans. I do not discount spontaneity, and in education, instructors refer to these moments as teachable moments.

I tried to show that some planning can make a weekend more enjoyable, but if plans do not work out, individuals are accountable to themselves. However, in the classroom, where **accountability** is a priority, planning becomes even more important. Developing effective lesson plans allow instructors to organize the substance of the class, which provides evidence that the instructor engaged the students in the educational process. Thus, lesson plans become part of the accountability measures of the institution.

Lesson plans are the blueprints of a classroom. They are sometimes tedious,

but if an instructor learns the formula to develop them in an effective manner, lesson plans become very simple to complete. The main component of a lesson plan is to be able to distinguish between a goal and instructional (behavioral) objective. These two items are necessary and complementary but they establish the foundation of any course or program. A goal is a non-measurable direction that an instructor wants students to understand. For example, a goal for a psychology course is for students (learners) to understand the influence of behaviorism in the history of psychology. This goal represents what the instructor desires the students to understand. However, how is the instructor going to ensure the students can reach this goal? Therefore, instructional objectives are necessary.

Instructional objectives reflect behaviors, so they employ action verbs. These objectives should focus on student behaviors and not necessarily on instructor behaviors. The following statement is the driving force for developing objectives: **What do you want the students to know and be able to do with the information?** This axiom allows instructors to determine what content is important and to determine effective strategies that will engage students in the application of the information. In short, curriculum is what an instructor will teach the students and instruction is how the instructor will teach the students.

Instructional objectives could reflect a three-part objective: Given X, the learner will be able to do Y, as measured by Z. For example, given the psychology textbook and vocabulary list, the student will be able to apply the words, as

measured by earning a 70% or higher on a short essay. However, shorter objectives should be written in the standard formula: **Students will be able to do X.** This shorter objective provides just enough information that an external observer can identify what the students are going to do in class.

This type of objective is very detailed and **measurable**. Instructional objectives use **action verbs**, which are unambiguous words that permit instructors to observe what the students are doing in class. An ambiguous word is the word “understand.” Humans cannot observe another human “understanding” the material without the use of some technology. The goal section should incorporate the word “understand” because this section is non-measurable and goals provide the general idea of what the instructor wants students to obtain from the course. Thus, objectives use action verbs, which are identifiable; however, action verbs can reflect either low-ordered or high-ordered tasks.

Low-ordered action verbs permit students to engage in a basic demonstration of knowledge, such as knowing, defining, describing, identifying, or explaining information. This low-level basis of knowledge is important because it serves as the foundation to complex knowledge. Complex knowledge allows students to engage in comparing and contrasting, evaluating, judging, planning, and using information. The action verbs themselves change the behavior of the student. A student who is defining the words will think differently if the instructor now asks the students to use

the words in a story or if asked to compare and contrast two concepts.

The students must first be able to know the information. Once instructors build upon student prior knowledge through the SQ3R and KWL methods, then instructors can further build upon this prior knowledge by exposing students to the information, through activities, such as note taking, reading, and vocabulary exercises or discussions. These students are then ready to apply this new information to high-ordered activities. In short, this method is known as the “define and apply” approach.

Measurable objectives also begin the process of instructional design. Objectives allow instructors to determine the most significant behaviors that students should demonstrate after the students leave their class. Thus, the program or class must contain meaningful assignments and assessments that follow from the objectives. At the end of the program, evaluations on instructional effectiveness as measured by passage rates, projects, or other assignment grades could determine if the objectives should be modified or remain the same. This systematic approach to instruction introduces a feedback loop that allows instructors to improve their craft in the classroom.

In sum, as modern colleges exist during the age of accountability, instructors must be sure that they have demonstrated effective teaching. Lesson plans that incorporate observable action verbs and collaborative activities that allow students to apply the information provide evidence of effective planning. Planning allows the structure of the class or program to produce students who are

prepared to perform in the work community. An effective way to determine the success of the program is through a feedback assessment. The results of this assessment allow instructors to modify their approach and make improvements. Thus, the entire instructional process starts with lesson plans.

Excellence in Teaching Articles

Strategies to Involve General Education Faculty to Affect Student Success in Core Classes

By

Jill Cline, OT

Is it high school, with the books, studying, test, reading, writing and arithmetic? General education classes are about gaining the fundamentals needed to be successful not only in future core classes, but also as a well rounded professional. However, as with high school most students find very little value in the education these are providing. It is not difficult for students to see the value in the core classes considering the students are gaining the necessary skills to be successful in the field of their choice. With general education classes, most students’ attitudes reflect the high school sentiment of “When will I ever use this information again in my life?” The real question asks, is that a valid question? It is absolutely a valid question as long as the student maintains that attitude (Astin, 1985).

If general education classes meant nothing to students potential for success in the core classes then the only way a

student would suffer from this folly would be a loss of a well-rounded education. However, the information offered by the general education instructors is extremely valuable to the student's future education (Moore, 2005). Therefore, the first step in eradicating the high school mentality is to show the student the value of these classes. Thus, would it be important for the general education instructors to lead the calling to show the value of there class? Absolutely not. The general education instructors are very knowledgeable of the subjects they teach, but cannot be educated on how there subject can aid the students in all the core programs. The education of the students as to the value of general education classes must start with the core instructors. Every core instructor has the unique advantage of knowing the information being taught in the general education classes as a requirement for their own education. The rare teacher would have taken every core program offered by their campus. This means that if every instructor took the opportunity to evaluate the value of the general education classes towards their specific programs, as well as how it relates to the future jobs, it would then provide an invaluable resource for the teachers to make available real world examples in teaching. The students would relate to this leading to value the students are looking for and diminish the high school mentality (Johnston, 1991).

Getting rid of the high school attitude would be a major benefit to the general education teachers, but realistically the core instructors would have no interest in the additional work needed to provide this information if this was no benefit to them. So it's important to evaluate the

benefits of the general education classes to the core instructors. The only people that can make that type of assessment are the instructors themselves (Gabelnick, et al, 1990). However, a limited assessment of the occupation therapy assistant (OTA) program may give a good example of how this could work.

Gen Ed Class	OTA Related Benefit
English	Using proper grammar, spacing, and punctuation in notes, use of proper format (MLA, APA) for in-service presentations
Algebra	Understand how to measure for joint range of motion with negative numbers
Biology /Advanced Biology	Understanding how the body functions, the chemical composition of cells, and how the body uses the chemicals to function.
Speech	Writing in-service presentations, and how to present in front of a group of peers.
Intro to Psychology	Human brain functions and general understanding of human behavior.
Literature	Reading information and being able to obtain the meaning from what is read and summarizing the key points.
Intro to Computers	How to prepare a power point, use spread sheet, and basic usage of computers.
These are singular examples related to the OTA program only. Each Gen Ed class would have multiple beneficial aspects that would need to be relayed to teachers.	

All of this work would mean nothing to anyone if the students do not buy into the benefit of this program. It would be important for the program directors (or assigned faculty) to take the opportunity to develop a plan to express the goals of

the unified general education/ core programs. This would insure that the student is looking and paying attention to the crucial topics in their future classes. This could be done at the time the student enters the college and is assigned a core program. The general education teachers could help to facilitate this type of learning by having a working knowledge of what is important to the core classes that was provided by the core instructors.

The reverse to this would also be true. If the instructors have a working knowledge of the kind of things being taught to the students, then they can skip some of the rudimentary things and concentrate on the core subjects.

“When will I ever use this information again in my life?” The answer in this situation could be, “you will be using it in this class or these reasons, and in your job to relate to this particular situation.” What a wonderful gift to give to the students, teachers, and core instructors. All this could happen by taking the time to first develop a comprehensive list of fundamentals for the core classes. Have the core and general education instructor’s work together to implement these fundamentals into the classes. Introduce these fundamentals to the students as they enter into the college so they can be aware of what to look for as they take each class. Lastly it is imperative for the core instructors to utilize the well-rounded education in their core classes. If the teachers are going to the effort of helping some of the student in general education classes it would allow the teachers to be able to group students into their majors to emphasize the importance of their class (Boyer & Levine 1081). Collaborative

activities based on core programs or a countless number of other activities would be available to the general education teachers (Austin, 1992).

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Successful Strategies in Developing Professionalism in Our Students

By

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The modern college students represent a diverse and complex group of individuals.

There are students who come directly from high school, while others come back to school to finish their academic career, and another group of students has students in college or high school. Yet there are other students who have decided a career change and need further education. With so many different individual students in a class, how do you teach professionalism so that **ALL** of your students *grasp* your knowledge through lectures and assignments?

First, I will define what I think Professionalism means. Professionalism is a **verb**, which every person acts out in a unique manner. It is an individual's sense of instinct and motivation while navigating through life. So how do we as instructors reach our students and teach them how to navigate through life? I would like to simplify this point and put it into a perspective we can all relate to: course numbers and the objectives of each course.

Professionalism 101 starts in the earliest stages of life. The classroom is your home; the instructor is part of your family. This is where we learn morals and we become introduced to ethics. We learn the basics. We learn right from wrong. We learn that every choice that we make has a consequence: good or bad. Cause and effect is the basic

concept that lays the foundation of professionalism.

Professionalism 201 moves us out into society and we learn how to use the earlier lessons from home amongst others. We learn how to show respect to authority figures other than our parents and family, such as teachers and police officers. As we ascend through K-12, we might discover some special talents. Our time in school also allows us time to develop friendships. The subjects that we excel in and the extra-curricular activities that we choose help us to develop our individuality.

Professionalism 301 is the start of real-life responsibilities. Regardless if a person chooses going to college, having a family or going to work after high school, we realize that the previous courses were practice for the *real* deal. The path we chose for ourselves is a direct response of how well we learned the morals and ethics early in life. The quality of our previous experience creates our idiosyncrasies that we employ at the career or position that we obtained. These idiosyncrasies also provide the basis of how well we carry out our professional ethical standards for that career. There is a social call for professionalism in every organization: medical, business, information technology, or even being Mom. An individual's personal value system and setting the priority list to our own specifications affect our choices for the road ahead.

Professionalism 401 is begins when you are able to culminate all if the previous courses together and use them in your daily life. Not just at work, but in interpersonal contacts. How you

conduct yourself in a world full of opportunities? By recalling the level of professionalism you achieved. This level also sets the pace of your career. For example, how long will it take you to get to the top? Does every one want to be there? The answer is NO. Those individuals work to live and not live to work.

When interviewing an Instructor of Leadership and Management for Coast Guard Officers, from The United States Coast Guard Leadership Development Center, I found out that their core values are Honor, Respect, and Devotion to Duty. I want to share with you the meaning of each:

Honor is from within; it is your self-image and self-respect.

And what you do, or don't do, to keep yourself in good moral standing.

Respect is shown through your communication and treatment of others. An acceptance of cultures and values different from your own is a fundamental value in teamwork.

Devotion to duty is how seriously you dedicate yourself to the job at hand, whatever it is.

Professionalism is the finished product of personal hard work and making decisions to surround yourself with other professionals who continue to strive for success. It is constantly calling yourself to do better, learn more and reach higher. It is how others see how you apply the knowledge you attain through out your life to better the environment around you, constantly fine tuning and looking for ways to better yourself. So

how do we teach students, who are on so many different career paths, how to attain quality professionalism?

It is my belief that if you are strategizing to teach professionalism effectively to students, it is wise to have more than just a grasp on the subject at hand. Providing your students with a good role model is the most effective strategy. Showing students that they are important and that you are invested in their growth and success shows students that you care. Students are aware of the people who are sincere. It takes time, patience, and constant observation of each individual student in the classroom. Teaching students that we will NEVER be finished with our quest for ultimate professionalism is the best lesson we can give. I relay this message to my students as often as I teach them the course content. Most important, they teach me. With every new class I teach, my own professionalism constantly evolves. Each day brings a new lesson and new possibility for growth.

Graduation day will eventually arrive, so we must be honest and let them know that the life-long learning will continue past school. There is no cap on how far you can go in life. Believe in your true self, work hard and the rest will follow. Be good to yourself. Look out for the best interests of others. Be more than you thought you could be.

Your own imagination and level of motivation can limit your potential as an instructor. When this occurs you are ready to comprehend that professionalism, although it is not necessarily intrinsic cannot be lectured. It must be shown every day, in order for your students' to respect you enough to

emulate the professionalism that you project to them.

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Helping Students Transition from Didactic Learning to Clinical Rotations

By

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A positive, successful transition from the classroom to the clinical setting is in the best interest of the student and the college. As an institution, it is our responsibility to the student, the healthcare facility, and the general public to ensure this transition is accomplished with the least amount of resistance and anxiety. The ultimate goal of clinical rotations is safe, quality health care and the development of excellent practitioners. To be able to accomplish this, a number of techniques can be utilized in the classroom as well as in the early clinical experience. The purpose of this article is to explore the literature and personal experience in facilitating the transition to the clinical setting.

Most students are often nervous and filled with self-doubt when faced with the challenge of clinical rotations. In a study by Prince, Boshuizen, Vleuten, and Scherpbier (2005), 67% of medical students were unaware of the expectations for clinical practice and were unsure of how to act. Other factors contributing to the anxiety of students include fears regarding clinical instructor, attitudes of health care providers, receptiveness of the clinical environment, and the challenge of performing skills learned in the laboratory on actual clients. Transition to clinical rotation appears to have a major impact in the life of the student since they perceive this as the time when

they learn to be healthcare professionals that they look forward to and at the same time fear (Holland, 1999).

According to Baltimore (2004), healthcare professionals are frequently involved in complex situations that demand high-level problem solving and critical decision-making. Case studies can be used during lecture to foster critical thinking skills in the student. These case studies will provide a brief patient history and appropriate diagnostic data providing a clear, concise picture of the patient. Questions after the case study will help promote clinically sound decision making in the student. Instructors can use case studies as part of the grading criteria and analyzed to evaluate areas of strength and weakness. When an area of weakness is identified, time can be allotted in lecture or skill laboratory for remediation.

Skills laboratory procedures that coincide with lecture topics are vital to facilitate the development of needed skills and confidence level in performing these skills. Instructors need to be available after class to assist the student with practicing the skills. Equipment should be up to date and available for students to practice. This will create confidence and proficiency when in the clinical setting. Prior to allowing student into the clinical settings, their skills must be evaluated and perfected. Instructors must validate skills only when they are performed safely and effectively (Baltimore, 2004).

There is nothing more valuable than relating theory to real life experience. According to Santucci (2004), many of the concepts learned can only be

internalized through personal experience. Having an experienced instructor share their experiences during class can assist the student with making the connection between theory and real life. Practical experience will aid the student in recalling learned information and may also help in the decision-making process during the clinical experience.

Theory is a key part of learning the role but the application of learned material is best done in the actual clinical setting. Students must be given feedback early in the clinical experience to ensure development of good habits. The instructor, staff, and management are key components in helping students with a smooth transition into the clinical setting.

Instructors must be confident and familiar with the clinical area. The instructor must facilitate a non-threatening learning environment for the students. According to Clay, Lilley, Borre, and Harris (1999), a supportive and nonthreatening environment maximizes adults' abilities to learn effectively. The instructor should be secure with their knowledge base to eliminate power struggles that may lead to student intimidation. The clinical instructor should demonstrate the role of the healthcare professional in practice. Instructors should be seen as facilitators of learning who assist students assimilate new information into daily practice rather than simply as presenters of information (Baltimore, 2004). It is important for the instructor to locate experiences that will enhance learning and share this with all of the students.

Staff at the clinical setting plays an important role in the students' clinical education. According to Windsor (1987), students progressed in professional socialization by observing other healthcare professionals. The staff can be helpful in guiding the student towards optimal learning experiences. A supportive attitude of the staff is essential in helping students feel like part of the healthcare team and to transition into performing quality clinical practice. Having staff support is also helpful in providing the students with a well rounded clinical experience. Instructors are unable to be with students at all times, assigning preceptors in different areas can allow the student to experience other areas in the clinical setting. According to Ross (2002), there should be set guidelines as to what students are expected to do in the different placement areas.

It is essential to provides students with an opportunity to discuss and share their experiences during the clinical rotation. This can be accomplished by having post clinical meetings in which students discuss and questions situations encountered. This can also provide an opportunity to incorporate critical thinking scenarios that may relate to situations experienced during the clinical rotation.

Support groups meetings have been incorporated into the clinical agenda and are facilitated by clinical educators to allow for discussion of dilemmas, conflict resolution strategies, sharing and processing of experiences (Santucci, 2004). This should be done in a non-threatening, open forum format.

In conclusion, providing the student with a smooth transition from the classroom to the clinical setting is a complex, but rewarding endeavor. The instructor must form a partnership that includes the clinical staff and, most importantly, the student. By utilizing the above techniques this transition can be smoother and more rewarding to all involved.

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Motivation Ensures Success

By

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How do we as instructors motivate students to succeed? Unfortunately, there is no magic motivation formula. We are given the task to help shape the students' lives. We are responsible for caressing, molding, and nurturing them to success (Sherfield, 2005). What a responsibility to know that what we teach today will affect someone's life tomorrow.

A key factor of motivation is encouragement. Most adult students lack confidence. These students have to know that we genuinely care about them. For some, this concept is difficult to grasp. We need to maximize their learning potential. An instructor's confidence can go a long way in encouraging and motivating a student to succeed. Showing and earning the students' respect is also vital to their success. The student is more likely to accept your encouragement if he or she respects and values your opinion.

Most students are goal oriented. Lieb tells us (1991) two of the best motivating factors for adult students are interest and self-benefit. If they can be shown how the course will benefit them, they are more likely to perform better with longer lasting results. To keep the students' interest, we as instructors need to set the bar high and challenge them. The course level of difficulty must be appropriate so as not to set the student up for failure.

Another key factor of motivation is variety. We need to peak the students

curiosity and interest. Instructors should vary their teaching methods. Lecture is fine for the auditory learner, while games, demonstration, and simulations are better suited for the visual or kinesthetic learner. The more senses we can stimulate, the more likely the student is to retain the knowledge. Linking the knowledge with a vivid, fun memory or hands-on experience can enhance the recollection of the information.

In order to succeed students must retain knowledge. Repetition directly affects retention. Repetition helps to transfer knowledge to our long-term memory (Johnston & Wright, 2005, p. 20). We need to ask students "What are you learning? Why is this important?" These answers require a deeper understanding of the material presented. We need to relate the information to the student's desired goal. The knowledge they gain in one class needs to be reinforced in subsequent classes to improve their overall performance.

In conclusion, motivating students to succeed is the hallmark of our profession. Encouragement, interest, self-benefit, variety, and repetition are the key ingredients to successful motivation. Incorporating these motivational qualities into our daily teaching will ensure the student success in all they set out to accomplish.

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Common Characteristics in Successful Faculty Members

By

Rene' Nyberg

According to the Bush Administration's proposal, a "highly qualified" teacher is based on the fact that teacher excellence is very important to realizing improved student achievement. It also makes sense to look at the existing evidence that teacher qualities are related to teacher effectiveness. (Rice, J.,2003).

Let's evaluate common characteristics in a successful faculty member. I have chosen seven that stand out to me. They are flexibility, accessibility, passion, knowledge, confidence, encouragement, and a sense of humor.

Be flexible. Take advantage of new information, quickly bring new interpretations and representations of a problem to light. (Hattie, J., 2003). Re-evaluate and revise plans from hour to hour, day to day, and year to year based on individual student strengths and weaknesses. (Hopkins, M., 2004). The definition of insanity is continuing to do the same thing over and over while expecting different results. This is especially true in education. If the students are not grasping the information; you have to be flexible enough to present it in a way that they will understand. Meet your students where they are and then help them grow.

Be accessible. Be available and easy to reach. This includes being approachable so that students feel free and at ease to ask you questions. If you keep abreast

of what the student's needs and concerns are you can be assured that the student will never get to the point where they believe they have few options ahead of them. Listen to what the students are saying and show them with your attention that you really care.

Be passionate. "Passion can be seen in body language, the eyes, gestures, chosen words of speech and speech inflection," Henderson says. (Hopkins, G. 2003, p.2). Passion oozes from a successful teacher. It is what lets the student know that you care as much as they do about their goals. Passion is about watching students that you have laughed with, cried with, and grown with walk across a stage toward their new life. Passion is what gets you up in the morning when you would rather stay in bed.

Be knowledgeable. Establish your own credibility. Having this knowledge can help students gain confidence that the "teacher knows what he or she is talking about." (Fink, L., 2006). This credibility also allows you to make mistakes and allows you and your students to learn from each other. No one needs to be right a hundred percent of the time; but the students should have confidence in your ability to give them the education they require. Share personal experiences with them that relate to their goal.

Be confident. Students will know if you are confident or not. When you present yourself with confidence the inner strength will follow. Help students appreciate the relevance of the content by connecting it to real-world contexts. (Hopkins, M., 2004). Students will emulate your behavior. If you show them how to be confident with the

knowledge and education they are receiving; they will use this new found confidence to help them succeed in the career we have helped them to obtain.

Be encouraging. Genuinely enjoy all of the students. Believe in their potential. Believe all students can learn. Know and respect students as individuals. (Hopkins, M., 2004) Encourage them to be confident even if they don't feel that they are.

Have a sense of humor. Go that extra mile, be brave and step "out of the box." Have fun and enjoy what you do. Then they will see that this is the profession for them because not only have you told them but you have shown them.

In conclusion, to be a successful teacher one must never stop learning. Give your students feedback; but also accept and adjust your teaching based on the feedback the students give you. See change as a challenge not a chore. Thomas Beckett, principal in Western Australia says, "In my school we have a saying that 'learning from a teacher who has stopped learning is like drinking from a stagnant pond'." (Hopkins, G., 2003).

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