



Image from National Geographic

Good teaching is more of giving of right questions than a giving of right answers. Josef Albers

THE POWER OF PLANNING

I love the saying, “Failure to plan on your part does not constitute an emergency on mine.” This emergency feeling can be felt from our student as confusion, frustration, and boredom. We often get into the routines of spending so much time assessing that we often neglect one of the most impactful pieces of teaching...planning. Ben Curran(2016), in *Starting Strong* states, “Careful and thoughtful planning is a formula for academic achievement.” If you think about how many decisions are made within in a single lesson, it can be overwhelming. A few of the questions that may run through your mind as you plan a lesson include: What will I say? How will I engage students? How does the outcome of my bell ringer effect the rest of the lesson? What will I have students do? How will I know students understand the objective explicitly taught? Curran explains, “Establishing the “what” and the “why” in the first 10-15 minutes pays high dividends. Students need to know what they are learning within a given lesson and why they are learning it. Putting an objective on the board and never talking about it with your students is not enough. At the end of each lesson when you ask your students what did you learn? The students’ response needs to match, with what was clearly defined in the first part of the lesson. Depending upon what you are teaching and how you plan to teach the objective will depend if you use direct instruction or indirect instruction. Direct instruction should be used to teach a discrete skill such as an algebraic equation or the different parts of speech. The approach of I DO-WE DO- YOU DO is an excellent way of teaching the gradual release of responsibility model. If you are teaching a concept in which you want students to synthesize different information and draw on multiple skills than indirect instruction may be the best approach. When you think about all that goes into planning a lesson it can be overwhelming. The work with instructional strategies in your PLC is designed to help add more tools to your toolbox for meeting the needs of your students. When we develop a common language for the instructional strategies, it allows you to specifically plan for what strategies will best fit in students learning the objective of the lesson. Ben Curran breaks the importance of lesson planning into three simple questions; “How can I ground students in the lesson’s context and purpose? Is a direct or indirect approach best? What few statements or questions do I need in advance so that the first 10-15 minutes of the lesson are productive?” Planning with a purpose and with our students in mind requires a lot of work, but this work pays off with high levels of student achievement. Have a great week!

The school district of Seward, in cooperation with parents and community, affirms that all students will have the skills to become productive and contributing members of a global community. The district is committed to the development of each student academically, emotionally, socially and physically.

