

Coaching Cycle: Stage I

Planning is the process that a teacher uses to make decisions about **what to teach (curriculum)** and **how to teach it (instruction)**. A plan provides a structure or setting that guides a teacher's actions. How well one plans determines the utility of the plan in the classroom and the quality of instruction that takes place. Planning, or the lack of it, also impacts student discipline and classroom management.

Research indicates that teachers believe that effective planning produces feelings of confidence and reduces uncertainty. Thus, for teachers new to the Louisiana public schools, it is important to plan effectively in order to reduce first-year teaching anxiety.

1. **How** does one go about planning?
2. **What** should be considered in planning?
3. **Why** should it be considered?

These are key questions for coaching a new teacher. The answer to the first question tends to be a process response. The second question addresses curriculum content, instructional strategies, and student characteristics. The third question provides a rationale or justification for what is being considered. Although the other questions are important, the coach will be spending much of his or her time addressing the second question with the new teacher. In a focused coaching process, the content of the Components of Effective Teaching is addressed primarily in the second question.

Where are we going?

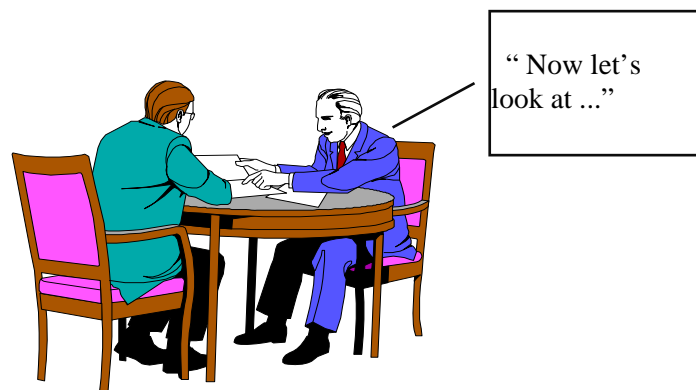


“To know where you're going in teaching, you must first determine a destination. That means setting goals and long-term planning.”

Shalaway, Linda, *Learning to Teach*

Perhaps the most important settings for coaching teacher planning are the conferences that precede and follow a mentor's or mentor support team member's observations of the new teacher or the new teacher's observations of the mentor. The observation sequence - planning conference, observation, postobservation conference/debriefing - offers a context for the teacher and the mentor to reflect on teaching and learning. The planning conference is a vital tool in coaching teacher planning. The postobservation conference/debriefing facilitates reflection on the planning as well as on the actual instruction.

Since the Components of Effective Teaching address expectations for teacher planning (Component A), it is important that the coach ensures that the new teacher understands the expectations outlined there. Discussion of the new teacher's understanding and application of Component A and its Attributes, along with the results of the needs assessment conducted in the first meeting, should provide the mentor with insight into the aspects of planning that need to be emphasized. The assessment informal conference questions about planning (found in the *Assessor Training Manual* and the *Guide for New Teachers*) may be of value in this discussion.



The questions asked by the mentor in every planning conference will be key to understanding what the teacher has incorporated into the planning for that lesson, how the incorporations have been made, and why they have been made. Good questions posed by the mentor should lead to greater reflection on and deeper understanding of planning by the teacher.

The planning conference is used prior to a classroom observation as a means of determining specific planning skills and processes. During coaching, other questions might be used to help the teacher focus on what has been planned and on relationships among content, instruction, and assessment.

Planning Conference Questions

Question Types	Samples
1. Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the intent of the lesson? • What will students learn from the lesson? • How did you choose the objective(s) for this lesson? • What behaviors are you looking for in students to see whether they are successful in achieving the objective(s) of the lesson? • How do you know the lesson is aligned with the Louisiana Content Standards?
2. Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What teaching materials or supplies will you use in the lesson? * What makes these materials or supplies important to the development of the lesson's objective(s)? * How will you set up your classroom for this lesson? * In what ways will you accommodate different learning styles? * How do you plan to accommodate the needs of individual students? * How much time will you need for this lesson? * In what ways will you promote a positive learning climate? * How will you incorporate technology into the lesson? * Why have you chosen these technologies?
3. Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * What teaching strategies will you use? * What makes these strategies important to the development of this lesson's objective(s)? * What strategy will you use to introduce your lesson? * What will you expect the students to do in this activity? * What strategy will you use next? * What will you expect the students to do in this activity? * How will you culminate your lesson? * How can technology enhance the lesson? * In what ways will you check for student understanding? (Informal assessment) * How will you formally assess the students' learning in this lesson? (Formal assessment) * Why is the chosen method of formal assessment appropriate? * How are you going to use the assessment results? * What will you do if you do not get the anticipated behaviors? * What problem(s) are you anticipating? * How do you plan to handle the problem(s) that you anticipate?

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Planning Conference Questions (contd.)

Question Types	Samples
<p>4. Professional Growth (These questions are used during coaching when the new teacher can direct the focus of the observation.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the one thing you want me to observe? • How would you like me to record the data I collect? • When should I arrive at your classroom? * Where would you like for me to sit? * What, if any, extenuating circumstances should I be aware of in your classroom? * What would you like for me to do while the lesson is in progress?

Focus questions

New teachers often need assistance in articulating the answers to the planning questions. Probing questions are often necessary to clarify or verify information. It may be necessary to help the new teacher to refocus. When the new teacher offers vague or general answers to questions in the planning conference, focus his/her thinking through some of the following probing questions.

1. Clarifying

- What do you mean by _____?
- What are you referring to when you say _____?
- Can you describe ? in more detail _____?

2. Verifying

- How did you know to _____?
- How do you know that _____?

3. Refocusing

- What are you noticing that makes you say _____?
- What did you observe that led you to say _____?

4. Narrowing Focus

- Can you tell me more about _____?
- What did you notice about _____?
- What made you decide to _____?

Adapted from Dantonio, M. (1988). *Teachers Coaching Teachers*. Bloomington, IN: Phi Delta Kappa

Planning

TEACHER:	SOC. SEC. NO:																			
MENTOR/PRINCIPAL:	SOC. SEC. NO:																			
SCHOOL DISTRICT: _____	SCHOOL: _____	DATE: ____/____/____																		
GRADE: _____	SUBJECT: _____	OBSERVATION TIME: ____ TO ____																		

INFORMAL CONFERENCE QUESTIONS

1. What objective(s) have you chosen for this lesson?
2. What student and teacher activities are planned to accomplish the objective(s)?
3. How will the student activities be modified to accommodate for the individual differences among your students?
4. How and when will the objective(s) be measured?
5. Are there any special conditions?
6. Optional comments.

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