

First EVALUATION

Your first teaching evaluation can be stressful; however, adequate preparation can ease your apprehension. Follow this guideline and you'll be smiling when the evaluation is done.

Plan

Devise a lesson with "wow" value. Most administrators will watch 30–50 teachers during an evaluation period; therefore, make your lesson notable. Administrators rate well-designed lessons highly! For an organized, quality lesson, follow the diagram for research-proven lesson design:

1. Activate prior knowledge. Use a strategy such as the KWL chart (what do we know about the subject, what do we want to know, what did we learn), or review a previous day's lesson.

2. Direct instruction. Employ techniques that reach visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners. For example, in addition to reciting the page number of the text, write it on the board and hold up a copy of the page for students to see. Provide manipulatives or hands-on materials when possible, but only if students have used the materials previously.

3. Guided practice. Lead students through the steps you want them to take. Apply the 'I do, you do' method (I do a step, and then you do the step, and so on). Next, focus on your questioning techniques. Ask higher-order questions, stating the question once, waiting three to five seconds, and calling on the responder. Waiting briefly gives students time to process the question and promotes a higher level of responses.

To increase your comfort level in asking these questions, list prompts on a card ("compare . . .," "defend . . .," and "how else would you . . .?"). Practice the prompts using the card for reference. When students respond, call on them equally. Don't trust your memory; instead, pick from a group of sticks bearing students' names, check off names from a student roster, or follow a pattern, (such as every third seat responds). Give students specific feedback, informing them whether or not their answers are correct and why.

4. Review and practice. Keep a review brief and centered on critical components of the lesson. Follow up the review with an independent practice assignment.

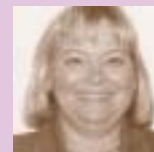
Schedule

Schedule pre- and post-conferences with the administrator completing your evaluation. At the pre-conference, ask what he or she will be looking for in the lesson, share your lesson objective, and identify the state standard for which the lesson applies. Schedule the observation when you will not feel rushed. At the post conference, listen to the administrator's comments with an open mind; don't be defensive. If the administrator recommends improvement, arrange a time for assistance.

Inform Your Class

Tell students ahead of time that you will have a visitor in the classroom and that you would appreciate their attention during the lesson. Informing them minimizes distractions and encourages their attention on the lesson and you. Begin and end your lesson in a calm and timely manner. Anticipate the unexpected! If the administrator cannot make it to your class at the designated time, be ready with a read-aloud book or quiet activity.

Begin evaluation day in a good frame of mind—read an affirmation or an encouraging note from a parent, peer, or student. Before starting the lesson, smile. It will help you relax, as will remembering why you entered teaching: because you enjoy children and value education. With those motives guiding your thoughts and actions, the odds for a good evaluation will be in your favor. ■



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