

RATIONALE FOR COLLEGE LESSON PLAN POLICY

As indicated on page 3, the College has adopted the following policy for lesson planning:

Student teachers are required to prepare and submit to their associate teachers a written lesson plan for all teaching tasks using a lesson plan format adopted by the College.

The rationale for this policy includes the following considerations:

1. Repeated exposure to written lesson plans helps students think their way logically through all aspects of a lesson. The goal is to help student teachers form the habits of mind to be able, as future classroom teachers, to formulate mental plans of action that incorporate all aspects of the teaching task.
2. A written plan helps you as associate teacher to “see” how the student teacher has understood the teaching task and how he/she is going to act on it before the student teacher actually teaches it.
3. A written plan forms a basis for discussion after the lesson has been taught. It serves as a written guide for both assessment and self-evaluation.
4. The lesson plan formats adopted by the College require students to give attention to all aspects of the teaching task and thus help student teachers develop a good understanding of:
 - the content of what is to be taught and how it relates to the goals of Reformed education (i.e., the *what* and the *why* of teaching).
 - which teaching methods and instructional groupings are best suited to the nature of the content and the learning needs of the students (i.e., the *how* of teaching).
 - how student learning can best be assessed (i.e., the *how well* of teaching).

THE ASSOCIATE TEACHER’S ROLE IN LESSON PLANNING

The associate teacher’s role in lesson planning changes as the student teacher develops experience and skill in planning for instruction. As the student teacher moves along a continuum of learning, the associate teacher adjusts his/her level of involvement accordingly. In this learning process, the associate teacher may assume the role of:

- leader and role model for the beginning teacher
- guide and advisor as the student teacher gains experience
- collaborator with the student teacher as he/she assumes greater responsibility and independence

This gradual transfer of responsibility for planning and instructional decision-making from the associate teacher to the student teacher prepares the student teacher for assuming full responsibility for instructional planning in the classroom.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE ASSOCIATE TEACHER

1. Student teachers stand to learn the most from an associate teacher who:
 - *is willing to share what he/she has learned about lesson planning through classroom experience.*

- *is willing to assist the student teacher in developing lesson plans using the format adopted by the College.*
 - *welcomes a collaborative setting for lesson planning.* Although the student teacher may not be your “equal” in skill, knowledge, and experience, he/she has ideas, questions, and learning needs that will stimulate your thinking and broaden your horizons to consider other ways of doing what you do.
2. Make yourself comfortable with the standard lesson plan format before the student teacher arrives (e.g., use the format to plan one of your own lessons).
 3. Plan for demonstration lessons with the lesson plan format in mind. Talk through these demonstrations with the student teacher in terms (e.g., objectives, sequence) of the lesson plan format. Reviewing your lesson demonstrations with the student teacher also gives you opportunity to model self-evaluation of your own teaching.
 4. Set aside conference time each day for working on lesson plans with the beginning student teacher. Ask questions, suggest possibilities, or model wording (e.g., for objectives) when the student runs stuck. The planning questions on pages 35-37 provide suggestions to assist both the student and the associate teacher.
 5. Avoid being overly critical of a lesson plan just before the student teacher teaches the lesson. You will want to head off potential disaster, but, for the rest, it is better for the student teacher if you let him/her teach the lesson as planned and to learn from what went well or didn't go well. Student teachers should be allowed, within reason, to make mistakes and to learn from them.
 6. Adopt a collaborative approach to the review of the student's lessons at the end of a teaching day. Using the lesson plan as an organizer for discussion, allow the student to participate in an evaluation of how well the lesson plan served its purpose. Help him/her to use what was learned from mistakes in planning his/her next lesson.