P-3: Create objective-driven lesson plans

Give students opportunities to show mastery of the objective independently

**How do I plan for independent student practice?**

**What are examples of plans that do this well?**

**What factors should I consider when planning to do this?**

*Note: in the 5-step lesson plan, this purpose is usually accomplished by “Independent Practice”*

**How do I plan for independent student practice?**

- In your lesson, plan to:
  - Clearly state and model behavioral expectations for how students are to practice
  - Allow all students to show mastery of the objective’s knowledge and skill independently
    - Write questions so that you can easily determine what each student does or does not know
  - Provide opportunities for extension
    - Write multiple practice problems, including items that challenge students who finish early to higher-levels of thinking
  - Plan what you will be doing as students practice – think about how to monitor student work and provide feedback to student questions and responses

- Choose your instructional methods - solving problems, performance tasks, etc.

- Consider different factors when deciding how you want students to practice (see below for more details on each of these):
  - student needs and interests,
  - the nature of the content,
  - time and resources available

- Determine how students will be grouped:
  - Individually – the most common way of organizing students as they practice independently
  - Small Groups – if utilized, make sure you can measure each students’ individual level of mastery

- Determine how much time to devote to this part of your lesson - always make sure to allot a significant portion of the lesson to student practice

- Double check the alignment of your practice examples - are all problems or questions aligning to what your objective requires?

- Note: If this part of your plan is not serving as your lesson assessment, make sure the practice is aligned with - but not identical to - your assessment. If this part of your lesson will serve as your assessment, see the “create your lesson assessment” section for more about how to create it effectively
What are examples of plans that do this well?

5-step lesson plan examples with teacher intentions:

### OBJECTIVE #1 (ELEMENTARY ESL): Students will be able to use regular comparatives correctly in an oral presentation.

**Independent Practice:**
On their own, students are to think of two famous people and develop five different comparisons between them. These comparisons must include adjectives that have a variety of syllables. For homework, students are to prepare a brief presentation on their celebrities (they can bring in pictures, to provide a visual reference for the comparison), explaining how they used the comparatives correctly by referring to the syllable rules. As an extension, students can complete a journal activity that asks them if they enjoy being compared to others.

**Teacher’s Intentions:**
This assignment incorporates student interests with the achievement of the objective, asking every student to use regular comparatives correctly. The teacher thought through the assignment and realized that students could choose very simple adjectives and therefore added the stipulation about a variety of syllables. Ms. Cate also taps into the evaluative cognitive domain by asking students to weigh the pros and cons of comparison.

### OBJECTIVE #2 (6TH GRADE): SWBAT write a bibliographic entry for a book.

**Independent Practice:**
Students are to trade reading books with a neighbor, find the appropriate information and write the bibliographic entry for that book on the bottom of their page. They are then to check their answers with their neighbor. For homework, students are to make a bibliography of half of the books they are using for their upcoming research project, making sure to put the books in alphabetical order by author’s last name. Ms. Cartwright also provides a guide for making bibliography entries with magazine articles for those who completed research using periodicals.

**Teacher’s Intentions:**
By this point in the lesson, students are locating and recording bibliographic entries on their own, therefore achieving the objective. Students can verify their accuracy with their neighbor, who had already written down the bibliographic entry for the book during the Guided Practice. This activity has extension possibilities through a varied and more complex task that is relevant to a larger assignment that students are working on: their research project.

### OBJECTIVE #3 (10TH GRADE BIOLOGY): SWBAT describe the biological risks of drug use.

**Independent Practice:**
Students are to create “Say No to Drugs” posters, with a series of pictures depicting the gradual debilitation of three different bodily organs through smoking, alcohol or drugs. Ms. Donnelly distributes a rubric, noting that students will be evaluated by the extent to which they detail the biological processes at work. Students may begin their posters during class, but they are to finish them for homework. As an extension, students can strategize where the class could hang these posters for maximum effect.

**Teacher’s Intentions:**
The creation of a poster that describes the biological risks of drug use is an achievement of the objective. The teacher ensures that students focus on the substance, rather than the style, of the poster by providing a rubric for the assignment. Ms. Donnelly plans a practical extension to the assignment by asking students to consider the most effective forum for persuading peers to “just say no.”
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What factors should I consider when planning to do this?

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**Student Needs and Interests**

To learn more about tailoring your plans to meet individual student needs, read about [differentiating instruction](#).

The same factors mentioned in the “engage students in new content” page play into how you decide to have your students practice new material, though in slightly different ways.

- You would probably find that your attempt to implement co-ed cooperative learning groups would encounter a different set of developmental challenges if you were teaching eighth grade than if you were teaching fourth grade.
- **Student interests** may really come into play when students practice skills on their own. The simple act of allowing students to pick a research topic within some predefined parameters is based upon a recognition that you need to leverage students’ interest into learning the key skills in your unit plan. Doing this can help motivate students by building their desire to achieve (I-2)

**The Nature of the Content**

As mentioned in “engage students in new content” page, some concepts and skills, by their very nature, are best presented and practiced in particular ways.

- If your objective involves the mastery of some process (determining the area of a circle, or tying shoes, for example), your system of practice should probably involve repeated completion of that process.
- If your objective involves straight memorization of facts (the bones in the human skeleton, or multiplication tables, for example), your practice system should probably engage students in a process of repetition that will facilitate memorization.

You should ensure that the mental rigor of student practice is aligned with the cognitive level of the objective.

- If the cognitive level of the objective involves knowledge and comprehension, simple short answer questions and more rote activities can provide effective student practice. These activities give the teacher an easy opportunity to check for student understanding of new terms or skills.
- If the cognitive level of the objective points to application, students need to apply their knowledge to specific scenarios, such as word problems in math or a document to edit in language arts.
- If the objective requires synthesis and evaluation, student practice should include activities that require complex thinking, such as designing a science experiment that tests the physics theory about which they have been learning.

**Time and Resources Available**

The amount of time dedicated to student practice should be a function of the time students need to master the objective. Remember that practice is the most important part of the lesson cycle, so make sure you give students enough time to practice and internalize the content of your objectives. As you might expect, the cognitive level of the objective might also affect the amount of time that should be dedicated to student practice.

- Knowledge and comprehension activities generally only need to be of short duration. Such activities are suitable to discrete periods of class time or as homework.
- Application activities generally take longer, depending on their complexity.
- Complex thinking—such as that demanded by evaluation or synthesis activities—often requires think-time and usually calls for extended practice.
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Again, just as when you engage students in new content, the types and amounts of resources you have available may also influence your choice of practice strategy.

In addition to these several factors that influence your decision about how to have your students practice new material, you should remember the value of variation. You might think of the need for variety as a fifth factor that will affect your instructional strategy decisions. You will have more engaged (and therefore more successful) students if you vary your instructional strategies.