

ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Department of Instruction
BEST INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

Appendix A-1

PLANNING

The teacher demonstrates knowledge and use of APS curriculum.

- Designs lessons that address the long- and short-range goals and objectives of the curriculum
- Prepares lessons that adhere to best practices for delivery of instruction that is relevant, engaging, and challenging
- Designs lessons that incorporate processes that lead to student learning:
 - Motivation of new content by activating prior knowledge and/or providing background experiences
 - Presentation of content
 - Practice of associated skills and processes
 - Application of skills and processes to real world situations

The teacher demonstrates knowledge of student intellectual, social, and emotional development.

- Creates, selects, and adapts instructional plans and materials to accommodate learner differences that include age groups, learning styles and achievement levels, interests, and cultural background

The teacher demonstrates knowledge of resources.

- Selects instructional materials that are relevant to the instructional content being taught
- Utilizes appropriate staff resources such as reading specialists, library media specialists, counselors, ESOL/HILT teachers, special education teachers, paraprofessionals, Title I teachers, and resource teachers for the gifted.
- Makes use of community resources such as public library, museums, community and volunteer organizations
- Promotes, uses, and incorporates diversity in program development and selection of materials

INSTRUCTION

The teacher delivers instruction that is relevant.

- Connects learning to students present lives
- Guides students in connecting learning to the world beyond school
- Incorporates opportunities for the application of new learning

The teacher delivers instruction that is engaging.

- Creates an interactive learning environment that emphasizes inquiry, discovery, and problem-solving
- Develops lessons/tasks that address the range of student readiness levels, learning styles, and multiple intelligence
- Uses a multisensory approach for delivery of instruction (e.g. use of manipulative, visuals, and concrete materials)
- Uses technology to facilitate teaching and learning
- Groups and regroups students in a variety of learning situations
- Incorporates a student-centered project approach and provides ample opportunities for the practice of skills and processes
- Uses teaching strategies which emphasize student questioning, justifying, writing, modeling, and observing

The teacher delivers instruction that is challenging.

- Connects new learning to what students already know
- Ensures that all students have access to the full range of the curriculum regardless of past achievement or any other factor
- Makes multidisciplinary connections
- Acts as a guide and facilitator to student learning and promotes a student-centered classroom

The teacher assesses student learning.

- Includes assessment as a regular part of classroom instruction
- Designs assessment that is congruent with instructional goals both in content and in process
- Establishes assessment criteria and communicates those criteria clearly to students
- Establishes with students meaningful criteria and choices for demonstrating their learning
- Promotes student self assessment and peer assessment
- Uses assessment results to inform instruction
- Uses a wide range of assessment tools
- Monitors students learning, both formally and informally
- Observes students in a variety of settings and uses student work samples to monitor and document student progress
- Communicates assessment processes and results to students and to parents and staff as appropriate

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

The teacher creates a safe, supportive, learning environment.

- Promotes positive relationships among students that encourage mutual respect, initiative, positive view of learning, independence, and self confidence
- Demonstrates respect for and sensitivity to the diversity among students and staff

The teacher establishes high expectations.

- Communicates high expectations for all learners regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, language background, or disabilities
- Provides opportunities for students to work in their areas of strength and receive recognition

The teacher effectively manages the classroom.

- Establishes classroom routines (so that time may be used efficiently) to assure optimal student learning
- Establishes and administers a consistent and fair set of conduct standards and expectations
- Elicits students input in the development of conduct standards and consequences
- Assures that all resource staff and volunteers are effectively used to enhance student learning

The teacher maintains a physical environment conducive to learning.

- Uses a variety of physical resources such as print and non-print materials, audiovisual equipment, computer technology, and classroom libraries
- Encourages and cultivates student participation in establishing an effective classroom environment
- Creates a physical environment that stimulates and increases students involvement in the instructional program (i.e. a display of student work)
- Adapts space for different instructional purposes at different times, matched to curricular goals as well as student needs

PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The teacher grows and develops professionally.

- Participates in professional development activities (i.e. professional organizations, staff development, curriculum projects)
- Keeps current in the field and applies knowledge to instruction

The teacher reflects on teaching.

- Uses goal setting as a means of continuous growth
- Assumes responsibility for student outcomes
- Participates in self-assessment activities
- Monitors own beliefs and behaviors to assure that high expectations are communicated

The teacher communicates with others about the instructional program.

- Communicates with students, maintaining student records, and keeping students apprised of their progress
- Communicates with families and engages families in the instructional program
- Communicates with peers through activities such as Teachers as Readers, Teachers as Researchers, collaborative inquiry, peer coaching, and study teams

The teacher demonstrates professional behavior.

- Serves as appropriate role model to students and peers
- Demonstrates ethical behavior
- Practices a strong work ethic
- Collaborates with colleagues

SOURCES

Guidelines for Student Assessment

Arlington Public Schools, October 1996

Best Practices Document

Curriculum Supervisors, August 1997

Core Curriculum Characteristics in Common for Teacher Observations

Arlington Public Schools

Curriculum Framework: Social Studies Best Practices

Arlington Public Schools

Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching

Charlotte Danielson, ASCD, Alexandria, Virginia, 1996

Onward to Excellence Effective Schooling Practices: A Research Synthesis

Kathleen Cotton, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, Portland, Oregon, 1995

Teacher Performance Evaluation Handbook

Fairfax County Public Schools, 1994

SAMPLES OF EVIDENCE OF BEST INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

PLANNING EVIDENCE

- Description of what is seen
- A written lesson plan
- States goal
- Visuals, materials, etc. graphics
- Students know procedures
- Students on task
- Learning centers
- Transitions through multiple activities
- Questioning strategies
- Group work planned
- Organizing physical space

INSTRUCTION EVIDENCE

- Use of manipulative, visuals, concrete materials
- Students working on related computer software
- Dialogue
- Journal writing, portfolios, checklists, anecdotes, weekly report to parents.

CLASSROOM, ENVIRONMENT EVIDENCE

- Display of student work
- Materials relevant to curriculum
- Organizational tools
- Grouping and regrouping
- Varied use of physical space

PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES EVIDENCE

- Strategies observed
- Interactions with others
- Home - School communication
- Data collection
- Ongoing accommodations