The Right Questions For Planning: Using the Danielson Framework to Design Learning

In order to fully enact the professional knowledge and skills described in the Danielson Framework for Teaching, teachers must think deeply about their work. For many accomplished teachers, this thinking is natural and seemingly effortless; however, for those learning their craft, this thinking must be purposeful and generative—"What am I supposed to do and what ways might I get it done?" The questions below are designed to make explicit that effortless work of accomplished teachers, and the answers not only push toward aligned, robust instruction, but the act of answering provides evidence/documentation of student teachers' development of the necessary professional knowledge and skills.

NOTES:

- *The specific Danielson domains and components are indicated in each section header. For additional information, see the Danielson Framework for Teaching.*
- *A template is provided to document your responses to these questions; the completed template must be submitted to your Student Teaching Faculty before each pre-observation conference.*

Step 1: Research

What standards are specified in the district curriculum guidelines (scope-n-sequence, planning guides, lesson plans)? What do students need to know and be able to do, as described by those standards? (NOTE: Check the actual standards in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills.)

What level of Bloom's Taxonomy is called for in these specified standards?

Is there something they learned last year that might support their learning this year? Is there a way that what students learn in this lesson will support future learning?

What other information from the standards will help strengthen your instruction and assessment?

In what ways can students demonstrate what they know and are able to do (re: the specified standards)?

What are high-quality demonstrations of what students know and are able to do?

Which 3-5 demonstrations of knowledge and skills will be generated by this lesson plan? (NOTE: Verify these against the actual standards in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills.)

What assessment criteria reflect these demonstrations of knowledge of skills?

How will students assess their own work against this set of criteria?

Step 2: Plan

Sketch the Plan	Generate a set of overarching (big) questions and/or learning activities that reflect the level of Bloom's Taxonomy called for in the standard(s) and in the criteria. Document the flow of the lesson, including the beginning, middle, and end. Determine roughly how many instructional periods will be needed to carry out the lesson.
Communicating	How will I communicate the expectations for learning? How will I communicate the assessment criteria? How will I share directions/procedures? How will I offer explanations of content?
Discussing	What questions will I ask to elicit evidence of students' understanding? What secondary questions will scaffold for students? What prompts will I use to support student success? How do I expect students to add to the class understanding? How will I support student participation?
Engaging	What activities will students engage in to support their development of understanding? What work products will generate evidence of students' understanding of both knowledge and skills? How will I group students? What materials/resources do I need to prepare? How will students use these materials/resources? How will I maintain awareness of pacing/timing of the lesson? Identify different ways in which the students could demonstrate they understand and have met the criteria.
Responding	How will I incorporate student interest into my lessons? How can I maintain awareness of students' understanding and adjust my instruction?

Implement the lesson as planned.

Gather the student work products and other evidence of students' understanding.

Step 4: Analyze and Reflect

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What evidence do you find to indicate how well students learned the content and skills of the standards?

Based on that evidence, what instructional steps might you take next?

What did I learn about my lesson planning/design from this analysis of student work and other evidence of student learning?

How can I improve the flow and connectedness of my lesson?

Discuss with your cooperating teacher potential revisions that would strengthen

- alignment to the standards.
- alignment to the appropriate level of Bloom's Taxonomy.
- students' attainment of the criteria.
- classroom logistics and management.

What adjustments are needed?

Document revisions to the lesson plan.

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Consider the implications from this process—and in particular, from the analysis of student work—for future lessons and for lesson design overall.