

PLANNING FOR ACTION

Application 7: Planning for Action

Lance A. Webel

Cincinnati Hills Christian Academy

As a professional educator, I know that I must pursue teacher transformation throughout my career. As Fullan & Hargreaves state, "teacher change is at the heart of successful educational reform" (1998). This transformation is particularly important in the area of goals ... I must continually seek to improve my teaching and facilitating by setting new goals and seeking to fulfill them. For this application, I prioritized and planned for two new goals to accomplish in the coming school year.

The process that I went through in prioritizing my goals was quite simple. First, I considered the feasibility of each goal, taking into account the progress that I had already made towards the final result, the resources that were available to me, the knowledge and understanding that I had already obtained about the topic, and the restraints that would be placed upon me from outside factors if I tried to pursue that goal. Because I will be "starting fresh" this year in Cincinnati, it was very important for me to start as simply as possible, pursuing the most reasonable and viable goals. Through the process of elimination, then, two clear winners emerged ... both of these goals were simple, measurable, and relatively easy to accomplish with a set plan, predictable resources, and a little bit of hard work and determination.

My first goal, for Focus Area #2 (Planning & Designing Learning Environments & Experiences), is:

I will update each of the lessons in my curriculum by assigning specific instructional models or strategies.

The resources, discussions, and applications that were used for EDUC 6630, Instructional Models and Strategies, are more than sufficient to complete this goal. I have already reorganized these materials and plan to use them throughout the school year as I seek to accomplish this goal.

The action steps that I will take are quite simple. First, I will go through my lessons, one at a time, and assess which instructional model or strategy is best suited to it. As each lesson is taught, then, I will evaluate the effectiveness of the given model and make appropriate changes.

Then, at the end of the year, I will review all of my lessons, the way they fit together, and balance of different instructional models and strategies that resulted from the changes. In a strange sense, I have already collaborated on this goal through the discussion forums and ideas that were shared during EDUC 6630. I will also want to share my progress and ideas with the other technology teachers in my district near the end of the school year.

This goal is easy to track because it is very measurable. At the end, all of my lessons should have a specific instructional model or strategy attached to them. Hopefully each strategy will be suited well to the lesson. Once I have met this goal, I

expect my students to be able to acquire and process information in a much wider variety of ways.

My second goal, for Focus Area #4 (Assessment and Evaluation), is:

I will develop a standard list of basic technological skills that each of my 400 students must complete by the end of the year.

The first action step that I will take will be to find the list of skills that my school has and evaluate their relevancy and importance, revising the list as I go. I will then take the revised list and search for a system that will allow me to easily record student progress in a flexible and usable way. Finally, I will implement the system, recording student skills throughout the year as students move throughout my classes.

The resources for this goal are also quite simple. Our school system already has a list of skills established, so I must simply create a “checklist” and find a simple way of recording skills for each student as they are completed. Ideally, our new gradebook software that is being implemented this year will provide a simple way of entering this information.

Again, this goal is very measurable, so it will be easy to know when I have achieved the goal ... I will have a working checklist! As a result, I will be much more organized, I will be able to report needs and successes to both parents and the

administration, and I will be able to tie specific skills in with specific lessons as I move throughout the curriculum. Once I meet this goal, I expect that my students will be more aware of their own skills as well, monitoring their progress on the checklist and paying more attention to the skills that they have not yet obtained.

This year will be a year of transition, readjustment, and reevaluation for me. Overall, I hope that setting these goals and striving for their completion will be a vital part of my transformation as a teacher, and I am looking forward to seeing the fruit of this planning process both in my life as a scholar practitioner and in the learning processes of my students.

Resource:

Fullan, M., & Hargreaves, A. (1998). Teacher change. *ENC Focus*. Retrieved March 4, 2003 from <http://www.enc.org/features/focus/archive/change/document.shtm?input=CDS-000389-389>.