

Principles of Good Teaching

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Many elements and principles which increase the chances that children will succeed are inherently present in the home school model. Research on effective schools has shown higher rates of achievement when the following “pieces” are in place. As you evaluate your home school, congratulate yourselves on areas of strength. Don’t aim for perfection, aim for improvement. Where you find an area you’d like to improve, set small achievable goals and celebrate progress towards them.

1) *Vision and Goals*

- ___ Parents share an inspirational vision for the home school and for the children’s future.
- ___ Mission, philosophy and priorities are clear.
- ___ A sense of the whole picture, the ultimate aim.
- ___ An understanding of how people learn.
- ___ Prayer and trust in God.

2) *Nurturing Relationships*

- ___ Children know adults love them, enjoy being with them, and appreciate their personal worth.
- ___ Feelings are accepted. Adults listen with respect.
- ___ Adults model character qualities they want children to emulate.
- ___ Adults are courteous and responsive.
- ___ Adults encourage children to develop their strengths and to persevere in overcoming weaknesses. Children learn to handle failure.
- ___ Children know adults believe in them and their ability to reach high standards of achievement.
- ___ Adults are in close proximity to children. Hugs, touching, and eye contact are frequent.

3) *Structure*

- ___ Children feel loved, safe, secure and important.
- ___ There is a “normal” schedule for days and weeks.
- ___ There is a master calendar. Outside activities are grouped to minimize interruptions.
- ___ The family eats meals together and conducts family discussions.
- ___ There is a positive “family culture.”
- ___ The environment is pleasant and conducive to study and learning.
- ___ Distractions have been minimized in order to increase “time on task.”
- ___ Routines and systems are in place for housework.
- ___ There are a variety of reference books, maps, time lines, etc. to allow us to take advantage of “teachable moments.”

4) *Consistency*

- ___ Children have been trained in good habits.
- ___ Parents are in agreement about disciplinary standards and reasonable consequences.
- ___ Children know the standards and consequences.
- ___ Focus is on the positive. Approval is expressed when children choose to do what is right.
- ___ Consistent and businesslike follow through in enforcing consequences.
- ___ Hate the sin and love the sinner. Adults have confidence in child’s ability to choose behavior.

5) *Balance*

- ___ Balance focused time and free time.
- ___ Balance work, study, and play.
- ___ Balance routine and interesting activities.
- ___ Balance talking and listening.
- ___ Balance individual and group activities.
- ___ Balance hands-on activities and books.
- ___ Balance indoor and outdoor activities.
- ___ Balance left brain and right brain activities, or sequential and creative activities.

6) *Communication*

- ___ Adults listen and respond to children.
- ___ Adults talk at a level children understand, or slightly above it to stretch their understanding.
- ___ Communication and feedback flow both ways.
- ___ Praise is frequent and reasons are given for the praise. Focus is on the positive.
- ___ Goals, standards and objectives are clear.
- ___ Feedback is prompt and frequent.
- ___ Adults ask a variety of types of questions.
- ___ Adults delve, rephrase and give clues if children have difficulty with a question.
- ___ “Wait time” is employed to give children time to think and formulate answers.
- ___ Adults recognize “body language” and attitude clues of children and adjust accordingly.

7) *Planning and Preparation*

- ___ Schedule time for planning and preparation.
- ___ Know what students need to know, what is essential and what is nice but not necessary.
- ___ Know your students and be aware of their individual differences in motivation, interest, etc.
- ___ Diagnosis: Find out what students already know.
- ___ Prescription: Select appropriate learning objectives, not too easy and not too hard.
- ___ Collect appropriate materials and curriculum.
- ___ Prerequisites: Determine if children have the skills they need to succeed in this new task. If not, teach the prerequisites first.
- ___ Task analysis: Break assignments into “bite-sized” pieces, small sequential steps.
- ___ Timing: Do not introduce too much at once. Step by tiny step will maximize success.
- ___ Readiness: To check for readiness, offer tryout activities and adjust expectations as needed.
- ___ Early success: Plan *carefully* to ensure early success when something very new is being introduced.
- ___ Prepare checklists or contracts so students know exactly what is expected of them.

8) *Instruction*

- ___ Materials, equipment and supplies are ready.
- ___ Review related concepts, vocabulary and ideas.
- ___ Show enthusiasm and interest.
- ___ Provide overview or outline of lesson or unit. Move from whole to part to whole.
- ___ Objective. State and have students state objective.
- ___ Purpose. Why is this important to learn?
- ___ Transfer. How does this relate to what is already known? Help students organize and connect.
- ___ Clearly present information. Do not include non-essential information or distractors.
- ___ Move from simple to complex.
- ___ Move from known to unknown.
- ___ Model or demonstrate examples, non-examples.
- ___ Actively involve students, use variety.
- ___ Adjust level of questions to student ability.
- ___ Check for understanding frequently.
- ___ Feedback. Use criticism sparingly. Provide prompt positive feedback with reasons.
- ___ Guided practice. Closely monitor practice in the early stages of learning. Aim for 80% success.
- ___ Closure. At the end of a lesson, summarize what was learned.
- ___ Review and reteach as often as necessary.

9) *Practice*

- ___ Practice is directly related to lesson objective.
- ___ Students are not distracted during practice time.
- ___ Directions for practice are clear.
- ___ Adequate practice is provided to ensure mastery.
- ___ Generous feedback is given early on.
- ___ Guided practice is closely monitored. It is “practice without penalty.” No grades or marks.
- ___ 80% success rate before independent practice is assigned.
- ___ Students are held accountable for checking and correcting their work.
- ___ Practice is distributed over time. Practice is less frequent after initial instruction but continues. Review and reteach as necessary until mastered.
- ___ “Mental practice” is encouraged.

10) *Evaluation and Accountability*

- ___ Teacher is accountable to someone for diligently pursuing goals and plans.
- ___ Self discipline, diligence and timeliness are emphasized and rewarded.
- ___ Students are held responsible for completing work on time and doing a quality job.
- ___ A method exists to keep track of goals and their achievement. Examples: plan book, student contracts or checklists, conferences.
- ___ Informal evaluation takes place constantly.
- ___ Formal evaluation (testing) is used as needed so that students can demonstrate their mastery.
- ___ Grades are essentially comparative and punitive. Better to keep a running list of accomplishments.
- ___ Evaluation is used as a basis for selecting future objectives.

Types of Questions

Recall. Does the child remember specific facts and details?

Comprehension. Does the child understand the meaning?

Application. Can the child tell how this information could be used?

Analysis. Can the child analyze the information?

Synthesis. Can the child combine the information with information learned previously to come up with a new insight?

Evaluation. Can the child give an evaluation of the information which is well thought out?

Madeline Hunter's Lesson Design

Standards

Students know behavior expectations.
Materials and equipment are ready.
Efficient systems and use of time.

Setting the Stage (Anticipatory Set)

Objective. What will we be learning?
Purpose. Why is this important to learn?
Transfer. How does this relate to what you already know?
Motivation. Raise interest and concern. What will students be expected to do?
Check for understanding. Students state what they will learn and why.

Instruction

Review. Check prerequisite skills.
Input information. Clearly and concisely present information, definitions, rules or procedures. Do not include non-essential information or distractors.
Model. Model or demonstrate what children are expected to learn or do.
List steps if applicable.
Go through several examples, then present non-examples.
Four examples to every non-example.
Check for understanding. Children demonstrate or explain their understanding of the concept or skill.

Guided Practice

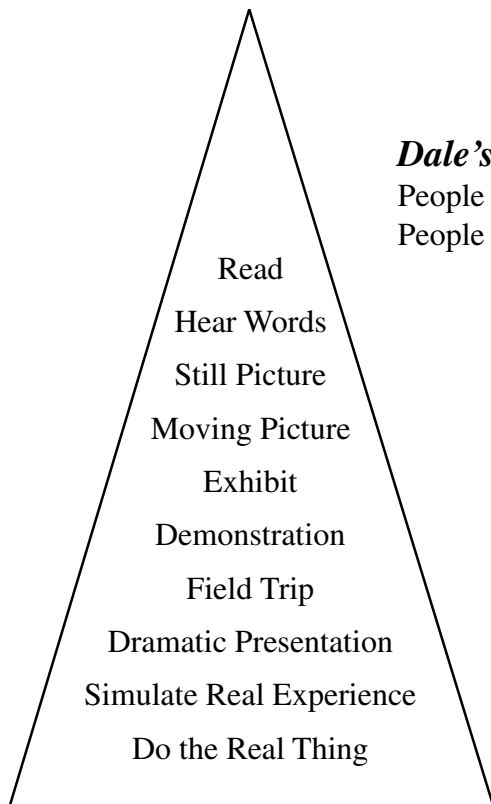
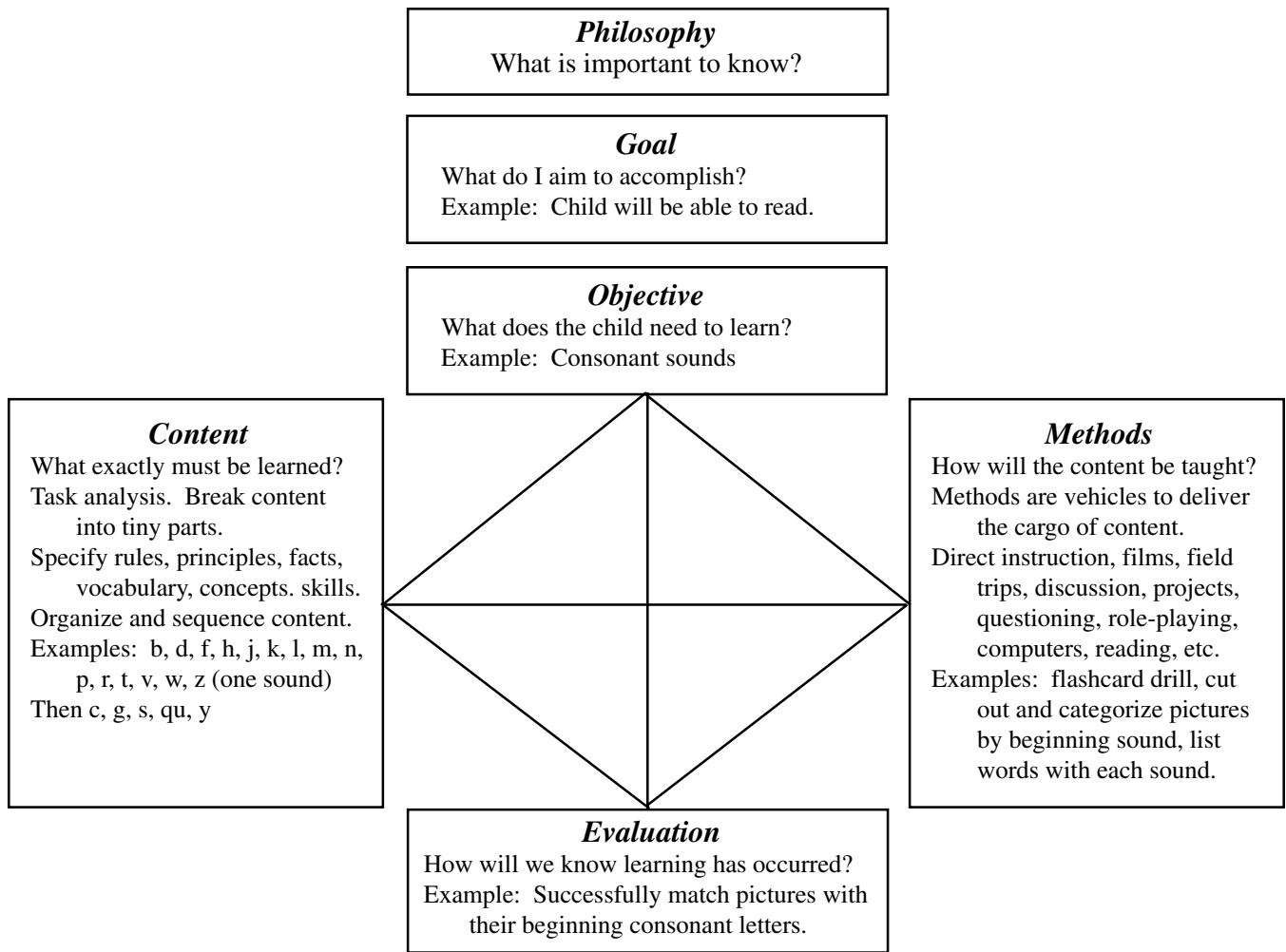
Related to lesson. Practice should be directly related to the new learning.
Directions. Directions should be clear and simple.
Overt Response. Teacher can see or hear what students are doing.
Monitoring. Ensure *correct* practice. Provide feedback and correction.
Practice without penalty. No grades or marks. Strive for 80% success.

Closure

Check for understanding. Students state what they have learned.

Independent Practice

Seatwork or other assignments reinforce and strengthen learning.
Students check or correct their own work and receive prompt feedback.
Distributed practice. Practice is distributed over time. Intense at first, then fade.
Concepts or skills are reviewed and retaught periodically.



Dale's Cone of Experience

People learn best when they are actively involved in the learning process.
People learn better when experiences are concrete rather than abstract.

People generally remember:

- 10% of what they *read*
- 20% of what they *hear*
- 30% of what they *see*
- 50% of what they *hear and see*
- 70% of what they *say or write*
- 90% of what they *say as they do a thing*.

If new learning is not recalled or used within 24 hours, recall drops to 75%. If not used within 48 hours, recall drops to 25%.