

Four Priorities of High-Leverage Design*

Connect to student learning needs for success (1b)

Begin by understanding how the needs of the different learners in the class have been considered in the learning process.

- How is this lesson (unit) building on students' backgrounds, knowledge, and experience?
- What are some things about your students' readiness (social skills, routines, self-management) that are influencing your lesson (unit) design?
- What are some special areas/student needs you will need to address in this lesson?
- What are some issues you anticipate might influence student learning?

Clarify the purpose of student learning and context of the lesson (1c/1a).

Invite the teacher to talk about this lesson and how it fits into the curriculum. Explore the lesson/unit's learning targets and prior learning that has led up to it.

- What will the students be able to do when they have finished this lesson?
- What idea, topic, or vocabulary is MOST important for students to learn and understand so that they can achieve the learning purpose?
- What will the students need to do to show they understand the learning target?
- What prior student learning experiences have led to determining this learning target?

Determine criteria for student learning success (1f).

Inquire about the teacher's expectations for students' learning.

- What kinds of assessments will you use to determine student success throughout this lesson/unit?
- What formative assessments might help adjust instruction while you are teaching?
- In what ways are students assessing their own learning?

Consider the design of the instructional activities and resources that guide the structure of the lesson/unit (1e/1d).

Ask the teacher to talk about the instructional steps of the lesson (focused, guided, collaborative & independent learning experiences).

- What instructional priorities support your organization and sequence of student learning activities and their relationship to the learning purpose?
- How do the elements of the lesson planning process (i.e., instructional and student learning resources, student groupings, pacing, use of technology, classroom management priorities) ensure high engagement for all students?
- As you anticipate teaching this lesson, what are some points where students might struggle? How will address these possible struggles?
- How is the lesson/unit scaffolded or differentiated to address diverse learning needs?

Identify specific focus priorities for data collection (Domain 2 and 3).

At the conclusion of the pre-observation conversation, confirm teaching/student learning priorities to be targeted during the observation.

- What are you curious about regarding your classroom environment or instructional practice?
- What specific data might support later conversation and reflection?
- What are some ways that this lesson provides opportunities to pursue your own learning goals?
- As a result of this conversation, what are some next steps you are considering for your work?

*Questions adapted from C. Moss & S. Brookhart's "Knowing Your Learning Targets" and L. Lipton & B. Wellman's *Learning-Focused Conversations*.