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Instructional Records

Lesson plans are the foundation of every teacher training course every teacher has ever taken. When I was in school, we had to produce Madeline Hunter's seven-part lesson plans with an objective, the standard, the anticipatory set, teaching (input, modeling, checking for understanding), guided practice, closure, and independent practice. I wrote these lesson plans until I dreamed about them controlling not only my student-teaching classroom, but my finances, my housework, my driving, even my love life. At the time I thought it was all a bit much.

When I finally got a full-time teaching job, I quit writing lesson plans as soon as possible. I had a principal who didn't request plans from new teachers, so I wrote an occasional plan for my university supervisor and the rest of the time I flew by the seat of my pants, trying to decide what to do with my students on my way to work each morning. I told myself that I was an organic teacher, not able to plan because I wouldn't know what my students needed from me until we had gotten through the present day. I was a student-directed teacher, letting my students' needs determine my lesson plans. There was no way I could plan days in advance because I had no way of knowing where my students' needs would direct my curriculum.

I soon learned that the course syllabus is my road map. With it, I have an orientation for where I am, where I am going, and what my major stops are along the way.

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Lesson plans are my street map. They help me know where and when to turn. Today I write lesson plans to inform my teaching, to help me meet the ever-changing needs of my students without losing sight of our destination, and as records to justify and inform my decisions with the curriculum, with my students, and for my site organization: department, administrator, parents.

Assignment records, worksheets used, and directions given are the specific markers that make sure we are all on the right course. Standards alignments are the reward when we reach our destination and see how far we've come. Proper substitute plans ensure that even when we may be indisposed, the rest of the party heads in the right direction.

I've found that investing time at the beginning of each teaching unit actually saves me time in the long run, not to mention stress. It's like driving somewhere new. Someone has provided you with an address, a destination. Someone may have even given you verbal directions that you wrote out diligently: turn left at the stop light, right at the third house, and so on. For some people, this is enough information. For people who get confused easily, like myself, a map, a visual representation of where I'm going, helps. I have learned that the time invested in looking up the map and familiarizing myself with my destination makes my trip less stressful and my driving time more productive.

When you invest time in planning your teaching unit before you begin, you will begin each teaching day with a destination in mind, you will know how you are going to get to your destination, and if someone in the backseat has to take a potty break, you will be able to adjust easily to the distraction. You might even lead others in the caravan, who knows.

The records you must keep as a teacher include a course syllabus, lesson plans, assignment records, worksheets used, directions given, standards alignment, and substitute plans. These documents will

- Improve the quality of your instruction
- Provide students with clear objectives and expectations
- Clarify for parents what is happening in the class
- Provide your administrator with documents for evaluations and reports to the district office
- Document for your district your classroom practices

COURSE SYLLABUS

A course syllabus or unit overview is the first ingredient in a successful teaching year. It is also a necessary document if your teaching practices are ever called into question.

With state standards becoming commonplace and district curriculum maps becoming increasingly accepted as the norm, many districts

will already have done this and will provide it to you (Thompson, 2002). Most school districts are recognizing the benefits of ensuring that every student receives similar curriculum in each grade level across schools in the same district. If a syllabus, curriculum map, or unit overview is not provided for you, and you are a new teacher, asking for help from a veteran teacher will alleviate much of the stress of trying to create one.

It is important to have your course syllabus written down and handy for future reference. Not only will it guide your daily lesson plans, but it will be available for you the next teaching year for adjustments and improvements. Having a written document allows you to adjust, improve, and rely on what you are already familiar with.

Once you have collected your textbooks for the course, the state standards for your grade level and course, and reviewed the curriculum covered the previous year, it is time to begin your planning. First, you will need to determine what you will teach, when you will teach it, how deep into the curriculum you will go, and how many weeks you will devote to each topic (Wyatt & White, 2002). Many of these decisions will be made for you based on the textbooks and state standards. Some teachers will even be tempted to skip this document, relying on a printout of the state standards and the table of contents of the textbook, but that may lead to covering information out of sequence, over and over in different formats, or simply prevent you from using time optimally.

If you are ever questioned about the scope and sequence of your instruction and all you can produce are the state standards and the textbook, your credibility may be damaged. Also, handing out a course syllabus specific to your class to parents and students allows them to see the objectives, the journey, and the destination of your class, which gives the students a sense of control over how well they can master the content of your class (Ryan, 2003), helping you to ensure the success of all students. A course syllabus gives you credibility and a sense of control over your curriculum.

When planning a syllabus, three documents need to be in front of you: a calendar (preferably one you can write on), the state or district standards, and the textbook(s) for the course. Working in collaboration with other teachers at your school site and/or within your district is the best scenario. Most districts provide teachers with planning days for this before each semester, and using this time to work with others will ensure that your syllabus is on track with what others are doing in your district. Whether you work alone or with others, you will want to create a rough draft syllabus that can be adjusted as you work on it.

Once you have all the information recorded, you have created a record to provide your administrator or department, to justify your curricular decisions, to familiarize your students and their parents with the course expectations, and to inform your lesson planning. A sample syllabus planner might look like this:

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Sample Format for Syllabus

Key standards to be covered:

- * _____
- * _____
- * _____

Standards to be reviewed:

- * _____
- * _____
- * _____

Textbook(s): _____

Unit title: _____

Dates: _____

Objectives (Students will . . .):

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Assessments: _____

Projects: _____

Worksheets: _____

Key readings, outside readings: _____

After you have used the document for lesson planning, it will be important to keep it handy for future reference.

Sample Format for Syllabus – GRADE FOUR HISTORY/SOCIAL SCIENCES

Key standards to be covered:

*4.1. Students demonstrate an understanding of the physical and human geographic features that define places and regions in California

*4.1.1. Explain and use the coordinate grid system of latitude and longitude to determine absolute locations of places in California and on Earth

*4.1.4. Identify the locations of the Pacific Ocean, rivers, valleys, and mountain passes and explain their effects on the growth of towns

Standards to be reviewed:

*3.1. Students describe the physical and human geography and use maps, tables, graphs, photographs, and charts to organize information about people, places, and environments in a spatial context.

*3.1.1. Identify geographical features in their local region

*3.1.2. Trace the ways in which people have used the resources of the local region and modified the physical environment

Textbook(s) Harcourt Brace: Social Studies

Unit title _____ Missions in California _____

Dates: September 24-October 29

Objectives (Students will . . .)

1. _____ Locate missions on map _____
2. _____ Describe how far from or close missions are to geographical locations such as the ocean
3. _____ Write a paragraph describing a specific mission _____
4. _____ Make a chart of available resources for a specific mission _____
5. _____

Assessments: _____ Oral presentation of chart _____

_____ Rubric used for paragraph _____

Projects: _____ Chart of resources for missions _____

_____ Build a model of a mission _____

Worksheets: _____ "Missions in California" _____

Key readings, outside readings: _____ none yet _____

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LESSON PLANS

One of the most important records you will keep as a teacher is your daily lesson plan book. "Careful lesson planning is mandatory if effective teaching and learning are to follow" (Johnson, Dupuis, Musial, Hall, & Gollnick, 2002). Most schools provide you with a book that you can keep your lessons in, but with technology, many will find it easier to keep plans on the computer. However you decide to record your daily lesson plans, it is important to have them in a format that is legible, that is consistent, and that is organized.

Once you have decided how and where you plan to keep records of your daily lesson plans, you should come up with a format that you are comfortable with. "There is no one right format for these plans. Develop a format that works for you. It should be simple, yet complete" (Partin, 1999). New teachers usually write lesson plans that are very detailed. This is important when you are beginning your career as a teacher because you want to ensure that you have covered all the components necessary for a successful lesson. Relying on the method taught in your teacher education courses is always a good idea.

Sample Lesson Plan

Date: _____ Course: _____

Unit of Study: _____

Set or sponge activity: _____

Review of homework: _____

Standard: _____

Objective: _____

Instruction: _____

Pages in textbook: _____

Guided practice: _____

Independent practice or homework: _____

Closure: _____

Assessment to be used at end of unit: _____

A sample lesson plan might look like this:

Date: _____	Course: _____
Unit of Study: _____	
Set or sponge activity: _____	
Review of homework: _____	
Standard: _____	
Objective: _____	
Instruction: _____	
Pages in textbook: _____	
Guided practice: _____	
Independent practice or homework: _____	
Closure: _____	
Assessment to be used at end of unit: _____	

As teachers become more experienced, their lesson plans may become more truncated, making perfect sense to them but looking like just a bunch of notes to someone else. As stated earlier, the important component of this record is that it is consistent. Once you have adopted a format, try to stick with that format for the entire year.

Standard: _____
Objective: _____
Sponge: _____
Instruction/Pages of textbook: _____
Activity: _____
Homework: _____

After you have decided on a format, there are some key elements that should be included in every lesson: standards and objectives, necessary materials or equipment, anticipatory set, explanation or teacher input, student activities, alternative activities, closure, homework, and assessments (Burke, 2002). Including all of this information in your lessons represents the thought that has gone into your instruction.

Lesson plans as records are important to you professionally. "The lesson is where education takes place" (Slavin, 2003). If you fail to

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keep accurate records of your daily lessons, you leave yourself open to questions about your effectiveness as a teacher, your goals for your students, your commitment as a professional, your ability to build student knowledge, and your organization as a player in your larger school setting.

Every teacher has heard the question, “Why do we need to learn this stuff?” I heard it most often last year during my poetry unit. The students had the course syllabus, which showed the state standards the unit was addressing, and they were familiar with the end-of-unit assessment they were required by the district to complete. Still, “When will we ever use this again?”

Faced with these questions, I reviewed my lesson plans. It was clear that I hadn’t made the assignments and information pertinent enough to the lives of my students or I wouldn’t have been plagued by these questions. Course syllabi and quarter assessments are motivation enough for some students, but others want to know why the course syllabi and quarter assessments require they become familiar with this information. It was true, only a select few would ever be moved to write poetry for a living or a hobby, so why must they all learn the information? After reviewing my lesson plans, I did some adjustments and spent a day looking at how much money is spent in America on greeting cards. Then we wrote our own greeting cards using metaphors, similes, personification, rhymes, and rhythms. Suddenly, students saw how learning about poetry applied to their lives.

In my lesson plans, I knew my destination and so did my students. Convincing them to take the trip with me meant that I had to make a stop along the way that they enjoyed. Having a plan, knowing my map, gave me the flexibility to adjust to the needs of my students. Lesson plans have not prevented me from basing my instruction on my students’ needs. Actually, they help me to meet their needs more effectively.

ASSIGNMENT RECORDS

The next set of documents that will grow naturally out of your daily activities with your students is your assignment records. Assignments will be listed in your daily lesson plans, but it is important to have access to a document separate from your daily lesson plan book that lists all assignments completed in your class.

Many teachers write their daily assignments on the white board for students to copy. I have visited many classrooms in which the teacher not only had the assignments written on the board, but also had a calendar posted in the back of the classroom that had all the assignments listed. Such calendars are a great help for students to learn the importance of time-management and for students who have been absent, especially if the assignment has been erased from the board. Finally, many teachers print a weekly or monthly list of assignments due in the class for students to refer to during the course of a unit. Some teachers also keep

track of their assignments using a computer grading program such as *Grade Machine* or *Making the Grade*. This option allows teachers to print out a list of in-class assignments, homework assignments, assessments, and projects.

However you decide to keep track of the assignments in your class, you must be prepared to provide the list on demand. I have worked with many teachers who write the daily assignments on the board with the expectation that every student will copy the assignments. When a child fails to do this and a parent calls, it is not enough to explain that the expectation is that every child should copy the assignments from the board. Once this expectation has been explained, it then is pertinent to provide the parent or student with a copy of the assignments, or at least an opportunity to copy the assignments again (from the calendar posted in class). Failing to do so leaves you open to criticism for your lack of reciprocity in ensuring every student's success.

Assignment Sheet

Monday: Textbook or materials needed: Pages:

Title of assignment:

Directions:

Tuesday: Textbook or materials needed: Pages:

Title of assignment:

Directions:

Wednesday: Textbook or materials needed: Pages:

Title of assignment:

Directions:

Thursday: Textbook or materials needed: Pages:

Title of assignment:

Directions:

Friday: Textbook or materials needed: Pages:

Title of assignment:

Directions:

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A sample assignment record for an entire month may look like this:

Month of May Assignments

May 3–7

Read pages 45–57 of textbook

Answer question on pages 58–59

Complete worksheets provided in class

Provide resources for unit project

May 10–14

Read pages 61–68 of textbook

Answer question on pages 69–70

Complete worksheets provided in class

Provide outline or plan for unit project

May 17–21

Read handout chapter provided by teacher

Write summary of chapter, including key points

Provide a list of materials needed to complete unit project

Organize lecture notes for notebook

May 24–28

Review for end of unit assessment to be taken on Friday

Turn in unit notebook by Wednesday

Turn in unit project rough draft

Sign up for project presentations for next week

Once you have generated this list, you will want to keep several copies on hand for parent or student questions and file several copies for your records.

WORKSHEETS

Providing opportunities for students to successfully practice a skill taught in class and providing pencil-and-paper time that prepares students for pencil-and-paper assessments is an integral part of your planning. Worksheets—for lack of a better term—provide these opportunities.

Busy work is not the same as paper-and-pencil work that allows practice time to reinforce and extend concepts learned in class. Many “instructional strategies that engage the brain” can be done with a published or teacher-generated run-off such as: “drawing/art, graphic organizers, semantic maps, word webs, metaphors, analogies and similes, mnemonic devices [or guided] writing” (Tate, 2003). It is important that classroom

time not be filled with busywork, but with meaningful instructional time. When you come across a worksheet that yields the desired results, you will want to keep track of it for future use.

Keeping track of which worksheets you have used in your classroom, whether they are teacher-generated or taken from a textbook, is vital for recording opportunities provided to students for skills practice.

With a course syllabus, lesson plans, and an assignment sheet, your students have a destination, a vehicle for making the trip, and a map to follow. Worksheets are like the street signs or the landmarks to help students plot the success of their trip. Keeping track of these documents by placing a copy of each worksheet, the date each worksheet was used, and a key for the completion for each worksheet will help make your teaching day more manageable.

I've been in meetings with students and their parents in which I was accused of losing papers. If you teach for very long, you too will eventually be accused of this. It happens to the best of us.

Sitting with a student and parents who are sure you have been irresponsible with a student's papers can be unnerving. Being prepared with your lesson book, a list of assignments, and copies of the student's other work takes the conversation away from whether or not you lost a paper and focuses the conversation on keeping the expectations for the class clear for all involved.

Often, when the parents see how prepared you are for the meeting with all of your records, and when the student actually sees a copy of the work in question, it turns out to be a big misunderstanding and everyone leaves feeling like the problem can be solved. So many times, once students see a copy of the assignment, they recognize it and it's in their folder ungraded because they didn't realize the assignment had ever been collected.

Keeping a file of all worksheets used in your classroom helps to prevent misunderstandings about lost work, helps to keep your curriculum focused on new information and the review and practice of skills, and informs your decision making for future lesson planning.

GENERATED DIRECTIONS FOR ASSIGNMENTS/PROJECTS

As a teacher, there will be many times when you will look at the unit to be presented and your daily lesson plans and want to create or modify a project to reach all learners. After all, you know in order to reach all of your students, you will need not only to rely on the materials and assignments provided to you in the textbook, but you will want to use many teaching methods for effective instruction (Jonson, 2002). Thus, you will be responsible for creating directions or worksheets to meet the needs of your project.

I remember when I began teaching elementary physical education. I had a class of first graders out on the blacktop that I was trying to organize for a game, and lining them up seemed like a good idea.

"Form one line," I announced confidently. My class of five- and six-year-olds milled around chaotically. How hard was it to form one line?

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I announced my directions several times until my lead teacher, Scott Kirby, wandered over and announced, "Everyone, I need your toes on this line facing me." Within seconds, the first graders were in one line, facing me, ready for the game.

"Form one line" meant several things to my group. Some students were trying to get behind the person they thought was the head of the line. Others were trying to stand side-by-side, but they were all unsure of which way to face. Still others were waiting patiently for the directions to be made clearer or for someone else to physically move them to their spot. I learned a valuable lesson that day. Clear directions are pertinent to the success of my students.

When you plan a project or create your own worksheet, several things need to be included. Obviously, clear, step-by-step instructions are vital. A clearly posted due date is important so there are no misunderstandings about when the project is to be turned in. Finally, expectations for a successful project will make completing the project easier to accomplish for your students.

Each of these elements document the care you as the teacher have taken to prepare students to be successful with the project. With these elements documented, there should be no questions, debates, arguments, or disputes about the project or worksheet.

Other elements you may want to include are the standard the project or worksheet addresses, the materials needed to complete the project or worksheet, and the grading rubric or checklist for assignment completion to be used to assess the project or worksheet.

Letter to the Author Book Report

For your first book report, you will be composing a letter to the author of the book you read. You will write the letter in a business style format. You will be required to introduce yourself to the author, explain why you chose his or her book to read, and describe your favorite part of the book. Yes, the letters will be sent.

Letter to the Author Book Report

Due: Friday, October 14

Date, greeting, salutation (10 points) _____

Your address (10 points) _____

Author's name and address (10 points) _____

Paragraph introducing yourself (15 points) _____

Paragraph explaining why you read the book you chose (15 points) _____

Paragraph describing your favorite part (15 points) _____

Pride in presentation: ink, neatness (10 points) _____

Mechanics (10 points) _____

TOTAL: _____

If there is any question as to a grade a student receives on a project or worksheet you have created, this clear documentation will resolve all issues by delineating expectations for students. It is important that all students receive a copy of these instructions and that you keep several copies handy for questions you may receive from a parent and a copy to file for future reference. If the project is successful, you will want to use it again, or make adjustments for the following years as you gain more experience with the implementation of your creative ideas.

Planning for your directions requires several components:

Directions for Project

Objective: What is to be accomplished

Materials:

Method: Steps to accomplishment

- 1.
- 2.
3. etc.

Special considerations:

Due Date:

Filling in this information whenever generating directions will help clarify the project for yourself and for your students.

MATCHING ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENTS TO STANDARDS

An important movement in public education today is the implementation of national and state standards. As the pressure grows for teachers to align their curriculum with the standards, it is important for you as a teacher to begin the process for your curriculum.

Many districts or departments are already in the process of aligning their curriculum and so for many teachers, much of this work will have been done. The department in my district, for example, meets over the summer and aligns assignments, assessments, and readings from the district-adopted textbooks with the state standards.

If you are new to the district, check with your department chair to see if there isn't already a document that looks similar to this one. If not, don't despair. There is an easy way to begin to record how your curriculum meets the standards.

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Quarter Standards for Eighth-Grade English					
QTR	Standard(s) Blueprint	Key Words and Concepts	Assessment	Topics/Best Practices	Resources
1	Reading/Vocab Word analysis 1.0 Vocabulary and concept development 1.1 and 1.3	Idioms, analogies, metaphors, similes Definition and restatement and context clues	Lesson 1-6 More Abravocabra	Word Wall, Conversations, Vocabulary games (pp. 11-21), sentences	More Abravocabra Lessons 1-6
1	Reading Vocabulary and Concept Development 1.1 Literary Response and Analysis 3.1 and 3.6	Metaphor Simile Personification Symbolism Ballad Sonnet Lyric Couplet Ode	Teacher selected quizzes Reading comprehension Assessment: "Oh Captain, My Captain" "Mother to Son" "Lesson of the Moth"	Poetry Poster Picture Poetry writing Compare and contrast simile poem Ode to a personal item	The Language of Literature "Willow and Gingko" "Macavity the Mystery Cat" "Lord Randall" "Paul Revere's Ride" "The Raven" Others to be selected by teacher
1	Writing Writing Strategies 1.0, 1.1 Writing Applications 2.2	Six Traits: Ideas Organization Conventions Interpretation Analytical response Inference	Six Traits First Quarter Writing Assessment	Practice essay with poem response	Analyzing a poem
1	Listening and Speaking Speaking applications 2.2	Insightful interpretation Text-to-self connections		Poem and prose comparison	"Boats in a Fog" "Fog" "Winter's Fog"
1	Written and Oral English Language Conventions Written and Oral Language Conventions 1.1 and 1.5	Sentence and its parts Prepositions Capitalization Punctuation Verbs Diagramming	Standards plus grammar assessment	Diagramming sentences <i>Basic Firsts:</i> <i>Diagramming sentences</i> book A & B	Language Network

The first thing you will want to do is download a copy of the standards from your state and print them out. Once you have done this, and as you progress through the year, simply note on the document which assignments you give and where they fit into the standards. At the end of the school year, you will have created a working document for how your curriculum matches your standards.

The next step is to inform students and their parents of how the curriculum aligns with the standards. There is a big push for all stakeholders to have all the information about standards and curriculum. Providing students and their parents with a copy of this document assures everyone that you are providing the quality education all children are entitled to.

SUBSTITUTE PLANS

The final document that must be created in the course of your school year is a substitute plan. None of us likes to be absent from school. Being absent requires us to write clear lesson plans for someone else to follow, to gather and organize all the necessary materials for the lesson plan to be implemented, to provide records for your substitute teacher to guarantee a smooth procedural day, and to trust fate with all of your well-laid plans. Then we spend the entire day we are absent worrying that Luis is going to be off-task because we are not there to provide close physical proximity to reassure him of his ability, that Stephanie is going to forget to turn in her work because she usually must be reminded, or that Danny will ask so many questions about the lesson that the rest of the class will never be able to complete it. We spend the day imagining our return to class the next day to discover the materials in disarray, a stack of papers higher than we expected, and students bombarding us with how the substitute messed everything up. It is so much easier just to go to school.

But there will be those times that it is necessary for you to be absent, and it is vital that learning continues in your absence. A well-written substitute plan not only makes the day easier for the substitute teacher, but ensures that students will continue with their activities and learning without your presence.

If you are keeping a daily lesson book and have to be absent, it will be easy to simply use the scheduled lesson for your substitute plans. You may want to make some adjustments based on classroom management or availability of materials. It is easier for the substitute teacher to manage seatwork and books and paper, but if you have confidence in your substitute teacher, then little needs to be done to the lesson plan you have already written.

Substitute Teacher Plans

Introduction: (Logistics of the classroom)

Daily Schedule:

Materials:

Teacher's role in lesson:

Student's role in lesson:

Closure:

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Listing times needed to complete each part of the lesson may be helpful for the substitute teacher for pacing of the lesson. Also, setting out materials the substitute will need ensures that class time will not be wasted on searching for materials. Other things to leave for your substitute teacher are a daily schedule of activities, attendance forms and procedures, hall passes and procedures, seating charts, and classroom rules and consequences (Kottler, Kottler, & Kottler, 2004).

Sample Substitute Lesson Plans**Welcome to Room 29**

English 7/8

October 1, 2003

I am out today due to illness. Seating charts are on the clipboard on the podium. Students who are helpful have a star by their names. Hall passes are next to the clipboard. Detention slips and referrals are on the first shelf. Please let me know how the day went by making notations on this plan, or by writing a note. Thanks.

Tuesday Schedule: 5,6,1,2

Fifth period: 7:45–9:12

7:45–8:05 SILENT READING

This gives you time to take roll, get organized, and prepare for class. Students are to be reading from a book for their book report. Some students are done with their books and may borrow magazines from the bookcase. That is allowed.

8:05–8:10 ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Tell students to hang onto their homework until I return. We will take notes and correct today's homework when I return.

8:10–8:40 Get Blue literature books from behind white board and have students open to The Nobel Experiment on page _____.

Play audiotape and have students read along. It is ready, just push Play.

8:40–9:00 Worksheets are on my desk. Hand out and allow students to finish them on their own. They may confer with their neighbors if done quietly. Collect.

9:00–9:10 If students finish early, have them answer the questions at the end of the selection.

9:10–9:12 All work is to be turned in. Collect literature books.

(Continued)

Nutrition Break

Sixth Period 9:27–10:46 Conference

First Period: 10:53–12:14

10:53–11:13 Silent reading

11:13–11:23 Put first transparency on the overhead projector: 'ANSWERS TO HOMEWORK.' Have students correct their own homework. The grammar lesson is Chapter 4, Lessons 5 & 6 (marked for you).

11:23–11:33 Put second transparency up, 'CHAPTER FOUR LESSONS 7 & 8 NOTES' Read over and allow students to copy. Remind students that tonight's homework is these lessons.

11:33–12:10 LITERATURE BOOKS. Allow students to choose a poem from the literature book, and answer the questions at the end of the poem, then respond to the poem using the attached directions, which they each have a copy of. They may confer with their neighbor as long as they are doing so quietly.

12:10–12:14 Collect literature book work and clean up. Literature books may stay out; the next class is using them.

LUNCH

Third Period: 12:54–2:15

12:54–1:04 Silent reading

This class is the same as first period (directly above). This class can be rather rowdy. Please be firm with them about their behavior.

2:10 Please have literature books returned to the bookshelf.

2:15 Dismissal.

Thanks. Diane

Finally, ask the substitute to leave you a note describing how the day went. You know when you return the students will provide you with plenty of feedback about the day. It is essential that you also have a record of the substitute's impression of how the day progressed. When you return from your absence, before you tackle the messy materials or the stack of papers to be graded, look at the plans you left the substitute and any notes he or she wrote on those plans and the note left for you about the day, and file both of these documents for future reference. These documents inform you about writing better substitute lesson plans in the future and document how the day went in your absence.

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Your records as a professional teacher are important documents for your own needs, to improve the quality of your instruction; for your students' needs, to provide them with clear objectives and expectations that will result in success; for your students' parents' needs, to clarify for them what is happening while their child is in your care; for your administrators' needs, to provide documentation for evaluations and reports to the district office; and finally for your district's needs, to document your professionalism in case there is ever a question regarding your classroom practices.

Managing these records requires you to keep a daily lesson book and a file where copies of all these documents can be accessed with ease. If you choose to keep these records on a file on your computer, be sure to back the file up regularly to a floppy disk. I also recommend printing a hard copy to keep on file in your desk drawer for those spur-of-the-moment meetings that may occur in your school year.

These records are the backbone of all the other documents you will want to create and keep for your school year, including the records of assessments used in your classroom.