Graduate Teaching Certificate Program

Writing Effective Lesson Plans: An Overview*

"A Lesson Plan describes how learning is to be organized and facilitated in the classroom and documents specific plans for teaching. It is a written document composed of learning objectives that show alignment with [state and/or departmental requirements] as well as descriptions of all assessments, instructional activities, needed materials and resources, and wrap-up/reflection activities for a particular class or series of classes. Lesson plans may take a variety of forms."

Lesson plans are valuable because they:

- stimulate teachers to consider all the elements of a great class—modeling, sequencing, reviewing, and checking—which are more effective if planned for than if left to chance.
- address the specific needs (which can change often) and learning styles of each student, as well as the learning and teaching styles of the teacher.
- provide an excellent basis for discussion between peers, program director and teacher, and teachers and students.
- invite innovation—teachers can get stuck in comfortable habits, and busy schedules tempt teachers to "wing it" rather than plan out a class; time spent on lesson planning often leads teachers out of their ruts.
- help teachers be prepared, feel more confident, and deal better with surprises.
- deepen the teacher's own knowledge and skills.
- provide a good record of what actually occurs in the classroom, which can form the bases for future classes or can help substitute teachers cover classes effectively.