Chapter Three

Lesson Plans

The making of lesson plans is something over which a substitute has little control. The making of a lesson plan is the domain of the regular classroom teacher. The substitute is expected to carry out the lesson plan that he or she is given. Sometimes the plan is easy to follow; at other times, the plan is extremely difficult to execute.

The regular teacher should remember that the plan is not for the regular teacher, but for another person. The plan should be clear, concise, and have enough road marks, but not bog down in endless details that may confuse rather than aid the substitute. A well-made lesson plan left for a substitute is a partnership agreement that will benefit both the regular teacher and the substitute while fulfilling the ultimate objective of educating students.

A good lesson plan for the regular teacher is not always a good lesson plan for a substitute. For the regular teacher, who is totally familiar with the students, the subject matter, school procedures, and other school-related matters, the plan may be very easy to successfully implement. For a substitute, the same plan may be a swamp, ready to drag the substitute under the murky waters of classroom chaos.

What are the dos and don'ts of making good lesson plans and carrying them out? What kind of lesson plan is best for achieving maximum results for the partnership of regular teacher and substitute teacher?

Plans should be readily available and readable. Sometimes teachers jot down, scribble, scrawl, whatever, a set of blurred, poorly written instructions on whatever scrap of paper happens to be available. A student who handed in such a sloppy piece of work would be in danger of receiving an "F." The lesson plan doesn't have to be perfect, but it should be easy to read and able to convey quickly what the substitute is to do.

Some teachers will write the lesson plan on the board. That is fine, but what if a student, the school custodian, or someone else erases it? No lesson plan. "Help! What do I do now?" If a duplicate copy, written on paper, exists for the substitute, no problem. Writing a lesson plan or parts of a lesson plan on the board can be beneficial to a substitute, but only if a backup copy exists.

The same is true for plans that may be written on an overhead transparency and left on the overhead projector. What happens if that piece of plastic is lost or

misplaced? What happens if a student comes in and slips that piece of plastic into a notebook and the sub never receives it and has no idea where it is? Is it possible that a student might intentionally smudge out what is on the transparency while the sub is taking attendance? In most cases, students are not out to destroy a lesson plan, but strange things can happen in a classroom.

Sub plans sent in by fax are also at risk of disappearing. What happens if the computer doesn't work, if the office doesn't give or send the plan to the substitute? Many things can go wrong or take up a sub's time in trying to locate the fax. No lesson plan and it's panic time for the substitute!

Then there is the teacher who says, "Call me at home and I'll give you the plans over the telephone." This creates multiple opportunities for misunderstanding what the teacher wants the substitute to do. A written set of plans, where the teacher has to sit down and write the plans, is far more reliable than plans that have been copied from a telephone conversation while the teacher is usually ad-libbing them.

Another lesson plan that can easily vanish is a lesson plan that depends totally on student participation. "Shawn and Michael will debate Jennifer and Melissa today. Don't worry; the kids will do it all. Just take roll and sit back and enjoy the debate. It will take all period."

What debate? Melissa was absent and Michael didn't feel like debating anyway. Jennifer said that Melissa had all of their debate notes and she couldn't debate without her. It's panic time for the substitute!

Student participation lesson plans are fine for a sub, as long as a backup plan exists. "If for some reason Shawn, Michael, Jennifer, and Melissa can't debate today, give out Worksheet 122. Have the students write their answers on the worksheets and collect them at the end of the period."

When a lesson plan is designed for student participation, it should not be overly complicated and should not overly involve the substitute. The regular teacher might be able to handle multiple tasks while having students participate in an activity, but a sub, who is trying to figure out a lesson plan, maintain discipline, and direct students in the activity, should not be required to take a major part in the activity.

Sometimes a substitute is given the instruction "Read the narration to the class as the kids read aloud the play." This unnecessarily constricts the sub's ability to control a class—the sub is expected to monitor the behavior of the class while having his or her nose tied to a book. For the regular teacher, who knows the kids and is familiar with the play, this is fine. For the sub, who is trying to stay with the play, Charlie may be talking to Joe in the third row while Susy, who has lost all interest in the play, is demanding a pass to the bathroom. The sub has to be able to monitor class behavior. Tying a sub to any particular task that keeps the sub from monitoring class behavior should not be a part of any lesson plan.

Sometimes a lesson plan will call for the substitute to grade students. "Give each student a participation grade. I usually give the students up to five points per day for participation. Mark the participation points in my grade book."

No! No! No! A substitute should never be required to enter a grade for a student. That is the responsibility of the regular teacher who has set the criteria for grading and knows the students. There are too many variables involved with the substitute doing the grading. "Ms. Lesser always gives me five points, even if I only say one thing. I deserve more than the two points you gave me." Having a class correct papers after an assignment is a different matter. "Ms. Boatright wants you to exchange papers as you usually do. She left me the answers and

I'll read them to you while you correct the papers." The sub is not overly constricted in reading the class answers and can still monitor the behavior of the class. The sub is not entering grades in a grade book; the sub merely collects the papers after the correcting is done.

There is only so much that a substitute can do in a period. The chief task of a substitute is to maintain order while instructing students on what they are to do. There is no time for a substitute to give grades, complete a checklist on each student, or engage in any activity that takes the substitute's focus away from ensuring that the classroom is an orderly place of learning.

The definition of "orderly place of learning" has in recent years come to embrace an even larger array of activities. Some might say that what students do, particularly in middle school, is "play games." For many teachers, the quiet concentration on a math problem or the "No talking; read the story by yourself." has become a full-blown activity with students doing everything but running up the walls. Good or bad? Opinions vary.

The regular teacher, who may do fine with a class doing "full-blown-games," should not expect the substitute to carry out such games with the same expertise. If you are a substitute who is faced with an overly complicated game or "wild activity," do the best that you can with it, but if you can't handle it, don't. You may have to modify it to keep the kids under control or completely shut it down if necessary. Hopefully, no teacher will expect you to grade such an activity.

Teachers' grade books are best not made available to a substitute. Grade books and attendance books are too precious to risk with a substitute, even when grades and attendance have been transferred to a computer. The substitute would not intentionally lose, misplace, or alter the grade book, but it could happen. Students have been known to take advantage of a regular teacher's absence to try to alter a grade book. Why risk it, when there is no need to risk it?

Substitutes should not grade; therefore, there is no need for a grade book. Substitutes should leave a list of absentees for the regular teacher, as well as submit absentee names to the attendance office, if so required. As long as a substitute has a class list (often a computer printout, supplied by the office) and a seating chart (supplied by the teacher), a substitute can perform the functions of "*non*-grading" and taking attendance.

Henry David Thoreau left to posterity the great cry "Simplify!" Henry lived in the woods and never faced a class of twenty-first-century students, but his nineteenth-century recommendation on life is very apropos to leaving lesson plans for a substitute.

Simplify—do not leave overly complex lesson plans for a substitute. The regular teacher has no need to impress the substitute with a brilliant lesson plan that shows the substitute how knowledgeable the regular teacher is. The substitute, who thinks that he or she is bored with just passing out a worksheet and having the kids do it, should remember that substituting is a job—you are not there to be entertained. Most subs will thank the regular teacher for leaving something that is easy to accomplish while permitting the sub time to monitor student behavior.

Teachers will sometimes leave a notation similar to the following: "You've got an easy day. Just show the video to all my classes." Easy day or not so easy day? It depends.

Most substitutes today are familiar with a variety of audiovisual equipment. Usually AV assignments go well, providing the equipment is available, works properly, the substitute knows how to operate it, and the class has been properly prepared for an AV assignment.

It is the responsibility of the regular teacher to see that the substitute doesn't have to run all over the building to get a VCR or some other piece of equipment. It is the responsibility of the regular teacher to have adequate assurance that the equipment will work properly before

a lesson plan is left for a substitute involving the equipment. If the piece of equipment has peculiarities that may make it difficult to operate, instructions should be left for the substitute. "The VCR only works on channel 3 on both the TV and the VCR. Student announcements come in at the end of period 2 (9:33–9:38) on channel 58. You will need to switch the cord on the back and then re-switch it when the announcements are over. A number of students in the class know how to make the switch. Kevin, Carey, and Liz have been informed that they will be doing the switching for you."

For a regular teacher to prepare an AV assignment, sometimes it takes almost nothing, depending on the maturity level of the class and what it is the regular teacher wants to accomplish with the assignment. Some classes are relatively mature: "Have the students watch the last forty minutes of *Romeo and Juliet.* The video is set where you need to start. Sorry, but this VCR has no working 'counter' on it, so you will have to watch where you come in and then rewind to that point for the next class."

For some classes the regular teacher may leave something similar to the following: "Distribute the question sheets before you start the video. Make sure that the kids all sit in their assigned seats. Have the two students in the front corners move to the back seats in their rows, so that they can see the TV. Have students write answers on the question sheets during the video. Collect question sheets at the end of the video. Leave me the names of students who are not paying attention to the video."

A regular teacher should never "throw a video up in the air for a substitute"; in other words, a video is not for the purpose of allowing students to move by their friends, sit and talk, and socialize while absorbing nothing of the video. Videos should not be used for the purpose of killing a class period or giving the students a free period. Videos are instructional devices, and the regular teacher, when leaving plans for a substitute, should build into the plans for a substitute whatever it takes to ensure that the video is instructional.

As with any other assignment that can vanish, a backup assignment should be provided. "If something happens that you can't watch the video, have the students answer the questions on pages 95 through 98 of *Grammar for Today,* the red grammar books on the shelf in the back of the room. Collect work at the end of the period and check to see if we still have a total of thirty-three books on the shelf."

The regular teacher, in preparing a lesson plan, should not "overbook" or "underbook." It is difficult to know just how much time it will take to complete an assignment; usually, the more experienced the teacher is, the easier it is to judge how long a particular assignment will take students. If there is doubt, it is better to "overbook" than to "underbook."

A substitute who gives an assignment to students that only takes fifteen minutes in a forty-minute period is in trouble. On the other hand, there is no need for a lesson plan that lays out an hour and a half of work for a fifty-minute period and instructs the substitute to collect it at the end of the period, thinking that it will keep the kids so busy that they will not have time to get into trouble.

Why have the substitute collect work at all? Kids often do better for a substitute if they have an end-of-period deadline. If it is not due until the next day, the kids have a greater tendency to play around in class. "I'll do it at home tonight. I'd rather talk to Jamie now. I can't talk to her tonight, but I can do my work tonight."

A lesson plan that usually works well for a substitute has one part that takes up most of the period and then is collected at the end of the period. A second part of the assignment is open-ended and is not collected by the substitute: "Ms. Galviano wants you to get into your

reading groups and read 'The Flight of the Dove.' The handout I am going to give you has seven questions on the end of it. You will have to answer them as a group, on a sheet of paper with all of your names at the top of the paper. Don't write on the handouts. When you have finished, turn in the paper and the handout. That part of the assignment is due today. After you have finished that, do this week's vocabulary assignment, which starts on page 202 of your vocabulary books. That is due at the beginning of the period tomorrow."

Long periods, particularly "block periods" of an hour and a half or so, may require more than one activity to keep the focus and interest of the class:

1. (30 minutes) Have the students watch the video "Birds of Brazil."
2. (30 minutes) After the video, have them write down descriptions for three of the birds. They choose the bird's and the description for each bird should be about a page (one-side).
3. (20 minutes) Have students read descriptions to the class, without using the names of the birds they are describing. Other students listen and write down three characteristics of each bird. When the class has correctly identified the bird, the students add the name of the bird to the three characteristics.
4. (10 minutes) During the last ten minutes of the class, have each student, on a clean sheet of notebook paper, draw his or her favorite bird and list its characteristics. Collect what they have done today, with the exception of their drawings, which will be due at the beginning of Wednesday's class.

Of great help in explaining an assignment to a class, particularly a multiple-part assignment, is for the substitute to list on the board the main parts of the assignment. That way you won't get a multitude of questions similar to "What do we do after the video?" and "How many birds did you say we had to write down and what are we supposed to write?"

When having a substitute give a test, adequate instructions should be left for the substitute:

Give the attached test on Chapter 20.

Students may not use their books or notes—have them take everything off their desks except their tests.

Test will take approximately twenty-five minutes, but some may take longer or less.

Have students write on the test.

Collect each test as the student completes it and then have the students who are finished read silently pages 125–135 (molecules) in their science books.

Inform students that any talking or cheating during or after the test will result in a zero (warn students first, and then leave me his or her name if the student commits a second offense).

As a substitute monitoring class behavior, you have to be aware of every student in the room. If the teacher has boxed the teacher's desk off in the corner of the room, hiding behind bookcases or some other barricade, you should stand or sit elsewhere so that you can observe every student in the room. Students scrunched down on the floor or in a corner of the room or sitting behind a barricade won't do. Students working behind a separate wall partition or

students reading in the hall outside of the classroom can be a problem in monitoring class behavior. When you monitor kids you can't see, it becomes a matter of trust, rather than an objective observing. As a sub you usually don't know the kids well enough to know whom you can trust.

One hopes that, as a substitute, you won't be placed in a situation of "blind trust." Exceptions are many: yearbook, newspaper, photography, student government, drama, and a host of other classes that require classes to be broken up into smaller groups to go to various other places. It is up to the regular teacher to leave instructions on where and why kids should be out of sight. In such cases, often students have been placed in charge of activities or groups and it may turn out to be a pleasant situation. School newspaper editors, as an example, are usually wonderful in keeping kids on track while you are just there as the "adult presence."

In presenting a lesson to the "usual class" of thirty or so students in a "normal class," awareness of every student applies. The kid up-front who recites may not be heard by the student in the back of the room. While you get bogged down with a mini-discussion with two students on one side of the room, the rest of the class may drift off into talking and not paying attention. Awareness of all students and bringing them into the flow of the lesson is a way to minimize discipline problems and maximize learning.

"Gretchen is telling me up here that 37.5 is the correct answer. What do you ladies in the back think? Is she right?"

Your physical presence can help refocus a student or students who have drifted off into conversation while most members of the class are in focus with the lesson. Just move over by the two kids who are talking. Your physical presence usually gives them the message that they are being disruptive.

Moving about the room also causes students who are reciting to speak up so that you can hear them, providing you are not standing right next to the reciting student. "Chad, I'm sorry but I can't hear you. Could you turn a little more toward the class and speak up?"

Awareness! Awareness! Awareness of all of the class members! It is a skill that good teachers, regular and substitute, develop over time.

In some rooms, kids write all over desks. Other rooms have desks that are perfectly clean. What you do as a substitute is try to follow the pattern that has been set by the regular teacher. There is no sense in chastising a kid for drawing on a desk when every desk in the room is a monument to graffiti. If desks are clean and it is fairly obvious that students are not permitted to write on them, sometimes all it takes is walking over to a desk where a student is scribbling and tapping your finger on the desk while you go on with the lesson. At other times, it may take the admonishment "Get it off, please." Beyond that, you may have to leave the notation to the regular teacher: "Jerry Caldwell, period 2, wrote all over his desk and wouldn't stop when I asked him to."

Leaving good notes for the regular teacher is a responsibility of the substitute. Sometimes all it takes is the notation "Kids in all classes did a nice job. No problems. Thanks for a nice day."

Other times may take more reporting. "Periods 1, 2, 3, and 6 were great, but period 5 was difficult to handle and I didn't get through the entire lesson. We left off at page 27 instead of completing all of the assigned work. Here are several names of the troublemakers who disrupted the class: Steve Willows, Cheryl Bumgarten, Alex Madrid, Jessica Martin. These four people insisted on talking and not paying attention."

As a substitute, you are responsible for reporting back to the regular teacher enough information that the regular teacher knows what you did and can pick it up the next day without any problems:

Finished lesson 5 (collected papers).

Left video set where all classes left off except period 2. Had fire drill during period 2. Period 2 did finish lesson 5, but did not get to watch any of the video.

All classes were well behaved, but period 3 was a little difficult to settle down after the fire drill.

Sometimes regular teachers will not want to hear what you feel you must say in your report. They are professionals, and after all, "you are just a sub" in the eyes of the regular teacher. This line of reasoning does not alter the fact that sometimes the regular teacher knows less about teaching than the substitute knows.

Be diplomatic in your report. Instead of "Your students were rude, arrogant, totally out-of-control, lazy, and uncooperative," use something like "I had a difficult day. You must have your hands full with some of these kids. I don't envy you dealing with them on a day-to-day basis." The regular teacher gets the message and is more likely to respond to the criticism of the students than if you hit the regular teacher with both barrels, making the regular teacher feel like an incompetent.

Often, how a report is written is as important as what the report says. Show concern for the regular teacher's feelings. Use a little tact. The regular teacher probably knows that he or she has the biggest bunch of "turkeys" since public education began; you don't have to beat the regular teacher over the head with that fact in your report.

Your report is to inform the regular teacher what went on during his or her absence; it is not to pass judgment on the regular teacher. "You are one of the worst teachers for whom I have ever substituted. Your lesson plan was a joke, and you obviously have no classroom control. I'll never substitute for you again, so please don't request me." Inappropriate and not for the purpose for which a substitute report is intended. Inform the regular teacher what transpired on a particular day; don't make evaluations that set you up as an educational expert for things about which you may know very little.

In writing your report to the regular teacher, remember that the regular teacher operates under time constraints, as you do. After having a sub, a regular teacher does not want to come in and read a five-page report while getting ready for first hour. Be concise, convey necessary information, but don't run on with a college dissertation. Make it easy for the regular teacher to pick it up where you left off, just as, hopefully, the regular teacher made it easy for you to come in and pick it up where he or she left off.

The regular teacher also owes the sub the courtesy of reading the report and taking it seriously. Sub reports can be a valuable source of feedback that can help a regular teacher improve the learning environment. Maybe he or she won't need a sub again until three months later, but in the meantime, did the sub's report give the teacher any ideas for improvement? Furthermore, did the sub seem comfortable with the type of lesson plan and instructions that were left? Is there something the teacher could change for the next sub he or she has?

A long-term substitute assignment involves a change of tactics from a short-term assignment. The substitute must assume more of the role of the regular teacher. Perhaps the regular teacher is out for six weeks on maternity leave or is out four weeks recovering from surgery. For that length of time, the substitute must be "the teacher."

On a one- or two-day substitute assignment the substitute attempts to walk in the shoes of the regular teacher. As the period of time is extended, the shoes begin to pinch more and more. No two individuals can teach class exactly the same. Successful teaching is a blending of

the individual teacher's personality with the "personality" of the class and the subject matter. What works for one teacher doesn't necessarily work for another. The longer the substitute tries to fit into the personality of the regular teacher, the more difficult it becomes to do so.

When taking over a class that has been in operation for quite some time, where the class expectations and educational pattern have been set, it is suggested that the long-term sub go slowly in changing that pattern. As the days extend, modify the pattern to suit your own needs and personality, remembering that at some point the class will be returned to the regular teacher, unless it is an end-of-the-year assignment.

In the case of a teacher who has been run out of the class by unruly students and who will not return, you may wish to establish your own standards quickly. Abrupt changes are likely to bring howls from the class and perhaps even the parents. You will need to do a balancing act, instituting the changes that are necessary to bring the class under control and establish a sound educational pattern, without having the class and the parents revolt so much that you fall victim to the same thing that happened to the regular teacher.

If the regular teacher is expected to return, you should fit your grading into the regular teacher's method. This will ensure an easy return to the classroom for the regular teacher in the area of grading, with minimal student and parent complaints about variations.

Lesson plans are a different matter. For an extended period of time, a substitute cannot be expected to exactly follow a regular teacher's lesson plans. The shoes get more uncomfortable and difficult for the substitute to walk in. A substitute has to be able to gradually shift lesson plans to what is comfortable and successful for him or her.

"Ms. Mallory will be out for eight weeks, but don't worry about making lesson plans. She will fax them to you at the beginning of each week. All you have to do is follow them."

Bad idea. Lesson plans are rarely a static commodity. They should be changed to fit whatever situation arises and to conform to the interaction of teacher and students. Lock-step curriculums, where all teachers are expected to be on the same page at the same time, are a formula for stagnation and decay.

"Here is the curriculum guide. You figure out how to teach it and make sure the kids learn it. You are a professional who knows how to get the job done." Direction, without requiring teachers to be robots, is the way to successful learning.

Long-term substitutes, like regular teachers, need the freedom to make the curriculum come alive. Teachers need guidelines of where they should go so that they don't wander off into no man's land, but how they accomplish the task of getting the curriculum across to students should be left to the individual teacher—that is what being a "professional" is all about.

A regular teacher will make many lesson plans during a teaching career. A substitute who substitutes for any length of time will follow many lesson plans made by many different teachers. All lesson plans are not created equal. A substitute can hope for the best, and, one hopes, "roll with the punches" when a lesson plan is not the best.

Chapter Three Summary of Suggestions

1. Regular teachers should remember that the lesson plans they make for a substitute are for another person, not for themselves.
2. Lesson plans made for a substitute should be clear, concise, and not bogged down in details.

3. Regular teachers need to remember that a good lesson plan for them might not be a good lesson plan for a substitute.
4. Plans made for a substitute should be easy to read.
5. Lesson plans made for a substitute should not be written on the board, unless a back-up copy on paper exists.
6. Lesson plans for a substitute should not be written on an overhead transparency and left on an overhead projector.
7. Sending a fax may not be a good way to get lesson plans to a substitute.
8. Giving lesson plans to a substitute by telephone is usually not advisable.
9. A substitute should be provided with a written set of lesson plans.
10. A backup lesson plan that does not depend on student participation should be provided when a substitute is left a lesson plan that depends on student participation.
11. Lesson plans left for a substitute that involve student participation should not be overly complicated and not overly involve the substitute.
12. A short-term substitute should never be required to grade a student.
13. A short-term substitute should never be required to give grades, complete a checklist on each student, or engage in any activity that takes the substitute's focus away from ensuring that the classroom is an orderly place of learning.
14. Regular teachers should not expect substitutes to carry out overly complicated games or "wild activities."
15. When a lesson plan calls for an overly complicated game or "wild activity," the substitute should modify the plan or shut down the activity as needed to keep kids under control.
16. Teachers' grade books and attendance books should not be left for a substitute.
17. Class lists and seating charts should be provided to a substitute.
18. Substitutes should leave for the regular teacher a list of absentees, as well as follow any school attendance procedures.
19. Lesson plans left for a substitute should not be overly complex.
20. Teachers leaving an audiovisual plan for a substitute should also leave a non-audiovisual backup lesson plan in case the audiovisual assignment can't be carried out.
21. Teachers leaving an audiovisual lesson plan for a substitute should:
    - Make sure the equipment is readily available and leave adequate instructions for its operation.
    - Prepare the class for the audiovisual assignment and leave adequate instructions for the substitute on the execution of the assignment.
22. A regular teacher should not regard a substitute audiovisual day as a "free period" day or visitation day for students.
23. Lesson plans left for a substitute should not contain a great deal more than students can accomplish, unless some of the work is expected to be completed as homework.
24. Lesson plans left for a substitute should not contain a great deal less than students can accomplish, leaving students with little to do during the class period.
25. If in doubt as to how long it will take students to complete work, the regular teacher should assign more work rather than less.

26. An end-of-the-period deadline to hand in work is usually a good idea.
27. A two-part lesson plan, requiring work to be handed in at the end of the period and other work to be started in class and completed at home is usually a good idea.
28. Long periods, particularly "block periods," may require several assignments or activities to keep students interested and focused.
29. When giving a multi-part assignment, it is a good idea to list the main parts of the assignment on the board to avoid student confusion.
30. The regular teacher, when having a substitute give a test, should leave adequate instructions on how to give the test.
31. To adequately monitor student behavior, position yourself where you can observe every student in the room.
32. When presenting a lesson, be aware of every student in the room and keep all students focused on the learning.
33. Moving close to disruptive students can sometimes get them to behave better and refocus on learning.
34. Moving yourself about the room, instead of remaining stationary in front of the class, can be helpful in getting students to speak loudly enough that the other students can hear them.
35. When you observe students writing on desks, follow the pattern that seems to have been set by the regular teacher. If other desks are clean, tell the student doodler to stop scribbling on it; if other desks have markings on them, ignore the desk writer.
36. Leave good notes for the regular teacher, informative but not excessively long.
37. Be diplomatic in your report to the regular teacher, providing necessary information without being savagely critical.
38. The regular teacher should read the sub's report and take it seriously, using it as a source for future improvement if possible.
39. A long-term assignment involves changing some of your tactics from what you normally do as a short-term substitute.
40. With a long-term substitute assignment, you need to gradually, rather than abruptly, change the teaching pattern to fit your needs and teaching style, instead of being tied to the needs and style of the teacher for whom you are substituting.
41. If the regular teacher is expected to return at some time after a long-term absence, fit your grading into the regular teacher's method of grading.
42. As a long-term substitute, make your own lesson plans, rather than having the absent teacher or someone else make them for you.
43. Although states and school districts set guidelines for what is to be taught, teachers, including long-term substitutes, should be free to make lesson plans that they feel are the most effective in educating students.