
FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

Course Title: Charlotte Danielson's *A Framework for Teaching*

Presenter: Charlotte Danielson

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Charlotte Danielson's *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching*, defines teachers' responsibilities, which for education consultant and expert presenter Danielson fall into four domains: planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction, and professional responsibilities. Through lectures, classroom observations, and vigorous panel discussions, educators work through how to use the Framework to scrutinize and strengthen classroom teaching practices to improve student learning. Danielson and her panel assess classroom footage for strengths and weaknesses in each domain. At various intervals, participants pause to consider their experiences before and after they hear the panel members describe theirs. Educators then begin to assess their practice through Danielson's detailed levels of performance and through the ongoing task of self-reflection. Punctuated by worksheets, activities, and study guides, the course prepares educators to use the Framework to become their best professional selves.

Directions for use:

Each institution will utilize the facilitator's guide to suit its purpose. In some cases, educators will watch the course videos together with a facilitator who can pause between lessons for discussion whenever he or she chooses. In others, educators will watch privately but will come together for a live discussion. In yet others, educators' discussions will be online exchanges. Those differences notwithstanding, the questions below are phrased to allow the facilitator to decide whether to engage in whole-group discussions or to ask educators to work individually, in pairs, or in small groups before coming back to the whole group to share details or conclusions. The questions are also meant to accommodate new and experienced teachers and to help engage as much of the learning community as possible—to draw administrators and specialists into discussions with teachers as appropriate. Suggestions for proceeding include instructions for identifying goals, objectives, and student objectives. A summary list of what visitors to a school or classroom—other teachers, administrators, specialists, etc.—should look and listen for follows the lesson descriptions.

Essential skills of facilitation:¹

- Set learning goals and expectations
- Conduct activities based on the group's stage
- Bring out group members ideas, not your own
- Direct conversation with strategic questioning

¹ Culled from *Facilitation of Group Process*, Teresa Castro and Catherine Weber, Critical & Creative Thinking Program, U. Mass, Boston @ <http://www.faculty.umb.edu/pjt/facilitation.html>

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Basic procedures for structuring discussion groups:²

1. Specify objectives
2. Select appropriate group size
3. Assign participants to groups
4. Assign responsibilities (e.g., asking questions, acknowledging and resolving conflicts, note taking, summarizing)
5. Explain the cooperative goal structure and the task
6. Observe and monitor behavior of group members
7. Intervene to teach needed group skills
8. Call groups together for summaries

For details about the facilitator's role and responsibilities, how to begin the discussion (a critical stage), how to run the meeting, how to divide a large group into small groups (if appropriate), and additional strategies, see the attached addendum.³

Identifying goals:

As a group, identify the goals for undertaking this study of Charlotte Danielson's *A Framework for Teaching*. Goals should be broadly defined, such as to improve academic achievement across the entire student body or to professionalize the practice of teaching in your school or district.

Identifying objectives:

As a group, identify the objectives for undertaking this study of Charlotte Danielson's *A Framework for Teaching*. Objectives are more narrowly defined, tangible, and measurable than goals. Examples might include: teachers will annually self-assess their practice using the Framework, or leaders will annually evaluate teachers using the Framework.

Identifying student objectives:

Identify the student outcomes that the school or district expects to achieve as a result of this study. The objectives may be academic improvement with resulting test score advancements.

² Culled from Facilitation of Group Process, Teresa Castro and Catherine Weber, Critical & Creative Thinking Program, U. Mass, Boston @ <http://www.faculty.umb.edu/pjt/facilitation.html>

³ Culled from Clark County School District Empowerment School's Facilitator's Guide

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Lesson: The Wisdom of Practice

Lesson description:

Charlotte Danielson's *A Framework for Teaching* has had an enormous impact on schools and teachers all over the world. Here, Danielson provides an overview of the system, discussing with a panel of expert teachers its essential components. As the lesson advances, educators will begin to see the pieces that accumulate into the Framework as a whole, and develop the foundation to answer the fundamental question: what should an exceptional classroom look like?

What to discuss:

- Discuss with your peers what you think an exceptional classroom looks like.
- Share with your cohorts what you think some of the advantages are of having a common language to discuss teaching practice.

What to ask:

- What should an exceptional classroom look like?
- What is the basic structure of the Framework?

What to look for:

- Initial plans to convert one's classroom into an exceptional classroom

Possible places to pause the video:

- 15:16 to discuss what educators like or don't like in the classroom segment
- 30:10 to discuss what an exceptional classroom looks like
- 1:00:00 to review the structure of the Framework of four domains and their components

Alternative post-lesson activities:

- Debate the necessary components of an exceptional classroom.
- Construct a mind map to brainstorm about the components an exceptional classroom.
- Write an editorial suggesting how classrooms with very limited economic resources can still be exceptional.
- Illustrate an exceptional classroom.

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Lesson: Domains and Components in *A Framework for Teaching*

Lesson description:

Danielson takes educators deeper into the Framework in this lesson, scrutinizing its structure of domains and their components. In the process, she and the panel of expert teachers explore the classroom as a dynamic place whose environment and concerns can shift moment to moment. The lesson is framed by recollection of a particularly memorable teacher or teaching moment in the panel's (and audience's) experience as students, providing a personal and powerful context for understanding the distinctions between the Framework's four domains.

What to discuss:

- Share with your colleagues what components you feel matter most to your teaching practice.
- Describe your most memorable teacher to your peers.

What to ask:

- What variables affect the relative importance of the domains in teachers' practice at different intervals?
- What are the characteristics of a memorable teacher—in the language and context of the domains?

What to look for:

- An understanding of the distinctions between the four domains
- An appreciation that the relative importance of domains shift

Possible places to pause the video:

- 2:04 for "Which Domain" worksheet and discussion
- 21:28 to discuss educators' perspectives on relative importance of domains
- 51:23 to describe educators' memorable teachers

Alternative post-lesson activities:

- Write about how the importance of the domains has dramatically shifted for you in the course of a day.
- Storyboard either a memorable teaching moment or a day in the life of your most memorable teacher.

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Lesson: Classroom Environment in *A Framework for Teaching*

Lesson description:

In this lesson Danielson and her panel journey into domain 2: classroom environment. They consider its crucial components, including to what degree a teacher's classroom supports an environment of respect and rapport and establishes a culture for learning. They evaluate how well a teacher manages classroom procedures, student behavior, and the organization of physical space. As the panel considers the strengths and weaknesses of the classroom environment, educators learn how to sustain and develop strengths and address weaknesses within their own classroom environments.

What to discuss:

- Describe for your peers what you consider to be your strengths and weaknesses in domain 2.
- Outline for one another how you plan to develop your strengths and address your weaknesses.

What to ask:

- What are the essential components of domain 2?

What to look for:

- Initial changes in the classroom environment to reflect the components of domain 2
- Initial plans for augmenting strengths and addressing weaknesses in this domain

Possible places to pause the video:

- 4:28 to read the levels of performance descriptors in *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching*, if the book is available
- 22:38 to discuss the sources of respect and disrespect in participants' classroom or school and what to do to effect change
- 1:08:26 to discuss evidence of domain 2 in the classroom segment (before the panel does)

Alternative post-lesson activities:

- Sketch out your ideal classroom environment. Provide captions.
- Make an Excel spreadsheet or similar document to outline your plan for improvements in this domain.
- Create a mnemonic device to help you remember the components of domain 2.

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Lesson: Levels of Performance in *A Framework for Teaching*

Lesson description:

For every component of each domain, descriptors can be applied that will tell teachers whether their practice is unsatisfactory, basic, proficient or distinguished in that particular category—so that they can decide where to focus attention to better serve students, themselves, and the school community. Danielson and the panel take a close look at the descriptors for 2a: creating an environment of respect and rapport. That exercise provides a model for how to use—and how not to use—the levels of performance in an educator's teaching practice.

What to discuss:

- Confer with your colleagues about what uses individual teachers can make of the levels of performance.
- Discuss with your cohorts what uses and abuses your administration might make of the levels of performance.
- Share with your peers some of your most engaging student activities.

What to ask:

- What are the basic descriptors for the levels of performance?
- How should the levels of performance be used by teachers and administrators?
- What makes a student activity engaging?

What to look for:

- Engaging activities modified to become more engaging
- Initial self-assessment using the levels of performance

Possible places to pause the video:

- 19:15 to discuss uses of the levels of performance (with "Reflections on the Levels of Performance" worksheet)
- 36:26 to share some engaging activities before the panel does
- 1:15:32 to share after the panel does so

Alternative post-lesson activities:

- Modify an activity you think is very engaging for students to make it even more engaging.
- Write a dialogue in which someone challenges your some of your self-assessment and you respond to the challenges.
- Create a mind map to illustrate the potential uses and abuses of the levels of performance.

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Lesson: Classroom Instruction in *A Framework for Teaching*

Lesson description:

Danielson and her panel of expert teachers delve into domain 3—classroom instruction—which Danielson considers the heart not only of the Framework, but of the teacher's profession. Educators will consider their strengths and weaknesses in such components as communicating with students, using questions and discussion techniques, using assessment in instruction, and demonstrating flexibility. A classroom segment will give educators the opportunity to exercise what they've learned by identifying components of domains 2 and 3 as they view the video.

What to discuss:

- Describe for your peers what you consider to be your strengths and weaknesses in domain 3.
- Outline for one another how you plan to develop your strengths and address your weaknesses.

What to ask:

- What are the essential components of domain 3?

What to look for:

- Initial self-assessment in domain 3
- Initial changes in classroom instruction to reflect the components of domain 3
- Initial plans to augment strengths and address weaknesses in this domain

Possible places to pause the video:

- 35:18 to discuss educators' strengths and weaknesses in domain 3
- 41:34 to discuss evidence of domains 2 and 3 in teacher clip

Alternative post-lesson activities:

- Make an Excel spreadsheet or similar document to outline your plan for improvements in this domain.
- Argue either for an additional component in domain 3 or for the superfluity of one of the existing components.
- Provide one illustration and caption to stand for the whole of domain 3.
- Create a mnemonic device to help you remember the components of domain 3.

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Lesson: Planning, Preparation, and Assessment in *A Framework for Teaching*

Lesson description:

Danielson and her panel begin this lesson with analysis of the different types of curriculum outcomes for classroom activities. They then shift to scrutiny of domain 1—planning and preparation—a largely behind-the-scenes domain that includes such components as demonstrating knowledge of content and pedagogy, demonstrating knowledge of students, setting instructional outcomes, demonstrating knowledge of resources, designing coherent instruction, and designing student assessments.

What to discuss:

- Share with your colleagues some of your intended curriculum outcomes for a few particular lessons and projects.
- Describe for your peers what you consider to be your strengths and weaknesses in domain 1.
- Outline for one another how you plan to develop your strengths and address your weaknesses.

What to ask:

- What are the essential components of domain 1?
- What are the different curriculum outcomes for student activities?

What to look for:

- Identification of different possible curriculum outcomes
- Initial self-assessment in domain 1
- Initial changes in planning and preparation to reflect the components of domain 1
- Initial plans to augment strengths and address weaknesses in this domain

Possible places to pause the video:

- 25:55 to discuss curriculum outcomes for educators' engaging activities
- 1:18:31 to discuss educators' strengths and weaknesses in domain 1

Alternative post-lesson activities:

- Modify an assignment to change the type of curriculum outcome it is designed to produce.
- Modify an assignment to allow students a different process or product than you originally intended; aim to target different intelligences.
- Provide one illustration and caption to stand for the whole of domain 1.
- Create a mnemonic device to help you remember the components of domain 1.

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Lesson: *Rubrics in A Framework for Teaching*

Lesson description:

How do educators know what their students need to learn and are learning? Well-designed rubrics, Danielson argues. In this lesson, educators will examine some rubrics for criteria, levels, and descriptors, as well as watch the panel develop a model rubric. They will also have an opportunity to return to their investigation of domain 1—planning and preparation—to explore rubrics' relevance in that context. Educators will have another opportunity to test their developing skills at identifying the crucial components of the domains by revisiting and evaluating a classroom.

What to discuss:

- Analyze with your cohorts some of the strengths and weaknesses of the rubrics you currently use in your classroom
- Confer with your colleagues about how you might augment those rubrics.

What to ask:

- What elements should all rubrics contain?
- What different tasks are rubrics used for?

What to look for:

- The design and implementation of rubrics incorporating criteria, levels, and descriptors
- The use of rubrics in pre-assessment, formative assessment, and summative assessment

Possible places to pause the video:

- 18:45 to discuss strengths and weaknesses of educators' rubrics
- 55:58 to discuss evidence of domains in classroom segment

Alternative post-lesson activities:

- Create a rubric to assess your engagement in this course.
- Engage in a mind map to elaborate on your rubric's objectives.

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Lesson: Professional Responsibilities in *A Framework for Teaching*

Lesson description:

The focus in this lesson is Domain 4: professional responsibilities. Danielson and her panel lead educators to inspect their strengths and weaknesses in such components as reflecting on teaching, maintaining accurate records, communicating with families, participating in a professional community, growing and developing professionally, and showing professionalism. The art of self-reflection is introduced to educators through a teacher interview. Educators will leave this lesson with an arsenal of tools for developing their practice in this domain.

What to discuss:

- Describe for your peers what you consider to be your strengths and weaknesses in domain 4.
- Outline for one another how you plan to develop your strengths and address your weaknesses.

What to ask:

- What are the essential components of domain 4?

What to look for:

- Initial self-assessment in domain 4
- Initial changes in approaches to professional responsibility to reflect the components of domain 4
- Initial plans to augment strengths and address weaknesses in this domain

Possible places to pause the video:

- 41:35 to discuss educators' strengths and weaknesses in domain 4

Alternative post-lesson activities:

- Make an Excel spreadsheet or similar document to outline your plan for improvements in this domain.
- Argue either for an additional component in domain 4 or for the superfluity of one of the existing components.
- Provide one illustration and caption to stand for the whole of domain 4.
- Create a mnemonic device to help you remember the components of domain 4.

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Lesson: Self-Reflection, Common Themes, and Other Features of A Framework for Teaching

Lesson description:

Danielson asserts that self-reflection—a critical component of domain 4—is the most important skill for improving teaching practices. In this lesson, the panel and their audience of educators have the opportunity to reflect in detail on their practice. They will then engage in an exercise that links the common themes embedded in the Framework—including equity, cultural sensitivity, high expectations, developmental appropriateness, accommodating individual needs, appropriate use of technology, and student assumption of responsibility—to the Framework's components.

What to discuss:

- Share with your cohorts ideas about how to most effectively self-assess your practice.
- Collaborate with your peers to make a list of the ways the common themes appear in your practices.

What to ask:

- How can the Framework be used most effectively to self-reflect?
- What are the common themes and how do they fit in the Framework?

What to look for:

- Use of the Framework to self-assess
- Incorporation of the common themes into teachers' practice

Possible places to pause the video:

- 2:43 for worksheet 4 ("Reflection") and then discussion of self-assessment
- 52:37 for discussion of common themes in educators' practice

Alternative post-lesson activities:

- Illustrate each common theme and provide captions.
- Depict through both text and illustrations the interweaving of the common themes into a course of study you undertake with your students.
- Create a mnemonic device to help remember the common themes.

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Lesson: Initiatives, Inquiries, and Uses of A Framework for Teaching

Lesson description:

School-wide initiatives are often the context for an educator's professional development. In this lesson, Danielson and her panel look at some of those initiatives to discuss how educators can set personal goals that answer to both their own needs and to their school's broader needs. Danielson talks to an administrator who provides insight into how teacher leaders and principals can use the Framework to help teachers improve their practice. By the lesson's end, educators will appreciate the Framework as the highly functional, objective, and practical tool that it is.

What to discuss:

- Make a list with your colleagues of your school's initiatives and their relationship to the Framework.
- Collaborate with your peers to design a graphic or metaphor that you think would best represent the Framework.

What to ask:

- How do local initiatives fit into the Framework?
- How can new initiatives be instigated through use of the Framework?
- How should teacher leaders or other administrators use the Framework?

What to look for:

- Appreciation of school initiatives in the context of the Framework
- Proposals for initiatives in the context of the Framework
- Respectful, purposeful use of the Framework as an evaluative tool

Possible places to pause the video:

- 6:32 to share initiatives in educators' schools or districts
- 50:05 to discuss teacher leaders' potential uses of the Framework

Alternative post-lesson activities:

- Write a mock grant proposal for the introduction of a new initiative in your school or department.
- Provide a graphic representation of the relationship between an initiative and the overall structure of the Framework.
- Write a letter to families or to the community (e.g., to a newspaper) defending or critiquing one of your school's or department's initiatives.

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Summary of what to look for in domain 1: planning and preparation:

- Knowledge of content and pedagogy
- Knowledge of students
- Clearly set instructional outcomes
- Use of a wide range of resources
- Coherent instruction
- Coherent assessment

Summary of what to look for in domain 2: the classroom environment:

- Respectful transactions and rapport between teacher and students and between students
- A culture for learning
- Clear classroom procedures
- Clearly articulated rules for behavior
- Organized and vibrant physical space

Summary of what to look for in domain 3: classroom instruction:

- Easy communication between teacher and students
- Easy communication between students
- Sophisticated questioning and discussion techniques
- The ongoing use of assessment in instruction
- Flexibility and responsiveness

Summary of what to look for in domain 4: professional responsibilities:

- Self-reflection
- Accurate record-keeping
- Communication with families
- Participation in the professional community
- Professionalism