

101 - ABCDs of Writing Lesson Objectives

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Purpose: The purpose of the transcripts is to provide readers and listeners with a written version of each episode of the UAGC Center for Early Childhood Education's Early Childhood Chatter Podcast so they can follow along with the audio content. www.uagc.edu/ece-center/chatter-podcast

Audience: Current Active & Enrolled Students

Episode Transcript

Host Dr. Shipley: Hello everyone and welcome to Early Childhood Chatter with Dr. Shipley and Dr. Heald. We will upload a new episode every other week on Wednesdays.

Host Dr. Heald: This podcast is your go-to source for inspiration and practical tips to unlock the full potential of every little learner.

Don't forget to subscribe to the podcast for notifications about future episodes. Today, we have with us our friend, our colleague, Program Chair for the Associate of Arts in Early Childhood Education, at the University of Arizona Global Campus, Dr. Amy Johnson. Dr. Johnson has worked in the field of education since 1999.

She taught self-contained classrooms in each grade level from kindergarten to fifth grade, and she moved into higher education in 2011, after earning her PhD from Texas Women's University. She is such a well-rounded educator, and I am thrilled to have her as our guest today. Welcome Amy.

Dr. Amy Johnson: Thank you.

Dr. Tisha Shipley: Hi Dr. Johnson, thank you for being here with us today. Your title is the ABCDs of Writing Lesson Objectives.

We know that these are kind of tough for new and beginning teachers. So, I hope today we can flesh that out and help our listeners figure out how to do this. So, why did you choose this topic? Why is it important to you? Why do you think it's important for our listeners?

Dr. Amy Johnson: Well, as you said, I teach at the University of Arizona Global Campus.

So, I teach aspiring educators and many of them have difficulty creating specific and measurable lesson plan objectives. Without an objective, you don't know where the lesson's going, or when the students have accomplished what you wanted them to learn.

Dr. Stephanie Heald: Yeah, so I see it.

You have to play out the process first to figure out where you're going, right? You're creating that path. What are some of the actual steps in the ABCDs of writing an effective engaging lesson plan? Wow, that's a mouthful.

Dr. Amy Johnson: So ABCD stands for Audience Behavior Conditions Degree.

The audience is who, that's easy. It's the children or the students, or the Red Rocket Reading Group, whoever the lesson plan is for. And B is Behavior.

That means what is the behavior you want them to do? C is Condition and that is how do you want them to show you what they've done? How are they doing that behavior you just asked for? And D is Degree. How well do you want it done? To what degree does it need to be done, to show mastery? So, here's an example. The students will be able to identify the blue shape, when shown five different colored shapes three out of four times.

So, the audience is the students, the behavior will be able to point to the blue shape. Condition is when shown five different color shapes. And degree is three out of four times. So, everything is broken down in that statement.

What are they learning? They're learning to recognize the color blue. How do you know if they understand what blue is? Because there are five colored shapes in front of them, and they point to the blue shape. How do you know that they really know it, and they're not picking the blue shape on accident? Because they need to do it three out of four times.

How do you know they've mastered the lesson and can move on? When you put five colored shapes in front of them, and they pick the blue one three out of four times? How do you know if they have not learned the lesson, and they should be retaught? When you put five different shapes in front of them, they can't point to the blue shape, three out of four times.

So, another example, the student will be able to count to five with one-to-one correspondence by touching each goldfish, as the count with no more than one error. So, A is the audience, that's the students.

B is behavior. What are they doing? They're counting to five with one-to-one correspondence. C is condition.

How are they showing you that counting behavior? y touching the five goldfish as they count. And D is degree. How well do they have to do it? With no more than one error. So, with that objective, we know we're teaching one to one correspondence counting up to five. We need some goldfish, because the kids demonstrate the understanding, by touching and counting five goldfish.

We'll know that the kids have successfully completed the lesson if they can touch and count the five goldfish with no more than one error. And we know they have not mastered the lesson, if they make more than one error when touching and counting the five goldfish. So that's the gist of the ABCD method.

Dr. Tisha Shipley: Okay, so listeners, if you're out there and you've been in education and you've never heard of this, it's okay because Dr. Johnson, I have been in education for 24 years. I've never heard of this, but it's amazing. I love it.

It's a great way to remember. So where did you find out about this method? How did you come up with it, or who'd you learn this from?

Dr. Amy Johnson: It's funny that you say that because I don't remember learning about it when I was a student. I only learned about it when I started teaching my own students when I taught college.

I don't remember who told me about it, where I learned it, but it is how I teach my college students now. And it's like, it's why I like to drill it into them, because I didn't know this until recently. And it's such an easy way to write an objective.

Dr. Tisha Shipley: Right. Okay. Perfect.

I love it.

Dr. Stephanie Heald: So, I imagine you see a lot of these, you know, as you filter through your students' writing. And I would imagine you see some really, really great ones. And then I would imagine you see some very common, some very frequent error, you know, with new students, with new teachers.

What are some of those errors that you see in relation to writing objectives?

Dr. Amy Johnson: I see four errors frequently. So, the first one is attempting to teach too much in one lesson. Like some students will write by the end of this lesson, students will say all the letters in the alphabet.

Yeah, but that's 26 letters. And so, if you were learning Japanese, would you learn their entire alphabet in one session? No, you wouldn't. So, lessons should be bite sized one thing at a time.

Another thing I see is not sticking to the standard. So, if the standard says students will recognize the capital letter A, and the teacher goes great, by the end of this lesson, my students will recognize right and make the sound of the letter A. That's three different things. Being able to recognize a capital A is different than writing it.

And it's different than making a sound. And also, there are two A sounds. So, what is happening in this lesson, the standard said recognize a capital A. So that's what the lesson should be on recognizing a capital A. Another frequent one is having to do with names.

So many times, my students will write the children will learn to write their names. Well, this is going to be really easy for me, because my name is Amy, and that's three letters and they're easy letters, right? But Stephanie has nine letters, strike one. It starts with an S, which is hard to write, strike two, also has a P in it, which is easy to write backwards.

So, Stephanie is going to have a rough time. Amy has a way easier assessment than Stephanie. And then how is the teacher teaching Amy and Stephanie the same lessons when we don't have the same letters in our names? Throw in the name Tisha, you have three students and now you have 11 different letters to teach.

So that's not realistic. And then the final error I see is the degree portion. Don't expect children to be perfect, to like pick that blue shape, or count to with one-to-one correspondence with 100% accuracy.

Children make mistakes, they have days off. And then the degree portion is per child. It doesn't mean that 80% of your students need to do it correctly.

It means that if a child does it with 80% accuracy, then they've mastered that lesson, and they can move on. And if a child does not complete it with the accuracy, they can be retaught before moving on.

Dr. Tisha Shipley: Okay, I think all of those are important.

I see the first two that you said a lot also. So out of everything that you've told us, which is a lot, so we just need to remember the A, B, C, Ds of writing an effective lesson plan and objective. So, if we can remember what those each stand for.

But what's the most important thing that you want your audience to know moving forward?

Dr. Amy Johnson: I understand that objectives drive your entire lesson, and your assessment and everything. And this is an easy way to write that measurable objective. So don't be scared.

Use this way to write it.

Dr. Stephanie Heald: I love that. I think we have so much to consider with this, with our students, with our families, with our teachers for the future.

Dr. Johnson, can you give our listeners three takeaways that they can consider as they walk away from this podcast?

Dr. Amy Johnson: Just remember that an effective lesson plan begins with an objective. And that objective must be measurable and clear, so you know if the student has met it. It should be clear enough that anyone reading it understands the lessons and goal.

Dr. Tisha Shipley: I like that. I was just stopping and thinking about each one of those. Okay, so as we wrap up, Dr. Johnson, what is one challenge for the listeners that you want them to remember about your session?

Dr. Amy Johnson: I want you to tell a coworker, or a fellow student about this method.

And being on this podcast with two of my coworkers, I have already completed that challenge, because they learned something new today.

Dr. Tisha Shipley: That's true. Dr. Heald, have you heard about it before?

Dr. Stephanie Heald: I have, but I have not heard of Amy's method as detailed as it is.

And I have a greater understanding. So, Amy, you taught me something today, and I appreciate it.

Dr. Tisha Shipley: I mean, I think it's great.

And I do think that I'm going to start using this with my students on their objectives. So, thank you so much for being here with us today, Dr. Johnson. I'm sure you will be back on.

And listeners, thanks for being here.