Basic Planning

Lesson Plan | Middle and High School

Lesson Time: 15-25 minutes

Stoplight Plan

Objectives & Outcomes

Lesson Objectives: Given several tasks, students will learn task management using a stoplight highlighting system.

Lesson Outcomes: Students will be able to ...

- organize their tasks into three categories: those with immediate due dates, those with longer due dates, and those with long-term due dates

Subject Area Connection: Reading

Getting Ready

Teacher Preparation: The stoplight system for organization uses red, yellow, and green highlighting to help students remember when homework tasks are due. It is best to teach this lesson at the beginning of the year or whenever a review of task management is needed.

Materials Required:

- pen or pencil
- red, yellow, and green highlighter markers

Key Vocabulary

task management: a system to keep track of when various tasks are due.

organization: keeping things in order.

Background

Primary and elementary students must be taught how to handle their school tasks. Using a common system in the classroom makes it easier for students to keep track of when their tasks are due.

In this system, the red, yellow, and green highlights indicate when a task is due. Using the familiar icon of a stoplight, students learn how to manage their time to ensure that tasks with the shortest due date are completed first. The teacher may want to place a stoplight on the board with the meanings next to each light.

The red highlight means stop. This is work that needs to be completed immediately. The yellow highlight is a warning that these tasks are coming up soon and should be monitored to ensure that any background activities that need to be accomplished before finalizing the project are done and the full project should be tackled as soon as the red tasks are completed. The green highlight means these tasks have a long-term due date. It is okay to go ahead and work on other tasks first while fitting in smaller tasks that need to be part of the long-term project as they have time.

"Using the familiar icon of a **stoplight**, students learn how to manage their time to ensure that **tasks with the shortest due date are completed first.**"

Introduction and Modeling

Have students recall the meanings of the three colors of a stoplight. Younger students may act it out and older students discuss it with a partner. Explain to students that they will be learning a stoplight organization system for their task management.

Tell students to choose a red, yellow, or green highlight marker. Pick two students who chose yellow to pass out yellow highlight markers, and do the same procedure for the red and green. While they are passing out the markers, play a game. When you say, "Red," they stop and freeze. Explain that when they see a red highlight in their planner, they should stop everything and complete that task. When you say, "Green," they continue to pass out the markers. Explain that when they see a green highlight in their planner they should go ahead and finish the red and yellow tasks first. When you say "Yellow," they wait ten seconds, and then continue to pass out the markers. Explain that tasks that are marked yellow mean they should pause to make sure that anything that needs to be done now on these tasks to keep on track should be done before carrying on.

Next, teach the vocabulary for both words by having students say the word with you, spell the word with you, and repeat the definition to you.

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Procedure

1. Make sure all the students have three highlight markers in red, yellow, and green.

2. Write the following tasks on the board in a random order:
   - Math homework, due tomorrow
   - Book report, due next week
   - Science fair project, due in 4 months

3. Hand out a sheet of paper to students. Have them write the tasks on the sheet of paper. Explain that normally they should write their tasks in their planner, but this is just an example so they will be writing it on paper.

4. Ask them which task needs to be done immediately. Have them highlight that in red. Continue with tasks to be highlighted in yellow and green.

5. Have students break down the book report project into smaller tasks and highlight them as red, yellow, or green.

6. As a class, discuss what smaller tasks they decided on for the book report (examples may be, choosing a book, reading the book, picking a character or event to write about, etc.) and discuss what tasks they highlighted as red, yellow, or green.

7. Have students work in pairs to breakdown the science fair project into red, yellow, and green tasks and have them explain why they ranked them that way.

Discussion Questions

- Working with partners, have students discuss why it is important to break down larger, long term tasks into smaller, shorter term tasks.
- With partners or in groups, develop a plan for what to do if you missed a step when breaking down a larger task.
- Explain why organization and task management are important.

Evaluation

As the students engage in the discussion questions with partners or groups, circulate around the room. Help students that need clarification. Choose one or two good examples and have the students share their ideas with the class.

Tips for Tailoring This Lesson

For Higher Grade Levels

- Students can set up an online calendar in which they enter their tasks. Have them highlight their tasks in different shades depending on the immediacy of the task.
- Have them set up calendar alerts for the most urgent tasks.

For Lower Grade Levels

- Have students decide which order to perform their homework tasks (pick their hardest tasks first, etc.) and mark them in order with red, yellow, and green.
- Have them number the order they should perform the tasks: red 1st, yellow 2nd, green 3rd.

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Alignment to Standards and Frameworks

Common Core State Standards:
College & Career Readiness

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Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening

CCRA.SL.1. Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCRA.SL.2. Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

Anchor Standards for Language

CCRA.L.4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiplemeaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.

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