

Indicator: All teachers encourage students to paraphrase, summarize, and relate. (4429)

Explanation: The evidence informs instructional practice with teaching strategies that support closing a lesson. Key lesson closure techniques include the teacher modeling paraphrasing and summarization of the lesson's learning objectives. In addition, all teachers should assist the students with strategies to anchor or retain the lesson knowledge and skills learned. Based on student responses during the lesson closing, all teachers should be able to assess mastery and determine if re teaching is necessary.

Questions: What evidence will the principal seek to determine that all teachers plan for and implement lesson closure activities? How will the principal build lesson closure capacities in all teachers? How will the principal determine if all teachers model and teach paraphrasing and summarization? How will the principal confirm that all teachers use lesson closure outcomes to inform their next steps in instruction?

Purpose of Lesson Closure

It has long been considered best practice in teaching to include some form of lesson closure, or review of what was just taught, at the conclusion of a segment or lesson. The most common components of lesson closure are: 1) summarizing the main points of the lesson; 2) assessing what was learned and how well students grasped the concepts; and 3) facilitating opportunities or ideas for application of the material, either to future lessons or to real-world examples (Wolf & Supon, 1994; Webster, 2011; Wong, n.d.).

While closure can happen whenever a teacher sees that there is a need for clarification or to assess whether or not students are grasping the material, it is typically found in the last five to fifteen minutes of a lesson. This common practice is backed by cognitive and learning theories asserting that recall of information is more likely for what is heard most recently, so what is shared at the end of a lesson is especially important (Wolf & Supon, 1994).

Rosenshine (2012) also shares that:

An important finding from information-processing research is that students need to spend additional time rephrasing, elaborating, and summarizing new material in order to store this material in their long-term memory. When there has been sufficient rehearsal, the students are able to retrieve this material easily and use it in new learning (p. 16).

Because of these cognitive patterns, it becomes critical for teachers to facilitate review of what was covered throughout the lesson and not to introduce any new content during the last segment (Webster, 2011).

As Wong (n.d.) writes, "closure helps learners know what they have learned, why they learned it, and how this knowledge is useful" (p. 16). This segment of the lesson also encourages both students and teachers to reflect on the lesson content and their level of comprehension and understanding (Wolf & Supon, 1994). However, it is not uncommon for teachers to omit a closure section in their lessons, particularly when new teachers struggle with pacing and lesson design. Wolf and Supon (1994) stress how essential closure is for learning: "As a result of a weak closure, or no closure at all, students are robbed of the most important part of the lesson -- the time when they have the opportunity to think about what they learned and to discuss it" (p. 3). Ensuring that closure is effectively planned and that there is time for it within the class period requires advance planning and careful pacing (King-Sears & Cummins, 1996).

How Teachers Can Encourage Students to Summarize and Apply What They Have Learned

Through the closure process, teachers can help students to summarize and practice what they are learning in a variety of ways. Before students can perform these skills independently, it is critical for teachers to model them; teacher-led examples and thinking through processes aloud are two strategies that should be implemented to support students in independent or collaborative practice (Rosenshine,

2012). Other examples of these cognitive supports include: giving the students graphic organizers in an earlier part of the lesson, providing checklists or timelines for process steps or sequences, having question stems or prompts available on which students can build discussions and written work (Wolf & Supon, 1994; Rosenshine, 2012).

The closure process, as discussed in the available literature, can range from basic recall to creative application of skills and knowledge. Activities can range from asking students to succinctly summarize the main idea and share with a partner to role-playing or service learning (Wolf & Supon, 1994; Rosenshine, 2012; Wong, n.d.). The levels of rigor and critical thinking may vary across closure activities, but the ability for students to apply what they have learned is the ultimate goal. Homework assignments can also facilitate closure of a lesson, as long as they are only assigned when needed for “practice, review, application, or reinforcement of the lesson” (Wong, n.d.).

King-Sears and Cummings (1996) encouraged student agency during the closure process, saying that placing students in roles of responsibility during this part of the lesson can help them feel a sense of “shared ownership” in the classroom (p. 220). Whenever possible, students should be encouraged and supported in connecting the lessons and course material to their own lives (Wolf & Supon, 1994). Similarly, to encourage inclusion of students of all ability levels and needs, King-Sears and Cummings recommended that in assessing the success of a lesson, teachers should question or check with students of all ability levels in the classroom – ranging from the high-achievers to those who are struggling, as well as those with disabilities. This will give the teacher a well-rounded perspective in how well all students understood the material shared that day.

References and resources:

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