

Beyond “Lesson Plan”: Teaching as a Design Process

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EDIT 781: Designing for Information Using

This is not a “lesson plan.” Seeing teaching as a design process and seeing myself as a designer have shifted my thinking from an emphasis on technology integration to an emphasis on designing learning for the purpose of solving problems of practice. This heuristic helps me and teacher-learners focus on learning goals and priorities.

1. Overview/Context and Content/Learning Goals

Write a narrative describing the context (classroom, grade level) in which this lesson design will be implemented, content or standards (requirements) that guide this design, and learning goals for instruction. Situate this design in broader learning goals that include what comes before and what will follow this lesson. What do learners already know? What will they need to know to continue the learning process?

2. Analysis of Learning Content (SPD)

Thoroughly analyze what learners really need to take away from this lesson. What disciplinary structures (key principles and concepts), processes (“doing” and thinking in the discipline), and discourses (communicating in the discipline) relate to the content?

3. The “Real Design” Problem

Describe your problem of practice related to this design (i.e., an instance where instructional actions and activities have not resulted in intended learning). State the problem your design is actually intended to solve (i.e., connecting content to real-world problems rather than “school” problems such as passing tests).

4. Possible Activities (ABCS)

Brainstorm a list of authentic (professional tasks), background building (content knowledge professionals use to do tasks), constructing (learner tasks closely aligned with professional tasks), and sharing activities (select real or real-like audiences) that might be appropriate to guide learners toward the learning goals. Consider how real-world professionals from the discipline use content knowledge to solve problems and perform their job.

5. Searching, Sorting, Creating, Communicating, and Synthesis (SSCCS)

Integrate appropriate searching, sorting, creating, communicating, and synthesizing activities to promote learners’ ability to be good users of information. “Creating” is a thinking process that supports making meaning from searched and sorted information. “Communicating” is producing a message (e.g., a product) that conveys meaning to an audience. “Synthesizing” incorporates audience feedback and comments back into the learner’s ideas/meaning. Also, consider Rheingold’s (2012) Net Smart skills: Attention, Crap Detection, Participation, Collaboration, and Network Smarts.

6. Basic Structure of the Lesson (AeCTS)

Think through the components of a “good” digital learning lesson structure. What is the authentic problem (A) that situates learning and what is the exit strategy (e) that helps learners know they have succeeded? What is the clear outcome or product (C) and what constitutes a well formulated outcome or product? Include an assessment rubric with clearly developed categories/criteria. What thinking, problem-solving, decision-making, and/or creating strategies (T) are necessary and how will learners’ ability to use these strategies be scaffolded? What features of applications/tools/software (S) will be used as resources to complete this lesson and what do learners need to learn to use them well?

Rheingold, H. (2012). *Net smart: How to thrive online*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.



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