

DEMOCRATIZING ONLINE LEARNING IN  
POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION:  
INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN PLANS



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# DEMOCRATIZING ONLINE LEARNING IN POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION: INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN PLANS

ROBERT MCGRAY

In the Winter of 2018, Nick Contant and I had a discussion about our colleagues involved in teaching online or blended classes. At that time, he found that people were keen to talk about their approaches to teaching and possible variations that may have been successful for others. We are fortunate to work with many tremendous scholars of teaching and learning but, alas, time does not always permit the amount of collaboration that we wish to have with our peers. To this end, we organized a teaching fair to share and discuss strategies in the summer of 2018 – this volume documents some of those. We hope that you will find some inspiration in these plans as they reflect the experiences and scholarship of many passionate about online pedagogy.

## **About This Resource**

The instructional design plans in this volume were peer reviewed through a double-blind process. I would like to thank the review team for their work and their comments to the authors: Giulia Forsythe, David Hutchinson, Carol Reinhart Rahn, Sharmaine Itwaru, and Nick Contant.

## **How to use this Resource**

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CHAPTER 1

LOW STAKES TESTING: ASSESSMENT FOR  
LEARNING

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GIULIA FORSYTHE

**Number of people involved:**

Scalable to any size class as the quizzes are automated

**Amount of time scheduled for the activity:**

10-20 minutes for each quiz

**Program/Class the plan was used for:**

I have consulted on many courses that use this method. The example provided is from ECON 2P29 Sustainable Development but could be used for any university course.

**Procedure**

Create a series of multiple choice questions directly related to content based on weekly units. Allow students to take the quiz multiple times until they are satisfied with their performance. Record the last score.

**Example of activity**

Unit 1: Sustainable Development Goals

Question example:

The Sustainable Development Solutions Network suggests that our first goal should be to:

1. Ensure that everyone has access to primary health care
2. To reduce world environmental problems
3. To end poverty and hunger
4. To curb climate change

The design of a multiple-choice question can be designed to enhance learning by focusing on the specific learning outcome as opposed to unnecessary language complexity. Clear information related to the specific learning outcomes facilitates storage into long-term memory. Efficacy can vary but Agarwal, Finlay, Rose, and Roediger (2017) found it most beneficial for students with lower working memory capacity.

- The construction of the question uses a full stem question or at least segments the stem so the completion is at the end.
- The answers all follow the same grammatical structure.
- All answers are sustainable development goals but only one is the “first goal”.

A well-written question that addresses the learning outcomes of the unit and course guides retrieval of information which leads to greater long-term recall (Roediger, 2006).

### **Connections to the literature**

“Taking a memory test not only assesses what one knows, but also enhances later retention, a phenomenon known as the testing effect” (Roediger, 2006). The act of remembering becomes an act of learning. Designing a multiple-choice quiz to allow for this remembering can create enduring learning.

### **Variations**

- Increase the question pool of similar questions to allow students to increase their practice (Butler, 2010)
- Randomize the questions and answer responses to increase difficulty.
- Not all questions need to be multiple-choice. Answering questions for an assignment or participating in a discussion can have the same effect
- Grading is not necessary for the test effect to work, although it tends to reinforce that the instructor considers the activity to have value.

### **Other technology needed for the plan**

The testing effect can be done online through the LMS or using other easy to use tools like Microsoft Forms. For longer form answers, even using the discussion forum can be an appropriate place to “test” knowledge retrieval.

### **References**

Agarwal, P. K., Finley, J. R., Rose, N. S., & Roediger, H. L. (2017). Benefits from retrieval practice are greater for students with lower working memory capacity. *Memory*, 25(6), 764-771. doi:10.1080/09658211.2016.1220579

Butler A. (2010). Repeated testing produces superior transfer of learning relative to repeated studying. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition* , v.36, p.1118.

Roediger, H. L., & Karpicke, J. D. (2006). The power of testing memory: Basic research and implications for educational practice. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 1(3), 181-210.



CHAPTER 2

WORDLES – FROM RELATIONSHIPS TO  
OBJECTS

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LIANNE FISHER

**Number of people involved:**

10-20

**Amount of time scheduled for the activity:**

½ hour to construct the Wordle. Need to wait for students to complete. Can be done in seminar and/or online out of class.

**Program/Class the plan was used for:**

Seminar or Grad Class

**Example of Procedure:**

Please view Todd Rose' TedTalk: On the Myth of Average (or a weekly reading).

When you watch the talk please write down the main themes and ideas that come to mind, you might use some of Todd's words, you might use theories or phrases discussed in the course.

If you use a 2-3 word phrase, please use hyphens (e.g., please-use-hyphens). Please attempt to generate more than 10 words/ideas and

do your best not to evaluate and judge the ideas, if the word/theory/theorists or idea pops into mind, jot it down.

Please use all lower case and if you hyphenate an author/theorist with an idea, please put the idea first and the author second (e.g., brainstorm-seelig). I am modifying the work of Tina Seelig (2012) on brainstorming for this activity (the book is called—inGenius: A crash course on creativity).

Once you have all your ideas, please put them into the forums, nothing else just your words with a space in between, once everyone has a chance to post I will take them and put them back together again for the whole group. Please, do your best not to read each others' brainstorm list before you do this activity. Thank you.

**Example of activity:**

Take the non-hyphenated words/phrases and put in a Wordle.

Now take the hyphenated word/phrases and put in a Wordle.

You will now have two different images (based on the frequency of words).

**Connections to the literature:**

Demonstrates ways in which our language, how we talk about things, treats relations as objects (e.g., Packer, 2010).

It also allows the instructor to see the main ideas the students are identifying in the course material.

**Ways in which the plan addresses democratization or justice:**

Provides a demonstration how when we do not talk about or acknowledge the relationships between ideas/concepts, we tend to turn these ideas into things.

## **Variations**

You can use it for lectures, readings, anything really.

## **How to build the activity in SAKAI**

The original list of words are in the forums and they are copied and pasted into the Wordle. It would be great if there was a Wordle generator. If not it is easy to do.

## **Other technology needed for the plan**

Access to the Internet.

## **References**

Packer, M. (2010). Educational research as a reflexive science of constitution. *National Study of Education*, 109(1), 17-33.

Seelig, T. (2012). *inGenius: A crash course on creativity*. New York, NY: Harper Collins.





## CHAPTER 3

# LIGHTBOARD INSTRUCTIONAL VIDEO

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JENNIFER KOPCZINSKI

**Title of the activity:**

Lightboard course orientation video

**Number of people involved:**

The lightboard video was used in lieu of a written or other video-based course introduction/orientation. The video was designed to be watched by the entire class in ADED 1P31 (approximately 30 students). The production of videos included the instructor and a production team (approximately 1-2 staff members) from Brock's Centre for Pedagogical Innovation (CPI).

**Amount of time scheduled for the activity:**

The video itself was approximately 8 minutes in length.

**Program/Class the plan was used for:**

ADED 1P31 – Learning for Success

**Procedure:**

1. The use of the lightboard was coordinated and scheduled through CPI. CPI staff arranged the production facility and

provided the filming and audio equipment, along with the lightboard itself. The footage took approximately 30 minutes to film (including set-up and multiple takes).

2. The CPI staff members completed the post-production editing and rendering necessary for the video to be useable. This involved adjustments to the colour/exposure (to reduce glare from the lightboard surface) and flipping the image so that the words/images on the lightboard did not appear backward to the viewer. Approximately 3-5 business days were allocated to post-production.
3. The finalized video was uploaded to YouTube and embedded in the Overview area of the Sakai site for ADED 1P31. The video was also embedded in an announcement that was emailed to the entire class the week prior to the course starting.

**Example of activity:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AnLnSV6ce8I>

The orientation video contained an overview of the course topics and their relationship to the overarching goals of the course. Additionally, the learning activities and assessments were mapped onto the course goals.

**Connections to the literature:**

The use of the lightboard as a medium for online teaching supports two fundamental pedagogical principles: metacognitive skill development and instructor presence in an online environment.

How students organize information can impact both their experience of learning and how they apply what they have learned. Those with experience in a domain (such as instructors) have rich and meaningful knowledge structures which support learning and performance whereas students are still developing these cognitive knowledge

networks. According to Ambrose et al. “when students are provided with an organizational structure in which to fit new knowledge, they learn more effectively and efficiently than when they are left to deduce this conceptual structure for themselves” (2010, p. 53). The lightboard provides a medium through which these organizational structures can be made apparent to students in a visual medium. Additionally, this medium allows the instructor to actively construct the knowledge organization structure, demonstrating to students the interconnections between ideas and building the structure as they go. Rather than presenting such a structure to students as a static artifact, the act of constructing it makes explicit the metacognitive processes underpinning the structure. This is especially important as the learning outcomes for ADED 1P31 focus on students developing metacognitive skills to approach their academic studies. In this sense, the lightboard is not only facilitating the process of making explicit the organizational structures that underpin the course topics and concepts, but in and of itself is a model of a metacognitive skill. While I elected to use the lightboard to demonstrate the connections between the concepts that will be covered for the entire course, it could also be used for a particular topic or lesson.

One could argue that these outcomes could be achieved through screen-capture software or through filming the instructor at a whiteboard. While this is true, the lightboard provides the added value of supporting instructor presence in an online learning environment. Social presence has been associated with students’ cognitive presence in online learning (Garrison, Anderson & Archer, 2000). Providing students with the opportunity to visibly see their instructor (rather than read text written by the instructor or listen to their voice through audio recordings), creates a more meaningful connection to the learning which has been associated with student retention (Boston et al., 2009), learning satisfaction (Hostetter & Busch, 2006) and perceived learning success (Richardson & Swan, 2003).

### **Ways in which the plan addresses democratization or justice:**

The lightboard provides a platform that replicates an in-class learning experience for those students who may encounter barriers to participating in this learning format including student parents, students with full-time employment, students with medical challenges, or students who are living at a distance from the institution.

### **Variations of the activity:**

The lightboard can be used as a medium to provide almost any content through active construction that simulates learning in a face-to-face environment.

### **How to build the activity in SAKAI:**

Once the video is uploaded to YouTube it can be embedded into various features of Sakai (e.g. Lessons, Announcements, Overview).

### **Other technology needed for the plan:**

- Lightboard (available through CPI)
- Filming equipment
- Audio recording equipment (portable microphone)
- Video editing software

### **References**

Ambrose, S. A., Lovett, M., Bridges, M. W., DiPietro, M., & Norman, M. K. (2010). *How learning works: Seven research-based principles for smart teaching*. Jossey-Bass: San Francisco.

Boston, W., Diaz, S., Gibson, A., Ice, P., Richardson, J., & Swan, K.

(2009). An exploration of the relationship between indicators of the Community of Inquiry framework and retention in online programs. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks*, 13(3), 67-83.

Garrison, D. R., Anderson, T., & Archer, W. (2000). Critical inquiry in a text-based environment: Computer conferencing in higher education model. *The Internet and Higher Education*, 2(2-3), 87-105.

Hostetter, C., & Busch, M. (2006). Measuring up online: The relationship between social presence and student learning satisfaction. *Journal of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 6(2), 1-12.

Richardson, J. C., & Swan, K. (2003). Examining social presence in online courses in relation to students' perceived learning and satisfaction. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks*, 7(1), 68-88.



## CHAPTER 4

# VIRTUAL REALITY AS EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION

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JENNIFER KOPCZINSKI

### **Number of people involved:**

Students can engage in a VR experience individually, in pairs or in a small group (4-5 students), or in tandem with their instructor

### **Amount of time scheduled for the activity:**

Depends on the length of the VR content. Time should be allocated for engaging with the content followed by a reflective activity tied to the course learning outcomes (e.g. discussion, written/oral response assignment).

### **Program/Class the plan was used for:**

This is not currently in use in the ADED courses (to my knowledge), however it can be infused into multiple courses across multiple disciplines.

### **Procedure:**

1. Virtual reality headsets can be borrowed from Brock Library's Makerspace by students (limited time loan) or by instructors (extended loan is available if coordinated by your Experiential

Education Coordinator). Most smartphones fit into the VR goggles to allow for viewing web-based VR content.

2. Students are provided with guiding questions or themes to consider as they engage with VR content selected by the instructor.
3. Students complete a reflection-based activity (e.g. discussion, written/video-based/audio-based reflection, art-based reflection) following their experience to solidify their learning in connection to the course learning outcomes.

### **Example of activity:**

The use of VR experiences provides students with a no cost, no risk experiential education opportunity. Students can engage in immersive experiences without having to leave the classroom. Additionally, this technology allows students to engage in experiences far beyond those available within the local community. High quality VR content is widely available online. Two examples of websites/apps offering such experiences include Within (<https://www.with.in/>) and NYT VR (<http://www.nytimes.com/marketing/nytvr/>). Both apps are free and contain minimal/no advertisements. The content through these providers is also free and can either be downloaded or streamed.

The types of activities that VR can support are broad. While students can engage in the content individually, there is added benefit to having small groups of students engage in an experience together or having an ‘expert’ guide students through an experience. For example, in a course discussing climate change, students could watch a video from the *This is Climate Change* collection on Within, which includes videos on the melting polar ice caps, the 2017 forest fires in California, and the famine currently impacting Somalia, in order to gain a first-hand perspective on the impact on tangible places and communities. By



watching the videos together in small groups students would benefit from a shared experience ensuring that features of the videos are not missed. Following the videos, students could participate in a guided discussion to reflect on the experience and connect their experience to key course concepts and learning outcomes.

### **Connections to the literature:**

The use of virtual reality (VR) in education has grown in popularity in the last five years as substantial improvements have been made in the availability and quality of VR hardware and free web-based content (Jensen & Konradsen, 2018). While this technology has obvious connections to skill-based training and acquisition (e.g. health science disciplines, aviation), it is also being used as a form of experiential education across multiple disciplines to support “discovery learning, constructivism, situated cognition, and direct instruction” (Johnston et al., 2018, p. 414).

### **Ways in which the plan addresses democratization or justice:**

VR technology is becoming more accessible which reduced previous barriers to its use in educational settings. VR headsets can be borrowed from the Brock Library and many apps with high-quality VR content are free to users. With a smartphone and a wi-fi connection students can participate in immersive experiences which may otherwise be unrealistic or impossible. Additionally, research is emerging that suggests immersive storytelling through VR platforms is positively associated with learners’ empathy development (Shin, 2018).

### **Variations of the activity:**

VR content available through open access platforms continues to grow. The limits of what students can experience continue to be pushed.

Additionally, rather than directing students to content, this activity could be flipped to allow students to seek out and suggest a VR

experience that they found aligned with the learning outcomes of a course or particular activity.

A further variation to deepen the experience could involve having students engage with community members (e.g. elementary school students, senior citizens, populations with mobility issues) to introduce them to an experience through VR or to learn from them as guides (e.g. watching a video about forest fires with a firefighter to guide them through the experience).

### **Other technology needed for the plan:**

- VR goggles (available through Makerspace)
- Smartphone
- Web-based VR content (free apps available through Google Play Store and Apple App Store)

### **References**

Jensen, L. & Konradsen, F. (2018). A review of the use of virtual reality head-mounted displays in education and training. *Education and Information Technologies*, 23(4), 1515-1529.

Johnston, E., Olivas, G., Steele, P., Smith, C., & Bailey, L. (2018). Exploring pedagogical foundation of existing virtual reality educational applications: A content analysis study. *Journal of Educational Technology Systems*, 43(4), 414-439.

Shin, D. (2018). Empathy and embodied experience in virtual environment: To what extent can virtual reality stimulate empathy and embodied experience? *Computers in Human Behaviour*, 78, 67-73.

## CHAPTER 5

# SOCIAL MEDIA AS A VEHICLE FOR TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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RUTH MCQUIRTER SCOTT

**Number of people involved:**

30

**Amount of time scheduled for activity:**

Initial online portion + Forum post approx. 1.5 hours (follow-up in classroom 30 min; subsequent blog post approx. 3 hours)

**Program/class:**

Teacher Education program; Year 1 Language Arts course EDBE8P24 (Consecutive)

**Procedure:**

Steps 1 and 2 are done online via Sakai in an asynchronous format before the next class.

1. Teacher candidates (TCs) begin by working through an online module introducing Twitter and Pinterest as sources of teaching resources and strategies. They also read the introductory portion

## of the Ontario Language Curriculum as it applies to the Writing strand. (see below; links in References)

### Social Media:

#### Introduction:

Read the information on the Writing Strand (pp. 12-13 in hard copy) of the [Ontario Curriculum Language](#).

*What are the essential principles provided in this passage regarding the teaching of writing?*

Read the sources below for information on social media outlets and how they pertain to teaching.

Twitter: [Two Way Twitter PD](#)

Pinterest: [There's a Big Hole in How Teachers Build Skills, and Pinterest is Helping to Fill It](#)

[50 of the Best Education Accounts on Twitter](#)

#### Exploring Resources:

Use each source below as a starting point to find resources that will help teachers to implement the Writing Strand of the Ontario Curriculum – Language.

Twitter: [The Complete Guide to Twitter Hashtags for Education](#)

Pinterest: [The IRC of Brock University - Pinterest](#)

Note: You are free to go beyond the IRC Pinterest site to find Pinterest resources for writing.

– ...

2. Each TC then locates an online resource for teaching writing to Junior/Intermediate grades, using Twitter or Pinterest as sources of information. They write a post on the Sakai Forum describing the resource, their reasons for selecting it, its connection to the Writing strand, and how they might use this resource in their own classroom. (see below for instructions – URLs are found in References)

#### Resource Critique:

Choose one specific resource or idea that you explored above. Consider how it could address a key principle in teaching writing or a specific curriculum expectation for Writing. Note: You are not reviewing *The Complete Guide to Twitter Hashtags* or *The IRC Pinterest Site*; you are to critique a specific resource or idea for teaching writing that you found through one of the larger collections indicated above.

Create a Forum post that answers the “3 Ws”:

**What** is the resource? Provide a link and basic information about your selection.

**Why?** What principles of teaching writing or specific expectation(s) could be addressed through this resource? What features make this resource useful for teachers of literacy.

**What now?** How could you anticipate using this idea in your upcoming literacy placement?

Step 3 is done in face-to-face context in the class following the posts

3. Prior to class, a Literacy Leader for each table group reads the posts of the table colleagues as well as 2 or 3 others in class, and looks for themes. The Literacy Leader then constructs some higher level questions based on themes or issues in the posts and leads a 20-30 minute discussion that includes time for each TC to describe their resource. The Instructor circulates to each table during the discussion time. By the end of the day each Literacy Leader uploads to Dropbox a report on key issues or topics of discussion from the group.
4. During the next two weeks each TC builds on the initial resource by finding at least 2-3 other resources that support the aspect of writing selected. The TC creates a well-constructed blog post, following detailed criteria co-created by the class early in the term. It must conform to the conventions of educational blogs, with features such as live links, visuals, short paragraphs, sub-headings etc. The blog is posted to the TCs digital portfolio that was created during their 6-week technology course.

**Example of activity:**

Initial Forum posting by a Teacher Candidate (used with permission):

**Other ways to say....**

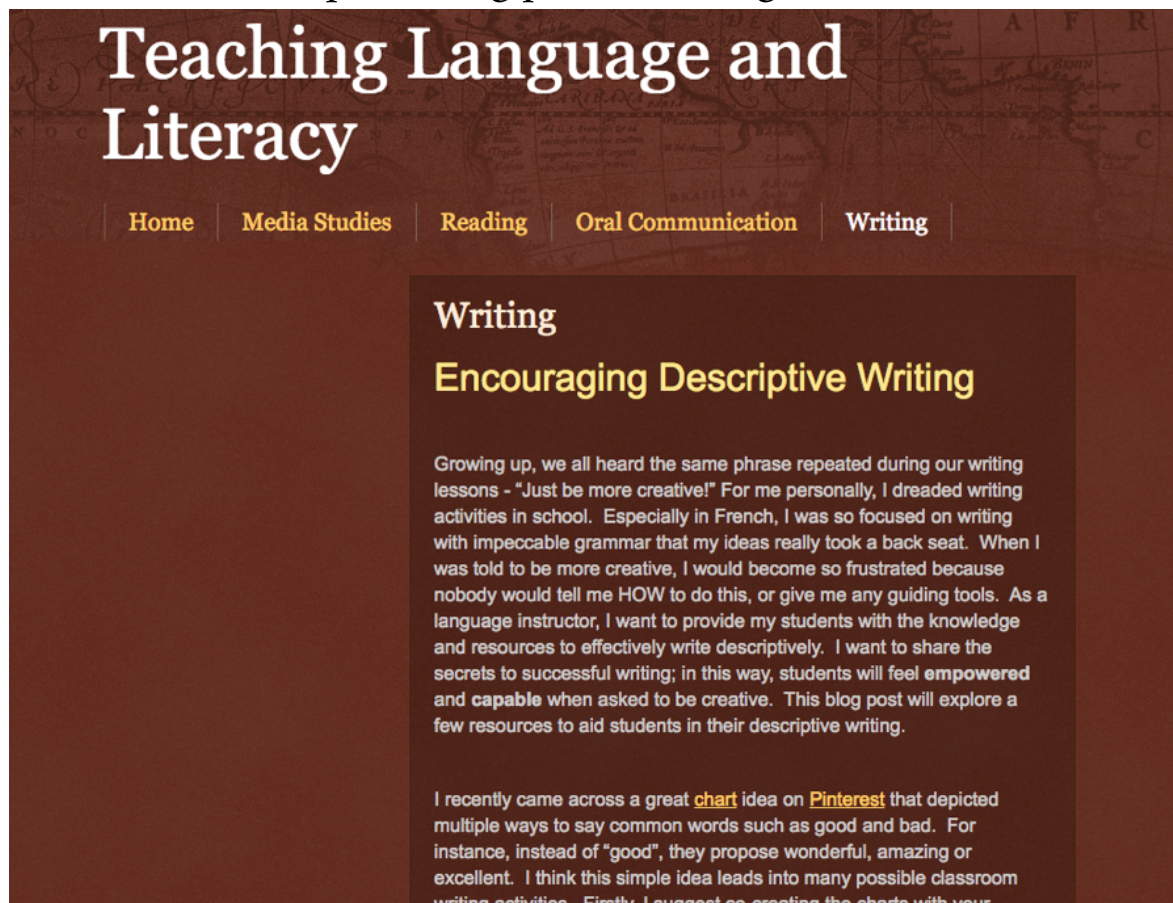
The resource I found for this week can be found here <https://www.pinterest.ca/pin/320740804697156728/>. It is a simple, easy to read, brightly coloured chart that describes multiple ways to express very common words, such as good, bad or sad. For example, instead of "good", you could write pleasant, exceptional or super.

As instructors, we want our students to produce sophisticated, academic and vocabulary rich writing. In the curriculum, I really like how the terms "refine expression and present their work effectively" (p.114) are repeated cross-grades in the overall writing expectations. Yes, they will be understood by using vocabulary like "good" and "bad", but we want to push our students beyond this and ultimately deepen their expressive abilities.

I love this idea in a classroom. Personally I would not just post this chart in my classroom, I would CREATE this chart with my students. It would be a great idea to give students the commonly repeated words, have them collaborate and come up with the alternate words **themselves**, as opposed to simply giving them the information. Often we remember what WE CREATE, more so than information we are just told. Furthermore, this again gives students a chance to collaborate - an element that didn't really exist in my writing classrooms growing up. Writing was solitary work, and that was that. I want to get away from this mentality in my language classrooms and encourage dialogue.

I currently work as an ESL instructor, and I often find myself encouraging my students to expand their vocabulary. For example, if I notice they are repeating a certain adjective in their writing, I ask them to make a list of other ways they can say the same thing. This is a practise that would benefit students at ALL LEVELS of English and writing. Additionally, I could see myself easily being able to incorporate this type of exercise into a French classroom. French students struggle with similar issues - they learn one French word to represent an English idea, and they stick to it. For instance, the word "triste". Literally translated this means "sad", but I find students automatically fall back on it to explain many emotions, like depressed or heartbroken, instead of searching for a better word. As a French instructor, I want my students' French writing to be as eloquent, detailed and varied as their English writing.

Portion of subsequent blog post, building on the initial Forum post:



**Connections to the literature:**

This activity is closely aligned with research on the role of teachers

in New Literacies (Jacobs, 2014; Fisher & Rosenthal Tolisano, S., 2014; Ungerer, 2016) as curators of digital resources. It also reflects the importance of teachers developing personal learning networks (PLNs) as they strive to be Connected Educators (Nussbaum-Beach & Ritter Hall, 2012). Furthermore, the use of Professional Learning Conversations to discuss the resources helps to foster the development of collaborative relationships characteristic of Communities of Practice (Wenger, White, & Smith, 2009).

### **Ways in which the plan addresses democratization or justice:**

In a broad sense, Connected Educators develop a greater global perspective as they interact online and form Personal Learning Networks. In the classroom context, the ubiquitous nature of online teaching resources enhances an educator's ability to provide engaging, appropriate materials for students of diverse backgrounds, learning styles, and interests.

### **Variations:**

This process is repeated 4 times during the course, once for each of the 4 strands of language. Other sources of online educational resources are highlighted for each strand including educational blogs (Media strand), teacher websites and ministry resource banks (Reading), visual and auditory sources such as podcasts, films, and curated photo collections (Oral Communication)

### **How to build the activity in Sakai:**

Only a basic comfort level with Sakai is needed. The introductory module on social media as a source of online resources requires a clear series of steps and embedded links to websites. A Forum is needed for initial posts; Dropbox is used for Literacy Leaders reports. Teacher candidates already have a blog site as part of their digital portfolio.

### **Other technology needed:**

None. Just access to Sakai (LMS)

### References:

Cummings, M. (2015, April 2]. There's a big hole in how teachers build skills,

and Pinterest is helping fill it [Web log post]. Retrieved from <http://www.slate.com/blogs/schooled/2015/04/02/>

[pinterest\\_and\\_teachers\\_how\\_the\\_site\\_is\\_filling\\_a\\_gap\\_in\\_teacher\\_training.ht](http://www.slate.com/blogs/schooled/2015/04/02/pinterest_and_teachers_how_the_site_is_filling_a_gap_in_teacher_training.html)

Curtis, I. (2012, July 5). Two-way Twitter PD [ Web log post] Retrieved from

<https://www.middleweb.com/1403/twitter-for-summer-pd/>

Fisher, M. & Rosenthal Tolisano, S. (2014). Digital masters: Becoming a blogmaster,

annotater, or web curator. In H. . Jacobs (Ed.), *Mastering digital literacy*, pp.

5-26, Bloomington: IN: Solution tree Press.

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<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/language18currb>.

Teach Thought Staff (2018, July 9). The complete guide to Twitter hashtags for education [Web log post]. Retrieved from <https://www.teachthought.com/twitter-hashtags-for-teacher/>

Teach Thought Staff (2017, September 25). 50 of the best education accounts on Twitter [Web log post]. Retrieved from <https://www.teachthought.com/technology/50-educator-twitter-accounts-worth-following/>

Unger, L. (2016). Digital curation as a core competency in current learning and literacy: A higher education perspective. *International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning*, 17(5), 1-27.

Wenger, E., White, N., & Smith, J. (2009). *Digital habitats: Stewarding technology for communities*. Portland, OR: CP Square.



## CHAPTER 6

# ONLINE TEACHING PRESENCE THROUGH COURSE DESIGN

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LINDA PERSCHONKE

**Number of people involved:**

30-40 students

**Amount of time scheduled for the activity:**

Sessions 1-12 (Each Session runs for 7 days from Monday to Sunday)

**Program/Class the plan was used for:**

2F92: Curriculum Design for Adult Learners (Spring 2018)

**Example of Activity:**

In this course, learners create a 12-week, 36-hour course at the university or college level (or a course for the workplace or community using the standards applicable to a university or college course) that consists of learning outcomes, assessments and a lesson plan for one of the 12 sessions.

Having facilitated this course numerous times over the past 12.5 years, I would see learners quickly becoming overwhelmed by the amount of readings, theories and activities. For the Spring term, I wanted to put learners at ease and I decided to try something new,

embracing the philosophy that “good teaching is whatever helps students learn” (Brookfield, 2015, p. 17)!

*Before the Term Started:*

I held three ‘meet and greet’ sessions using the LifeSize video conference tool available in Sakai (learning management system) where I introduced myself and my approach to teaching and learning. An important part of my philosophy is interaction with the learners and I shared that I would be conducting an experiment whereby I would also be creating a course over the upcoming 12-weeks. The rationale was that as learners were working on their curriculum design projects, they could refer to my content to see how I was applying the theory from the assigned course readings to complete the activities. It is important to note that learners were advised that my intent was to demonstrate theory in action so I would not be creating a course to the same specifications they were being assessed on. Finally, for those who could not attend the live ‘meet and greet’ sessions, summaries were posted in Sakai.

*Once the Term Started:*

I communicated my plans using the various tool in Sakai (Announcements and Messages) and the LifeSize video conference in Week 1 and in Week 2. I also created a forum in Sakai called Linda’s Curriculum Design Project.

*Throughout the Term:*

Each Sunday I posted in Sakai my methodology and approach to the upcoming week’s course design activities along with the amount of time I spent. Learners could then review as they worked on their course design projects and post any comments or questions. Further, the twice weekly LifeSize video conferences provided the opportunity to discuss any challenges.

Each Friday when I posted the weekly “what to expect” message to learners for the upcoming week, I included a reminder to check out my curriculum design project and a reminder to attend one of the two weekly LifeSize video conferences.

### **Procedure for the Instructor:**

1. Request the LifeSize video conference link added to my course
2. Communicate plan in the ‘Instructor Meet and Greet’ LifeSize video conferences before the course started
3. In Session 1,
  1. Send email to learners outlining my plan
  2. Survey learners for meeting times
4. Communicate meeting times to Learners via Announcements (which also sent an email to their Brock accounts) and add to the Sakai Calendar
5. Read all of the course material and review all of the activities
6. Create a forum in the Town Hall to post my course design project
7. Complete course design activities which were posted each Sunday for the upcoming week
8. Host the twice weekly LifeSize video conferences and post a summary for learners who could not attend

### **Ways in Which the Plan Addresses Democratization or Justice:**

Most of us can likely relate, at some point in our careers to Brookfield (2015) who commented that “teaching is a process of informed muddling through complex and unexpected situations” (p. 15). However, the teaching presence is specifically defined as “the design, facilitation and direction of cognitive and social processes for the purpose of realizing personally meaningful and educationally

worthwhile learning outcomes” (Anderson, Rourke, Garrison & Archer, 2001, p.5). So why is this important?

Teaching presence is directly related to student satisfaction and learning. Because of the lack of proximity in online learning, it is important that a teacher is cognizant of how his or her teaching presence manifests in an online environment. (Clarke & Bartholomew, 2014, p.3)

I want to emphasize that “practitioners can create the conditions for critical thinking, rational judgments, and understanding through the engagement of a community of inquiry” (Vaughan, 2013, p. 10) in order for learners to truly become co-creators of knowledge. During the term, my role of the facilitator changed (Palloff & Pratt, 2007, as cited in Ouyang & Scharber, 2017, p. 35). Initially learners referred to my course design and their questions related to the decisions I made but by Session 4, there was a shift and learners began asking each other course design questions.

According to Palloff & Pratt (2007), there are three stages of learning community development:

Stage 1 – Learners tend to observe more than participate and communication increases as interaction and relationships develop. Learner interaction is highest with the facilitator. The role of the facilitator is to model ways of interaction, provide instructions, participate in discussions and answer questions.

Stage 2 – Learners are more interactive with their peers and begin to collaborate with them. Discussions are largely moderated by the groups. Facilitators guide and support the learners in the various activities. Facilitators encourage creativity and allow discussions to flow naturally, even if they seem to stray from the assigned topic.

Stage 3 – Learners participate and facilitate their own discussions.

Learners are more self-directed and the facilitator provides support as learners experiment with different ways of communicating. This includes encouraging learners to summarize their own discussions and promoting new areas to discuss and research. (as cited in Ouyang & Scharber, 2017, p. 35)

This is the model I referred to and the stages do not necessarily occur in sequential order. It is important to keep in mind that while the role of the learners increases, the facilitator presence must continue throughout the course and it is Garrison (2014) who reminds us that “instructor participation in online discussions is a balancing act” (n.p.).

Finally, because “All participants in a collaborative learning environment must assume various degrees of teaching responsibilities depending on the specific content, developmental level, and ability” (Vaughan, 2013, p. 14), the teaching presence signifies a learner-centred environment, one where power and control of the learning is shared so it is important to let learners know there is a rationale behind our actions and choices (Brookfield, 2015, p. 47)!

### **How to Build the Activity in SAKAI:**

- Create a forum topic for the course design project
- Communicate to students using Sakai tools (Announcements, Messages, Forums)
- Interact with students using the LifeSize Video Conference

### **Variations of the Activity:**

- Host synchronous chats to talk about course design

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## CHAPTER 7

# LEARNER TO LEARNER INTERACTION IN CRITICAL DISCOURSE

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LINDA PERSCHONKE

**Number of people involved:**

30-40 learners

**Amount of time scheduled for the activity:**

Sessions 1-12 of a semester (Each Session runs for 7 days from Monday to Sunday)

**Program/Class the plan was used for (intended audience):**

2F92: Curriculum Design for Adult Learners (Spring 2018)

**Example of Activity:**

Critical Discourse, “the means by which learners develop their own thought processes, through the necessity of articulating them to others” (Anderson, 2008, p. 350) was valued at 20% of the overall grade in this course. At the minimum, each week learners were expected to post one substantive original posting per topic and two critical responses per topic to demonstrate an understanding of the course material and to advance the ongoing discussion. According to Anderson (2008) “Discourse also helps students uncover misconceptions in their own thinking, or disagreements with the teacher or other students” (p. 350)

and learners were expected to provide evidence from the course materials and other academic sources, demonstrating the following from Bloom's taxonomy (1956):

- Knowledge and Comprehension: i.e., learners read the material
- Application and Analysis: i.e., learners know what the material means and can apply it to the discussion topic
- Synthesis and Evaluation: i.e., learners extract key ideas, themes and theories, examine various perspectives, draw conclusions, and ask questions

### **Challenges:**

Research supports interaction amongst learners and “online learning succeeds best using constructivist approaches that both foster and require collaborative input” (Conrad, 2009, p. 9). The course consisted of weekly discussions covering 2-4 topics and in a large online class of 37 learners, it was anticipated that there would be a significant number of postings each week for each topic. Realistically, it would not be possible for learners to read every posting and then decide which ones to respond to. This would be very time-consuming. Social presence is defined as “the ability of participants to identify with the community (e.g., course of study), communicate purposefully in a trusting environment, and develop inter-personal relationships by way of projecting their individual personalities” (Akyol, Garrison & Ozden, 2009, p. 352) plays a key role in supporting learning and if learners are new to one another, they may not know who to follow.

Given the above, two approaches were considered:

- Approach #1 Randomly assign learners to one of three groups for the entire term for the weekly group activity
- Approach #2 Randomly assign learners to new groups each week for the weekly group activity

**Decision: Approach #2**

While “Online discussions hold a promise for collaborative knowledge construction: participants in online communities are afforded the opportunity to share ideas, learn from peers and build knowledge collectively, while reading and reflecting on each other’s thoughts” (Kent, Laslo, & Rafaeli, 2006, p.117), the reality is, for various reasons many learners do not like group work. According to Cross (1981), there can be barriers to learning which can have an impact on critical discourse such as:

**1. Situational barriers**

- work and/or family commitments
- prior learning experiences

**2. Dispositional barriers**

- Difficulty connecting with new people
- Different interests
- Varying commitments to the course

To support learner/learner and learner/content interaction, each week learners were randomly assigned to a new group consisting of 11-13 people depending on how enrolment numbers fluctuated in Sakai, the learning management system. Being in a new group each week provided a number of benefits and reduced or mitigated the above noted barriers to learning whereby:

- Learners could focus on a smaller number of postings
- Learners had interaction opportunities with all of their classmates

- Students developed and demonstrated problem solving skills and strategies to successfully complete the activities
- Learners even supported and encouraged one another with non-course related matters.

### **Results:**

Collaborative learning with “students laboring together and sharing the workload equitably as they progress towards intended learning outcomes” (Barkley, Major & Cross, 2014, p. 4) in new groups each week helped learners establish new relationships and to further develop existing ones. In each session, learners posted and replied in their own groups and while they were still able to read the postings in the other groups, they could not reply. However, if there was content in another group that really interested a learner, the learner was encouraged to email the individual or comment in an open forum called Debrief.

Moore (1989) notes, “Learner-learner interaction online which is considered to be highly valuable in that it supports the development of skills that are needed to interact with others in the workplace and in the community” (n.p.), subsequently, the level of engagement was high the entire term which is not typical as engagement often wanes after Session 8 or 9. It is also worth noting that “the instructional use of small groups so that learners work together to maximize their own and each other’s learning” (Smith as cited in Barkley et al., 2014, p. 6) helped learners circumvent the forming, storming, norming, performing stages of team development (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977), thereby placing the emphasis on the task at hand.

### **Procedure for the Instructor:**

#### Step 1: In Sakai

- Create groups and forums
- Link topics to forums
- Request link to LifeSize video conference

Step 2: Communicate to learners what to expect for critical discourse via two LifeSize video conferences and using Sakai tools (Chat, Announcements, Messages and Forums).

Step 3: Throughout the term, monitor all three groups, comment as appropriate and ask learners for feedback on what's working well and what needs to be changed.

### **Ways in Which the Plan Addresses Democratization or Justice:**

The rationale for this decision was simple. Enrolment tends to fluctuate in the first few weeks of a term and joining a group that has already gone through the various stages of group development can be a challenge. Combined with the rigorous demands of the course, this can create a situation where the learner does not feel emotionally or socially connected to others in the online learning environment. New groups every week can provide a 'level playing field' for all learners. Finally, to create a democratic learning environment, learners were also able to self-select into groups for any other topics.

### **Variations of the Activity:**

From the facilitator's perspective, in terms of efforts and resources, it is time consuming to set up the site and then throughout the term, "additional time and nurturing, scaffolding, instructional design, and understanding learners' comfort level with collaborative online work" (Robinson, Kilgore, Warren, 2017, p. 29) is needed to monitor interaction, provide weekly updates and follow-up with learners for feedback. The instructor is the expert and depending on the needs of the learners including those who require accommodations, there are options on how often to create new groups, i.e., create new groups every 2-3 weeks instead of weekly. The purpose of creating small discussion groups is to encourage learner interaction and to not create additional barriers.

### **How to Build the Activity in SAKAI:**

- Three groups were created for each session (1-12) and three forums were created for each topic.
- Learners were randomly assigned to groups (Site info / Manage groups) each week.
- Topics in the Session Guide were linked to the forums

## References

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development revisited. *Group and Organization Studies*, vol.2, no.4, pp.419-27.





## CHAPTER 8

# PODCAST DEBATE

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JULIE STEVENS

### **Number of people involved:**

Optional individual assignment or can be group based. Group size may vary depending on learning objectives (pairs, small or large group interaction and is scalable to class size (the assignment has been delivered in classes ranging from 30 to 100 student enrolment).

### **Amount of time scheduled for the activity**

This course has been offered as either a 12-session (Fall or Winter term) or six-session (Spring term) online course. In either format, students create the podcast audio file on their own time. The assignment description is provided in the first week and the final product is due in the final week. In between students must submit a proposal that outlines their topic of choice, debate position statement, and a minimum of three key points, with support, for each of the 'For' and 'Against' sides of the position statement. Optional synchronous web conferencing sessions open for drop-in technical support are offered. Usually three sessions are adequate but additional sessions can be added depending on the number of students in the class and the length of the course. In addition, weekly web-conference academic support sessions are held through the course which can also provide content support to students as they prepare their podcast.

### **Intended Audience**

## Sport Management 4P97: Advanced Analysis of the Sport Industry: Hockey

### **Procedure**

Phase 1 Session 1: Podcast Assignment Introduced

Phase 2: Podcast Outline Due

- TA support & Technical Support
- Audio feedback from Instructor
- Optional Peer Review, see section: Variations

Phase 3: Podcast Due

See Assignment Description

### **Example of activity**

Exemplar debate topic: Is Hockey Canada's Game?

Debate Position Statement: Hockey is no longer Canada's Game

Student submission (shared with permission): Rachel Ivey's "My Hockey Podcast"

### **Connections to the literature**

The assignment aligns with the three categories of CAST's (2018) Universal Design for Learning framework: providing multiple means of engagement, multiple means of representation, and multiple means of action and expression. By changing the standard written essay into an audio-based debate, students are given the opportunity to express themselves in a different modality, in a way that is an authentic, real-world task.

The best podcasts have good production values, and most importantly, generate interest and establish a connection one's intended audience. In addition, the podcast assignment incorporates both content and conceptual elements and employability skills, such as teamwork, communication and technological literacy (Armstrong, Tucker & Massad, 2009).

The assignment balances flexibility and control so that the students can engage with a choice of content that motivates and interests them,

but the creation process is structured enough with checkpoints for frequent guidance and feedback to allow a scaffolded instructional approach (Ambrose et al, 2010).

A podcast outline was required. The assessment for the outline was low-stakes, as marks were not allocated but rather deducted from the final podcast assignment if the outline was not submitted. This created a 'low-stakes' learning environment where students could work through their podcast debate topic idea and receive qualitative feedback based on the rubric. The feedback was audio recorded by the instructor (4-5 minutes of commentary) and provided to each student group through the learning management system, or LMS (sakai).

### **Ways in which the plan addresses democratization**

Democratization is best achieved when opposing ideas are free to be expressed, negotiated, and explored. The goal of the assignment is to utilize a debate format to discuss an issue related to the culture or business of hockey, and also to present the discussion as a podcast. Podcasts are a medium for communication and a new, enhanced means of expressing information. The assignment follows a "dialectic approach" – which means students present a primary view and an alternate view (Rao, 2010).

The specific choice of debate, as discussed below, allows students to engage with multiple perspectives as part of a thorough and scholarly process (Rao, 2010). Chikeleze, Johnson and Gibson's (2018) literature review and preliminary research findings indicate scholarly debate can improve communication and critical thinking skills. Further, they indicate that this type of assignment generates soft skills that employers seek from higher education graduates.

### **Variations**

This dialectic approach can be used for almost any content where you want students to explore multiple perspectives of any given concept.

Two pedagogical options for sharing the podcast in a manner that extends beyond the initial submission include:

1. Learner Reflection – after submission, each group member reflects, reviews and submits as short written assignment;
2. Peer feedback – peer evaluation can improve the quality of student work by giving students the opportunity to be reflective on the criteria and improve based on peer feedback (Ching-Wen, Pearman, & Farha, 2010).

### **How to build the activity in SAKAI**

The instructions and assignment use the lessons tool in the LMS (sakai), embedding video instructions, and text. The equipment used to create the podcasts are available in the library MakerSpace for loan. As this course is online, there is online support via LifeSize available from the MakerSpace staff in the library, and from the teaching support staff (teaching assistants) assigned to work with the instructor for the course.

Assignments were submitted through the LMS assignment tool. It is recommended to keep the podcast time limit to 10 minutes. Imposing a maximum of ten minutes has many advantages. For the learner, it is a manageable size to create an engaging and meaningful piece of work. For their peers, the brevity allows for students to listen to quite a few podcasts (should a peer review element be incorporated) and still get a good overview of the topics. The time limit also ensures file sizes are not too large for uploading and downloading or streaming.

If the optional peer review phase is built-in, the assignment tool in the LMS has a workflow to include formal peer assessment. Creating a student page in Lessons or posting in Forums could also be a convenient and effective way to have students informally share their podcasts.

#### **Other technology needed for the plan:**

- Microphone
- Audacity (audio editor)
- LifeSize (optional extra tech support)

## References

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## CHAPTER 9

# BUILDING LEARNER SUCCESS RESOURCES (LSR) SAKAI SITES

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NICK CONTANT AND MARTHA DAVIS

### **Number of people involved:**

Two (Academic Advisor, Tech Support). Additional elements may require the talents of additional individuals. For example, the addition of an AI based question and answer element may require additional expertise.

### **Program/Class the plan was used for:**

The LSR site was built to provide various supporting resources to learners in the Adult Education program with the goal of improving student success and retention.

### **Procedure:**

Students access the LSR in a variety of different ways:

- 1) Learners who are enrolled in Adult Education courses are manually added to the LSR Sakai site, which enables the learner to access the LSR from their list of Sakai Sites.
- 2) The LSR is also available as a tool in every Sakai course site.

This promotes ease of access and encourages Adult Education learners to use this resource.

- 3) Depending on the nature of phone or email questions from learners to their Academic Advisor, they may be directed to the LSR. They are also directed to the LSR in the Academic Advisor's ADED Newsletters that are sent to learners several times each year by email.

**Example of activity:**

The LSR amalgamates general information learners would otherwise have to search multiple University webpages to find. This includes:

- – General ADED program information
- – Registrar`s website – registration, Letters of Permission, access to Advisors, important dates (durations, registration, drop & add, withdrawal dates)
- – Student Accounts and Financial Aid
- – Academic Integrity
- – APA Guidelines
- – Accessibility Services
- – Library Research Guides
- – Sakai Support

Ways in which the plan addresses democratization or justice:

- – LSR provides open access to information by allowing learners to easily connect with the site at any time and from any location via an internet connection.



- ◦ The LSR provides just in time help with regard to upcoming deadlines:
  - Registration
  - Dropping and adding courses
  - Withdrawing from courses
  - Tuition implications
  - Information related to assignment submissions
  - Library resources relating to writing, citing, and research
  - Sakai support
  
- – LSR is available to learners in all ADED programs – BEd in Adult Education as a First Degree, BEd in Adult Education as a Subsequent Degree, Certificate in Adult Education, and Minors in Adult Education.

Variations of the activity:

The information found on the LSR would otherwise need to be accessed via dozens of webpages at Brock. This often requires knowing which University department is involved and knowing the precise terminology to be used.

How to build the activity in SAKAI (Nick can help with this):

The LSR Sakai site was built using a multitude of different Sakai tools which focused on displaying information; as this was the purpose of the site, and Brock email is still the preferred method of communication. The various Sakai tools that were leveraged to build the LSR include:

- – Announcements: Share text, multimedia, links, or attached documents in a targeted announcement to individual or groups of learners.
- – Lessons: Design custom interactive modules to display information to site participants.
- – Web Content: Import webpages as a tool into Sakai.
- – Overview: Use text, multimedia or links to breakdown the resources available on the LSR.

Other technology needed for the plan:

In collaboration with the Faculty of Education Computing Services, an AI based chat bot was also added to the LSR. Alphie, the Academic Success Bot provides immediate access to information found in the LSR, University webpages. Alphie was added as an additional mechanism to expedite student access to information.

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This is where you can add appendices or other back matter.