

keeping learning going...

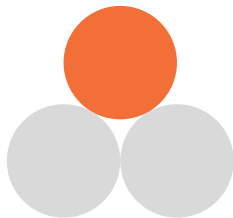
how can we design great learning sequences for primary students?



why is this important?

When we first transition to remote learning, particularly if we've switched suddenly because of factors outside our control, the easiest thing for schools to do is take each day 'one step at a time'. Of course, this is the best approach if the situation changes daily, but at some stage (and hopefully reasonably quickly) it will be time to plan whole units for remote delivery, not just day-by-day lessons. Working deliberately through a sequence of learning helps us to design for outcomes, rather than just outputs. Instead of focussing on how many activities a student has completed in a week, we can focus on their progress towards a defined end outcome or product. Planning a sequence of remote learning is similar to planning a high quality sequence of learning to be delivered face-to-face. Regardless of the age and stage of our students, we can use the Understanding By Design framework to plan units of remote learning, asking the three important questions detailed in this module.

key ideas in this kit



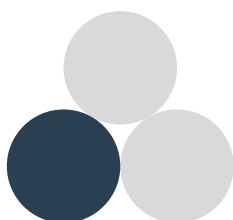
what do we want students to know?

Designing with the end in mind.



how will we know if they understand?

The tools and processes we can built into our units to ensure they're hitting the mark!



what activities can we sequence?

Getting into the flow of learning and following a learning arc.

what do we want students to know?

reflection

Stephen Covey says we need to begin with the end in mind. In doing so, we start with a clear understanding of our destination. We know where we are now, where we're going, and where we want to end up, so that the steps we take always lead us in the right direction. Importantly, the destination should be communicated to students in their own language.

Consider one of the sequences of learning you're currently teaching. Do you have a clear understanding of what students should be able to do and know by the end of the unit? Do students have this clear understanding, too?

tools

When you're beginning your planning process, use the following to inspire a thoughtful and practical approach to determining the destination.

- **Less is more:** When you're first planning a sequence of learning, identify 3 or 4 key learning outcomes you want all students to achieve by the end of the unit. You can always add to these over the course of the planning process, coming back to build these out once you have a better understanding of the end product, junctures for feedback, opportunities for authenticity and space for student choice. There's a temptation at the start of the planning process to list a bunch of Content Descriptors and their Elaborations, but it's hard to see the wood from the trees unless we take a 'less is more' approach. Be sharp and narrow with your focus.
- **21st Century skills:** One of the first things you learned in your teacher training process was how to use the national curriculum to guide your selection of the core content and skills. What might not have been as clearly emphasised is the importance of selecting 21st century skills to add to the learning outcomes for each sequence. In the Australian Curriculum you'll find these listed as General Capabilities. You might also want to go to the Foundation for Young Australians documentation to see their definitions of enterprise skills, or to Michael Fullan's Deeper Learning framework for an understanding of the 6Cs. Whatever framework you use, select one or two of these and be prepared to teach them explicitly. For example, we can't assume that students will know how to manage relationships and collaborate well with their peers online if your learning sequence is their first experience of collaborative remote learning.

what do we want students to know?

- **Get kids to own the intentions:** Share the intentions of the overall learning experience with your students, just as you would share the intentions of each lesson with them. Before you share these, make sure they are translated into 'student speak', and test student understanding as you share them. In a remote learning environment, if you're working with upper primary learners this could involve the use of an online form where students self-assess their current levels of knowledge and skill, or asking them to film and share a 30 second video rephrasing the intentions to show their understanding. If you're working with younger students, you might want to engage parents as the facilitators of this understanding process, providing them with some discussion questions to lead with their learners and then feedback on to you. If you want to go all out, engage a small team of upper primary students in the co-design of the learning sequence using video conferencing tools and Google Docs. Having students alongside you for the duration of the journey will make it really easy to tell if they are clear in what they need to know, understand and do by the end of the unit. If you get these learning goals right and in language your learners can understand, you can use these to start to build out your assessment rubric, killing two birds with one stone!

action

Consider the next unit of work or learning sequence you need to plan. Use the template we've provided in this toolkit to describe the following. Remember, less is more at this stage, include a future-focussed skill, and translate the learning intentions into language your learners would understand.

What do you want students to know?

What do you want them to understand?

What do you want students to be able to do by the end of the unit?

how will we know if they understand?

reflection

A temptation in the early days of remote learning is to focus on data and assessment that tracks task completion, hours spent online, or number of logins to your learner management system. This is all output data, and we want to make sure we're assessing student learning progression and outcomes. Your role as a leader is to make sure learning is still the focus, despite everything else that's going on.

Since you've been leading remote learning, how much time have you spent measuring and reporting on outputs of your students and how much time have you spent measuring and reporting on learning outcomes? Are you measuring the things you value?

tools

Remote learning provides you with opportunities for authentic and thorough assessment.

- **Data is king:** Great remote teachers track mastery levels of students, the same way face-to-face teachers do. But the benefit of remote learning, especially if you and your students have access to technology, is that learning is easily tracked. Maybe you're running formative assessment with online quizzes - that data can be exported into a spreadsheet for you. Maybe you're asking students to film a video of them reflecting on their progress. That's data that is saved and sent to you. Maybe you're asking students to write and edit work on Google Docs. Their edits can be easily tracked. Remote learning can actually generate lots of data, and as the teacher you just need to work out which data you want to track and how you're logging it. And to work out what data you should be tracking, go back to those all important learning intentions and track student progress towards those.
- **Set goals with learners:** Great remote teachers regularly conference with each learner to establish individual goals regarding performance on learning outcomes, and then follow up to encourage learners regarding progress towards those goals. Once you've built your assessment rubrics in student language using the intentions you wrote in the first step of the planning process, these can be used to help students set their own goals and track their progress towards them in your student-teacher conferences, whether these are synchronous or asynchronous and in your own time.

how will we know if they understand?

- **Build in variety:** Just as it is important when considering engaging lesson design, students experiencing a variety of assessment tasks is key. If they are producing a self-reflection video for every learning task, or doing an online Kahoot quiz for every learning intention, or writing a story and sharing it via Google Docs everyday, they'd go stir crazy! To maintain motivation and interest, be creative with the choices of tasks students can engage in to demonstrate their learning and skills, and if you know other teachers are working with the same group of students, make sure you're coordinating with them to provide a rich and varied overall remote learning experience together.
- **Flip the feedback:** Ask students to take photos and share their work with you periodically and record yourself providing feedback for students to watch in their own time. You can use this for formative and summative assessment tasks and it's often helpful to have the photo of your students' work displayed on the screen as well as your video or audio so that you can talk through their work as you move through it. This is a great way of maintaining connection with your students. Make sure your feedback is linked to the learning intentions for the unit.

action

Consider your upcoming sequence of learning. Where are the junctures for formative and summative assessment? And what format will you use to conduct these assessments for and of learning? Detail your assessment plans in the planning template provided.

what activities can we sequence?

reflection

Deliberate design of a sequence of varied learning activities that deepen understanding is key to an effective unit plan.

These activities are the stepping stones students are using to move from not knowing, understanding or being able to do, to the end destination you set when you first started planning this unit.

Start by considering the variety of activities your learners are currently engaging in. Is there a blend of reflective tasks, creative tasks, analytical tasks? Are all of the tasks to be completed in a lesson, or are there some longer term activities? Are all of the activities designed for students to work on independently, or are some collaborative?

tools

Try using the following insights to help you develop a varied flow of activities that deepen students' understanding and skill.

- **Big ideas:** Start each unit or sequence of learning with a big idea or a design challenge. As the teacher, you'll have the end destination in mind and can structure the learning activities around this. But kick off the learning with a bunch of provocations and questions that inspire deep thinking to fire up the kids and watch the engagement unfold! Keep coming back to this big idea or design challenge each lesson, linking it back to the learning journey you're on as a class.
- **SOLO and Bloom's:** If depth of understanding is something you're keen to structure learning activities around, the SOLO and Bloom's taxonomies will be useful frameworks to build your sequence of activities around. Over the course of a learning sequence, ensuring you have tasks that fit into the different levels of SOLO or Bloom's will support you to both plan a structured learning arc and to include a variety of activities that promote depth of understanding.

what activities can we sequence?

- **The 5Es framework:** To help you sequence a flow of activities you might like to use an inquiry cycle or the 5Es design framework to structure the learning arc. The 5Es framework was first designed to structure learning in science and might be familiar to you through programs like Primary Connections. We can apply the five stages of inquiry to most learning areas. As you walk through this process, make sure you're communicating which phase you're at with your learners. First we **engage** (tuning in) students in a topic and plan activities that help us to pose provocative questions using tools like Padlet and Mentimeter to assess prior knowledge and brainstorm ideas. Students then engage in activities that help them **explore** (finding out) the concept and generate ideas. Here students can use sites like the Smithsonian Tween Tribune, Youtube, the Khan Academy and Newsela and InsertLearning to differentiate the content. In the **explain** stage you and your students use a variety of techniques and modes to explain new knowledge. There are a range of platforms to support this, like EdPuzzle, FlipGrid and Explain Everything. Students next use more tools and processes to **elaborate** (synthesising, comparing & contrasting), deepening their understanding by applying it to new situations. Platforms like Kahoot, Socrative and Google Forms might be helpful here. Finally students engage in activities that help them **evaluate** (taking action, answering the question) their learning, reflecting on their knowledge, the learning process and assessment. At this stage, student-filmed videos explaining their learning along with the production and submission of any broader unit outcomes like a piece of creative writing, production of some theatre, a business enterprise, the design of a piece of sports equipment, etc, are all relevant and useful for assessing student knowledge, understanding and skill.
- **Don't load them up:** Drip feed the activities, just as you would if you were teaching face-to-face. Our young learners will get really overwhelmed if you provide a month's worth of work in one hit and expect them to manage their time! Help them focus on skill development and understanding by only engaging them in one or two activities at a time.

action

Select one of the frameworks described above; the 5Es, Bloom's taxonomy or SOLO taxonomy, and structure a series of learning activities that move students from the starting point to the destination you determined in the first stage of this planning process. There's some room on your template for your ideas, which you can also code to link them back to the learning intentions you set if you choose. For ideas about the types of learning activities you could plan, head back to Module 1.1 of this toolkit.

thank you for all you do to educate our children

the EC crew



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