Lesson Design and Planning

*In preparing for battle I have always found that plans
are useless, but planning is indispensable.*
                                        Dwight D. Eisenhower

By: Bob Harrison

Effective lesson design is approached with the learner in mind and with clearly identified goals. Less effective lesson planning is often the result of either resorting to convenience or the belief that "I have to cover the material" by an instructor.

The "convenience" error in lesson design often results from getting the notes and outline from the previous instructor. It may also result by having a favorite activity that students like and remember, but which has little or nothing to do with the learning outcomes. Examples of this shortcoming include showing a favorite movie clip or leading a favorite demonstration that is fun, yet not connected to learning objectives.

The other shortcoming of lesson design is coverage. Some call it, 'death by PowerPoint' or the 'Eternal War Story Epic.' This is the lesson where, for example, 150 slides are shown in a two- to four hour segment with no student processing or active student participation. It is the teacher's way of saying, "Hey, I taught it. They just didn't learn it."

We offer an alternative to these common pitfalls of lesson design: Outcome Based Design (OBD). Adapted from the work of Wiggins and McTighe[1] it is a lesson planning design that sets a tone of deliberate intention on your part as an instructor. It enhances your use of time more efficiently, aligns the learning with the desired outcome, and to more effectively support student learning. Consider:

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[1] Wiggins, Grant and Jay McTighe. (2005) Understanding by Design, 2nd ed. Alexandria VA. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development

Who (is coming to the training?)

_____

_____

What (outcomes am I seeking?)

_____

_____

Where (are my big ideas and core concepts?)

_____

_____

When (do I sequence the learning activities to generate understanding?)

_____

_____

How (will content be delivered?)

_____

_____

Outcome Based Design

Think about what you want your students to <u>know</u> and <u>be able to do</u> at the conclusion of their learning experience. Reflect on three questions that focus on the impact of your students:

- How are they different, and in what ways, as a result of the training?
- What big ideas and core concepts do they now grasp that is related to your learning objectives?
- How do you know they "got it"? What assessments did you use, and are they related to the performance expected in the real world?

In your planning and lesson development, a "backward planning" process is often used. By beginning with the end in mind, you ensure the focus remains on where the learners should be, not merely on what score they might get as a result of the training intervention.

The steps of this planning model are to:

- Identify the desired outcomes you want students to learn; both their "enduring understandings and what they will know and be able to do
- Identify the 'evidence' the students will produce that demonstrates what they know and are able to do. 'Evidence' might be working trough a scenario, producing a segment of a crime report, generating a memo to a superior, or modeling an interview of a victim.
- Consider the means you might use to assess student learning (e.g., how do you know they are getting it?) both "in the moment" (observations, questions, dialogue, demonstrations) and through formal means using

performance tasks and other evidence (quizzes, tests, homework and journals)
- Develop a lesson (learning experience) aligned with the outcome and student evidence. For example if you want students to know how to write a memo, they should write a memo. If you want students to know options available during a routine car stop, the learning experience should provide opportunities for them to experience the multiple options to consider.
- Design Learning activities to support the outcomes you have identified

Notes:
What should they know and be able to do?

_____
_____ _____

What are the "big ideas" and "core concepts" of the training? _____

_____
_____
_____

Outcome-Based Design

Identify Desired Results
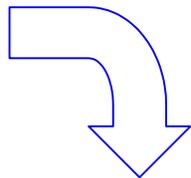
Determine Acceptable Evidence
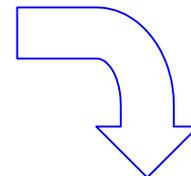
Plan learning Experiences and Instruction

- Results: Goals, content standards, training and testing specs, priorities (the "know" and "do")
- Acceptable Evidence: How you know students have achieved desired results; what is the evidence of student understanding
- Plan: Knowledge – key facts, concepts & principles; Skills – processes, procedures and strategies to perform effectively& achieve desired results
- Activities: to equip the student with the knowledge and skills

A Planning Template

In academy training, your goals and learning objectives are generally established by the state or local governing body. In most states, the learning objectives, tested outcomes and course outline may also be codified.

It is important to understand the outline is not a lesson plan, although it often contains the minimum specifications necessary for students to be able to succeed in that subject's formal test. It is not intended to be taught from the "top left" to the "bottom right." It is, however, a great foundation from which you can engage the planning process.

Use the following template to guide your work to create your lesson plan. Other articles in this series can then be used to help in your "final assembly" of the lesson plan.

The Planning Process

Step One – Desired Results
Established Goals • What relevant goals (content standards, training specifications, learning objectives or learning outcomes) will your design address? • For academy training, identify the relevant learning objectives from the Basic Course Training and Testing Specifications • For in-service training, this may be identified through your needs assessment or other evidence the training is warranted

Understandings	**Essential Questions**
"Students will understand that…" What are the big ideas and core concepts they must know? What specific understandings are desired?	What questions will you ask and want student to answer to ascertain learning?

Students will know…   **Students will be able to do…**
- What key knowledge and skills will students acquire as a result of training? How will you know they have acquired them?
- What should they eventually be able to do, and to what standard, as a result of the learning experience?

Step Two – Assessment Evidence

Performance Tasks
- Through what authentic performance tasks will students demonstrate the understanding at the appropriate level of Bloom's Taxonomy?
- At what points, and by what criteria will performance be assessed; both in-the-moment and subsequent to training?

Other evidence
- Through what other means (e.g., quizzes, tests, observation, homework, journals) will students demonstrate achievement of the desired results?
- How will students reflect upon what they have learned? How could they self-assess their learning?

Step Three – Learning Plan

What learning plan and instruction will enable students to achieve the desired results? How will the design:
- Help identify prior student's knowledge and interests?
- Hold student interest?
- Prepare them to experience key ideas and explore the issues?
- Provide opportunities to rethink and revise their understandings and work?
- Allow students to assess their work and its relevance to their intended future duties?
- Be tailored to the differing needs and abilities of learners, while maintaining integrity with established standards and objectives?
- Be organized to maximize initial and sustained engagement?

Worth Being Familiar With

Important to Know and Do

Big Ideas And Enduring Understandings
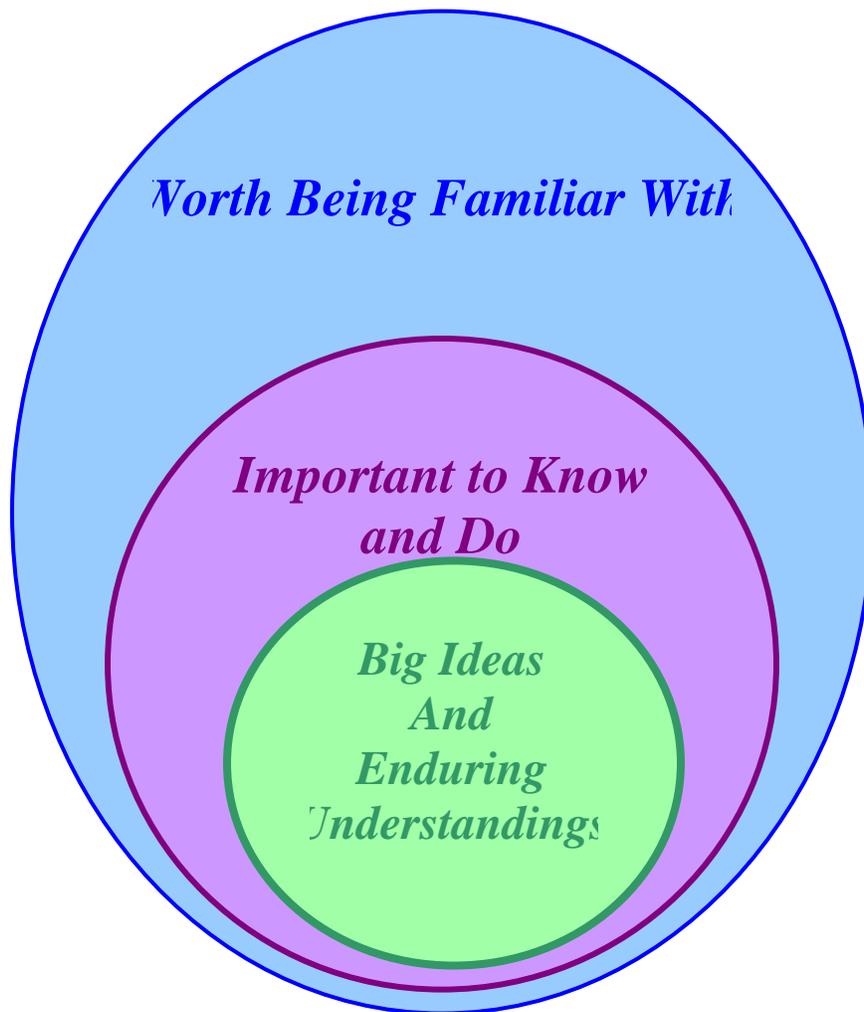
Adapted from G. Wiggins, ASCD seminar, Denver, CO 2006

Using the Nested Circles in Planning

Nested circles on the previous page can be quite valuable as you consider how best to deal with issues of content versus time. It is a rare instructor who has more time available than content to teach. In fact, striving to ensure everything needed is taught is perhaps the most pervasive issue facing instructors at all levels.

Being able to separate possible taught concepts into three general groupings may help to clearly identify what might be "left out" as time compresses the possibility of delivering all possible content:

1. The largest circle represents everything within the stated and desired learning objectives for your course or segment. They cover everything from the lowest level of Bloom's Taxonomy to the highest level of evaluative or creative activities. In general, though, concepts, skills and knowledge that remain in the outer circle are those with which the learner should "be familiar." We submit these concepts and knowledge generally not be taught in class unless necessary to create core "know and do" skills or understanding. In most instances, they can be covered using handouts, job aids or similar reference sources.

2. The middle circle represents the bulk of your instructional efforts. After identifying the learner's gaps in understanding and performance, teaching focuses on the ways students will be different leaving training than when they came in. What do they now know (consistent with learning objectives) and are also able to do (demonstrated performance)? This is the essence of transformative training.

3. Consider; if you have an eight-hour block of time for your normal class, and were told you had only an hour, what would you leave in as the core of your topic? That may be a viable starting point to think of the "enduring understandings" grouped in the innermost circle. It is the concepts driving the need for training by the student, and is generally found in the deep beliefs and values of those in the profession. For instance, in teaching the police use of force, an enduring understanding might be that the police are empowered to use any force necessary to protect lives and overcome resistance to their lawful acts; and also, that they must stop using force when the threat or resistance stops. Once a trainee in policing understands this at a deep level, it will organize and make meaningful any subsequent instruction in the topic.

Planning and delivery using this concept is founded in one underlying belief: That not everything can be taught, and that things taught change from class to class. It is inevitable you consider what is at the core of what you teach, and how best to deliver it in a transformative way. Not all concepts are equal; be deliberate with regard to what you intend for the training setting.