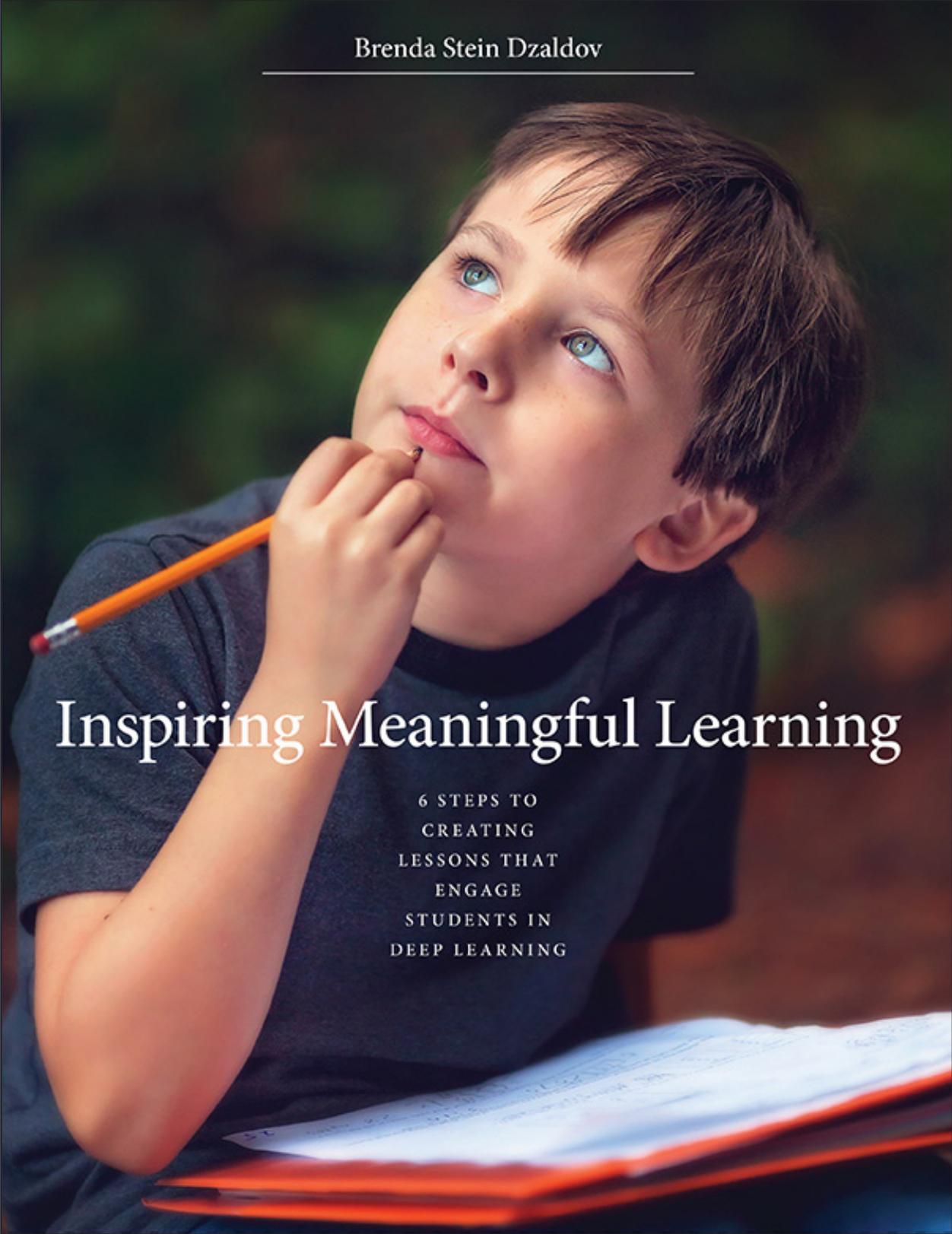


Study Guide

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Inspiring Meaningful Learning

6 STEPS TO
CREATING
LESSONS THAT
ENGAGE
STUDENTS IN
DEEP LEARNING



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** You can find out more about the book, preview the contents, and purchase a print or e-book version on our website.*

Introduction

This study guide has been designed to help you plan engaging and meaningful lessons, either in person or online. Although the online environment is unique, the principles of *Inspiring Meaningful Learning* can and are being successfully applied across contexts by teachers everywhere, both in-person and online.

When referring to online learning, Synchronous Learning refers to online learning that students attend / are engaged in at the same time. Synchronous learning is accomplished through video conferencing on a program such as Zoom, Google Hangouts, or Microsoft Teams. The particular tool you may choose to use for synchronous learning will depend what your school board/Principal endorses. Asynchronous Learning refers to online learning that students choose to participate in at their own pace and at a time convenient to them. Tools used for asynchronous learning include email, blogs, pre-recorded video lesson, webinars, online forums, and discussion boards.

As you use this book in a group study session or on your own, you may choose to focus on the set of guiding questions for each chapter, framed by the *Quotes to Ponder*.

When you begin to plan your lessons or units, it is recommended that you *refer to the lesson design on pages 21-23 first*. Move through the lesson design, focusing on each area and referring to the relevant chapters for clarification and examples.

Quotes to Ponder

“...one of the most important things I learned is that planning is necessary for meaningful learning. Knowing and connecting with your students, both academically and personally, is a starting point. Knowing your curriculum is next.” (page 5)

“...an organized, practical lesson design, backed by the theory around what educators know about engagement, motivation, and learning, can make our jobs much easier and truly fulfilling—because meaningful learning ensues.” (page 5)

Guiding Questions

1. The three overlapping areas of rapport, content knowledge, and pedagogical knowledge are key in the success of this lesson design (you will read more about these 3 areas in Chapter 1). This is true in person and online. What are some ways you have tried to establish rapport in an in person or online environment?
2. Many pedagogical (instructional) approaches work in person such as teacher-student conferences, small group work, polling, sharing thinking aloud or playing games. What are some pedagogical (instructional) approaches you have used online that have worked well to teach content (e.g. breakout groups, one-one conferences, tools such as Kahoot or Menti, Google Jamboard, etc.)?

1

How to Plan for Meaningful Learning

Quotes to Ponder

“...teachers, teaching assistants, and other professionals are not the only ones in the classroom who hold knowledge or who can share this knowledge with others.” (p. 11)

“The Lesson Plan for Meaningful Learning is organized to engage your thinking about each lesson you plan and to give you the opportunity to consider a wide range of approaches that inspire meaningful learning.” (p. 20)

Guiding Questions

1. In person or online, giving students agency and choice is an important part of meaningful learning. Read about the different ways you can invite students into learning on pages 11–13. Which “share the...” section is easiest for you to incorporate into your current planning? Which “share the....” section might be most difficult for you to. Why?
2. There is an example on page 18 about a time when you might have chosen to engage in learning (learning to use an app) and, coincidentally, followed the steps as outlined in the lesson design! Read and think about the example on page 18 and see if you can come up with another example from your own experience that followed those same steps and resulted in meaningful learning. Reflect on this in the context of planning for meaningful learning.
3. Review the lesson design on pages 21–23 again. Which areas are already in place for you? What is one new idea you could try, either in person or online?

2

Welcoming Students into Learning

Quotes to Ponder

“It won’t be possible to greet every single student before each lesson; however, as students enter the classroom, do the best you can to connect to each student by name as you welcome them into the class.” (page 28)

“Once students have been recognized and welcomed into your class, it is time to activate background knowledge, engage interest and curiosity, and direct their attention toward learning.” (page 29)

Guiding Questions

1. Review the strategies for welcoming students into learning (establishing rapport) on pages 28–29. What are 2 ways you could welcome students into online learning, either asynchronously or synchronously?
2. A hook (minds-on, activating prior knowledge) is important in directing students’ interest and attention towards learning. Creating curiosity is a wonderful way to accomplish this. Which of the strategies listed on page 35 interest you and might you use to spark curiosity at the beginning of a lesson?
3. Can these same strategies be used for online learning as well? Think about how you could use them in synchronous or asynchronous learning environments.

3

Sharing Learning Goals and Success Criteria

Quotes to Ponder

“Success criteria can be statements about how students will demonstrate what they know and are able to do by the end of the unit/lesson.” (page 49) *Letting students in on the “secret of success” so they can track and assess their own progress and learning can support students who are learning in-person and students (and their caregivers) who are learning online.*

“Students must have the opportunity to question, add to, and discuss the success criteria as they work through a series of lessons.” (page 53)

Guiding Questions:

1. Read the “soup” example for setting goals and success criteria on page 44. After reading this, you may see that, in general, tasks would be difficult to complete successfully without some idea about the goal and the criteria for success. Can you think of an example from your own life when you learned something useful and that included goals and an understanding of criteria for success?
2. Review page 47 (impact of learning goals and characteristics of written learning goals). There are examples of learning goals on pages 47–48. Practice writing a few learning goals using curriculum objectives for the grade/content area you teach. Share your learning goals with a colleague to get feedback on this.
3. Co-creating and sharing success criteria are crucial to student learning. Return to the “soup” example on page 53, where student experience and interest shift the example to make it meaningful. How can you give voice and choice to make learning more meaningful for your students during lessons in-person and online? There are ideas on pages 54–58.

4

Presenting Input and Modelling

Quotes to Ponder

“The input and modelling part of the lesson is known as the teacher-directed or explicit instruction part of the lesson. It is when the teacher, as one of the knowledgeable individuals in the room, directs students to content or skills that are necessary to learn, based on the articulated outcomes from the learning goals...” (page 61).

“By definition, teaching a whole class at one time is challenging. It means engaging the interests, preferences, and background knowledge of 20 to 30 different students at the same time to teach curriculum that may or may not be interesting or relevant to all students. Your task is to draw on students to make the curriculum meaningful and relevant to the best of their ability and to design learning experiences that engage students. Instead of thinking about the curriculum as the driver, think about the group of learners as the driver.” (page 69)

Guiding Questions

1. The input and modelling portion of the lesson can happen either in person or online. When it is online, you may choose to present the information by pre-recorded video, by posting written instructions and supporting materials (asynchronously), by having student explore a website that teaches the material, or by meeting students in real time using videoconferencing to teach (synchronously). Using the framework in the lesson design, which of these options for online input/modelling might work for you and for your students and why?
2. Learning and rapport are both important when engaging in explicit teaching. Review some of the ideas on page 71 (box) about ways to maintain rapport during learning. These are also do-able online, both synchronously and asynchronously. Brainstorm a few examples.
3. It is necessary to think about accommodations (for individual students) or differentiation (for groups of students) when you are planning this portion of the lesson. Review the examples of accommodation and differentiation on pages 73–74 and incorporate this into the input/modelling part of one of your own lessons.

5

Ensuring Guided and Independent Practice

Quotes to Ponder

“Observe, prompt, and possibly meet with a small group of students to support guided or independent practice.” (page 77)

“Based on assessment for learning before and during the lesson, teachers know that typically most students (80%) will be able to practice the content and skills presented in the lesson independently, either alone or in small groups. Some of those students (20% of the class) will benefit from enrichment instruction in which you extend the learning. That means 20% of your students will need some support from you in the form of reteaching an aspect of the lesson to support independence.” (page 78)

Guiding Questions

1. Guided instruction usually happens in a small group setting. When in-person, this would be at a table or space where students are gathered. In a videoconference, breakout groups are one approach that can be used for small group teaching for those students who require some guided support prior to working independently. Use one of the guided instruction lesson plans (Reading, Writing, Math, Science, or Enrichment) on pages 80–87 and consider how to incorporate guided instruction into one of your own lessons. How are the processes of revision and editing different? On which should we spend more time?
2. During independent practice, students assess their own learning using the success criteria for the lesson/unit. This is necessary both in-person and online. Using the information on pages 89–90, what supports (anchor charts, step-by-step procedures, success criteria, a reflection opportunity) would be useful in your teaching to support student learning?

6

Checking for Understanding

Quotes to Ponder

“Assessment as learning is defined as the process of developing and supporting students to actively engage in the assessment process: that is, they monitor their own learning; use assessment feedback from teacher, self, and peers to determine next steps; and set individual goals.” (page 95)

“Descriptive feedback linked specifically to the learning goals and success criteria is a powerful tool for improving student learning and is fundamental to building a culture of learning within the classroom.” (page 97)

Guiding Questions

1. Arguably, assessment as learning is the most important part of the assessment process for meaningful learning as it is student-involved. Review the sample self-assessment on page 96. This can be useful in-person or online. How can you use/modify this for use online to support the learning process?
2. Review the 3 most common types of feedback students receive during a lesson. Which ones do you use most? Least? Which ones would you like to include more often in your teaching?
3. Look at the open-ended dialogue prompts on pages 100–101. How do you think these (and other non-evaluative responses) might improve your feedback for your students?
4. Some of the strategies to check for understanding are on pages 105–107. Have you used the sticky note strategy before? Explore an online sticky note tool (e.g. Google Jamboard or Popplet) to apply some of these strategies for synchronous or asynchronous teaching.
5. Next, explore some tools such as Google forms, Poll Everywhere, or Padlet. Try an online check-in ticket tool to apply some of the strategies outlined in the book to inspire meaningful learning online.

7

Closing the Lesson

Quotes to Ponder

“...choose a closure activity that makes sense for that lesson or series of lessons.” (page 112)

“Be sure to say goodbye to your students, just as you welcomed them into learning, and let them know that you are looking forward to seeing them the next day. When you close the class on a note of praise, positive feedback, or a kind word, students feel good about their learning experience.” (page 116)

Guiding Questions

1. Closing the lesson by sparking curiosity for the next lesson is great way to wrap-up and let students know what is coming up for them. Check out the ideas at the bottom of page 115 for sparking curiosity at the end of the lesson. Practice by planning a question / prompt for an upcoming lesson.
2. Appreciations can and should be a way to build rapport during and while closing the lesson. This can be accomplished in person or online. During synchronous (verbally) or asynchronous (in writing) learning, students can be appreciated for their care, interest, effort, or enthusiasm. Look at the prompts on page 116 for appreciation. Which might you use and incorporate into your planning? Brainstorm other appreciations that make sense for your students.

This remarkable book explores the essential steps for planning lessons that will capture the attention of students and engage them in their learning.

Inspiring Meaningful Learning addresses the key areas that are most important for meaningful learning: content, pedagogy, and building rapport with students. It offers 6 steps for making every lesson engaging, impactful, and even fun!

- Welcoming Students – from making eye contact to sparking curiosity
- Sharing Learning Goals – from writing learning goals to involving students in creating success criteria
- Modelling – from teaching instead of telling to making input/modelling meaningful
- Ensuring Practice – from planning guided instruction to encouraging independence
- Checking for Understanding – from assessment that supports learning to effective feedback
- Closing the Lesson – from review to closure prompts

This practical resource shows you how content, pedagogy, and rapport work together to get students involved in their learning and help them see how individual lessons connect to their lives outside the classroom. It stresses the importance of tapping into background knowledge to facilitate learning and promote good discussion that supports deep thinking. It offers valuable suggestions for developing a toolkit of wide-ranging instructional strategies to meet the learning needs of a variety of students. It champions a classroom climate built on kindness and caring that encourages strong personal connections.

Inspiring Meaningful Learning is based on a lesson design that engages students and provides an organized, comprehensive way to plan lessons that inspire kids to want to learn.



Brenda Stein Dzaldov is an educational consultant and teacher educator. With more than twenty-five years of experience as a classroom teacher, literacy teacher, special education teacher, and educational consultant, Brenda is currently an instructor in the Master of Teaching Program at the University of Toronto. Brenda is the author of numerous children's books, as well as academic articles about student literacy learning. She is the author of *Literacy Smarts: Simple classroom strategies for using interactive whiteboards to engage students* and *Ready, Set, Learn: Integrating powerful learning skills and strategies into daily instruction*. Brenda's passion is supporting educators in creating classrooms where students learn, grow, and teach us to be better at what we do as teachers.

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