Teaching by Design

TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES TO IMPROVE INSTRUCTION

Jim Burke

"Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?"

"That depends a good deal on where you want to go," said the Cheshire Cat.

"I don't much care where—" said Alice.

"Then it doesn't matter which way you go," said the Cheshire Cat.

—Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*

Embracing Constraints

Whether at school or visiting an online community such as the English Companion Ning, attending a conference or simply having a conversation with colleagues during lunch, I can't help but notice that we are all thinking about planning in ways that are new to many of us, largely as a consequence of new pressures exerted through new standards such as the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Other pressing developments, such as the move toward full inclusion of special needs students, make additional demands that add to the complexity of the planning process. As a result of these initiatives, we are expected to be very intentional in all that we attempt to accomplish through our lessons. The feeling is that learning cannot be left to chance, that "an excellent education should

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not be an accident, but the consequence of deliberate planning" (Burke, 2013). In the absence of any instructional leadership or coherent narrative, a class, a unit, even a daily lesson stalls and accomplishes nothing; or, to borrow from Proverbs with some license, where there is no vision, the students do not learn.

The very essence of our work is reflected in the word *education*, its etymology capturing our primary aim. *Educare* stems from the Latin word meaning to lead out, and *educere*, a related stem, means to direct the flow. Both of these remind us that the word *curriculum*, traced back to its Latin origins, means course or to run, both evoking the image of teacher as a designer of and guide through the "course" our students are "to run" in order "to lead out" that person and potential that waits within each student.

Recommended Reading

✓ You can find Grant Wiggins' blog about planning and all of his other blogs, which are consistently insightful and useful, at grantwiggins.wordpress.com.

Such learning, such *leading*, can only come from deliberate instruction designed, as Grant Wiggins (2014) writes, to cause "specific results and changes in ability, attitude, and behavior … [and] make student engagement a central design consideration" (para. 9). This suggests that teachers should think as much about design as they should instruction, to think like designers as well as teachers. What

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does such "design thinking" look like or involve, especially as it regards designing units, lessons, and the materials needed to effectively implement them in our classrooms? It appears to require that we think in terms of boundaries and "the willing embrace of constraints… [and] discovering which constraints are important and establishing a framework for evaluating them" (Brown, 2009).

In this article, I want to examine this notion of "teaching by design" on several different levels:

1. Designing Performances
2. Designing Assignments
3. Designing Daily Lessons
4. Designing Materials
5. Designing Assessments

Under the leadership of a dynamic new principal, I now see at my own school what I have witnessed around the country when visiting and working with other schools: a cultural shift away from the "close the door and teach" days of old and a strong call for collaboration. Thus we all find ourselves working—at school and online—in our own local versions of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) whose primary task is to design units, lessons, and assessments we all use to ensure greater cohesion and effectiveness. I feel this pressure myself all the more since recently receiving a grant for 1:1 laptops with my teaching partner Melissa; thus adding to our already impressive array of demands, we now find ourselves trying to incorporate technology in ways that are appropriate and effective. Without the sort of guidance the tools and techniques discussed here provide, I suspect we would quickly feel overwhelmed; instead, we feel, if not invigorated, at least inspired and able to meet the many challenges we face thanks to the ideas that follow.

Designing Performances: The Big Picture

Many of us work, play, compete, and perform within a set of constraints imposed on us by some domain. It is exactly that sense of an occasion to which one must rise that makes the notion of performance so compelling, for it challenges us as teachers to design such assignments and assessments to be both meaningful and demanding. Such performances serve as assessments in the same way that concerts and actual games

do for musicians and athletes. Conceiving of our curriculum as a series of performances requires that we do away with isolated activities and decontextualized instruction, teaching our students, instead, the skills and knowledge they need for the next performance in our class. In other words, the concept of learning *as a performance* situates our teaching within the context of getting students ready for the game, which means everything we teach should serve a more targeted purpose related to that performance. It places students in the tradition of being a novice or apprentice to

> the kinds of thinking that are important for scientists (making and testing hypotheses, observing closely, building explanations…), mathematicians (looking for patterns, making conjectures, forming generalizations, constructing arguments…), readers (making interpretations, connections, predictions …), historians (considering different perspectives, reasoning with evidence, building explanations …) and so on. (Ritchhart, Church, & Morrison, 2011, pp. 10–11)

Recommended Design Resources and Models

✓ John Hattie's *Visible Learning* (visible-learning.org/)
✓ Nueva School's Design Thinking Model (designthinking.nuevaschool.org/)
✓ Pam Grossman's PLATO protocol (platorubric.stanford.edu/)
✓ Center for Applied Linguistics' SIOP Protocol for ELLs (www.cal.org/siop)
✓ Doug Lemov's *Teach Like a Champion* (teachlikeachampion.com)
✓ Achieve's EQuIP Rubric for Lessons and Units (www.achieve.org/EQuIP)

What exactly do I mean when I use this term *performance*? If we were an orchestra or a basketball team, all the concerts or games we played would count as performances. It is an authentic, meaningful performance in those various domains—reading, writing, speaking, representing, thinking—that gives students a feeling of accomplishment when they finish it. It is a piece of work that inspires a level of personal investment or engagement to the extent that it challenges and changes them, giving students the opportunity to learn and do things they did not know they could. While these performances invariably serve as some form of performance assessment,

this is not my focus when I speak here of a series of performances.

The Essential Performances Matrix (Figure 1) demonstrates what a set of such performances, each aligned with the 9–12 ELA CCSS in this case, would include. This matrix leads to challenging but important conversations about who teaches what—and when and how they teach it. Given that the Common Core anchor standards remain the same across all grades, each box *should* contain multiple performances during the course of a year, each one more complex, in some way, than the preceding performances. "Research," for example, should not have only one big paper in the 12th grade, but a series of performances in that domain in grades 9–11, each one building on the one before it; and within each year the Research box should show a progression of performances that challenge students anew as they move through the course and the year. After all, Common Core ELA Writing Standard 7 stresses "Conduct[ing] short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation" (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010).

The Essential Performances Matrix (Figure 1) serves as a design tool we can use to audit both what we are and should be doing as individuals, grade-level teams, departments—even as schools. It is not a curriculum map but the menu of all the meals, the schedule of all the big games or shows for a given year of, in my case, high school English. It was inspired partly by the idea that we should be able to show kids or their parents on a single page the performances for the coming season or what they will do—and *learn*—in the years before and after they are in our class. If done well, it should illustrate that we are challenging all students' minds and imaginations and, moreover, that we are, as John Hattie (2011) implores, ensuring "that there is legitimate progression of learning from one day, week, month, term and year to the next."

A completed sheet should thus include what the teacher, team, or department consider the "essential performances" at each grade level, arranging them in the order the performances occur across grade levels and within each year. Organized in this way, the sheet allows us to spot any holes in our year's curriculum (i.e., where there are no performances listed or the ones that are no more complex

or challenging than previous performances) and to examine the progression of complexity and intellectual demands from year to year as well as month to month in any given year. In this way, we might be forced to ask ourselves, when designing a year-long course, why we are preparing students for a given performance in February, for example, and how that performance builds on and exceeds the cognitive demands of those performances from earlier in the year—or even previous years, for that matter.

Finally, the Essential Performances Matrix, in addition to encouraging collaboration within and across grade levels, helps teachers align their teaching during the course of a year with those main standards we are charged with helping our students master. This sheet, simple as it is, allows us to strip away all the minutiae that bloat most standards documents, the Common Core included, and list on one page what we want students to show they know and can do by the end of each year. As Mike Schmoker (2011) writes in his book *Focus: Evaluating the Essentials to Radically Improve Student Learning*, "What is 'essential' for schools? Three simple things: reasonably coherent curriculum (*what* we teach); sound lessons (*how* we teach); and far more purposeful reading and writing in every discipline, or *authentic literacy* (integral to both what and how we teach)" (p. 2). Schmoker further reduces his argument, insisting that the principles that should inform our thinking when we design units and lessons are *simplicity*, *clarity*, and *priority*.

Designing Assignments: The Menu *and* the Meal

If I could create a hotlink to each performance listed in a completed Essential Performance matrix, it would lead to an assignment based on a template like the one in Figure 2. The bold headers on the left margin (created by using "hanging indents") provide a template that ensures I include all the basic instructional food groups in each unit I assign.

The Overview section (Figure 2), while providing students with a rationale for the assignment, demands that I myself understand what I am trying to accomplish. The Requirements section, seemingly a list of obvious items, becomes a list of elements I either have taught or need to continue to teach to ever-higher standards. The choice of length, features, and format become key instructional decisions as we try to be more intentional at every level of our work as

FIGURE 1 When completing this matrix or using it to facilitate discussion in your department or PLCs, remember that the CCSS says these should be filled for every grade with multiple assignments. Also, keep in mind that the document functions on two levels: across grade levels (from left to right) and within grade levels (from top—September—of each box to the bottom—June) to indicate the progression of performances over time in a given domain for that year.

ESSENTIAL PERFORMANCES

Department:_____ **Class Level:**_____ **Date:**_____

Description	9	10	11	12
Read a range of literary texts (stories, plays, poems, art). RS.10				
Read a range of literary and informational nonfiction (books, essays, autobiographies, articles). RS.10				
Read a range of graphic, visual, and multimedia texts (websites, images, art). RS.10				
Arguments: Write to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts. WS.1				
Inform & Explanations: Write to examine and convey complex ideas and information. WS.2				
Narratives: Write to develop real or imagined experiences or events. WS.3				
Research: Write short and sustained research projects for a range of purposes. WS.7				
On-Demand: Write over a shorter time for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences. WS.10				
Discussion: Participate in a range of collaborative discussions. SS.1				
Speech/Presentation: Present information making strategic use of digital media. SS.4-5				

Literacy Narrative
Mr. Burke/English 7

Overview   This assignment asks you to think about your own experiences with and attitude toward writing, as well as your identity of yourself as a writer based on those past experiences. Some experiences contribute more to our intellectual or academic identity than others, so this assignment asks you to consider which experience was most influential in that development.

Requirements   This paper should:
☐ Be 2-3 pages
☐ Be typed, double-spaced, with 1-1.25" margins
☐ Use a 12-point serif font (e.g., **Serif**: Garamond Pro; **Sans Serif**: Arial)
☐ Include your name and page numbers in the header
☐ Read and identify the techniques used in the assigned sample narratives by:
  ▸ Jimmy Santiago Baca
  ▸ Francisco Jimenez
  ▸ Malcolm X
  ▸ Maya Angelou

Standards   This assignment focuses on developing your ability to learn the following standards:
WS 1: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
WS 2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
WS 4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Guidelines   This assignment asks you to do the following:
☐ List a variety of experiences and people that contributed to your identity as a writer
☐ Use a graph or other thinking tool to help you arrange those details chronologically
☐ Identify the one experience or person from that graph that was most important
☐ Generate details related to this experience or person using a technique (listing, brainstorming, freewrite, etc.) we have learned this year to help you gather ideas
☐ Describe this experience or person in some detail, focusing on what happened, how it (or they) shaped your identity of yourself as a writer or your attitude toward writing, using examples, character development techniques (e.g., dialogue). Include in your essay why this person or experience was so important by considering questions such as:
  ▸ What was it about this person or experience that affected me so much?
  ▸ What was the specific effect of this person or experience on my writing development?
  ▸ What other experiences or people might I discuss by way of contrast?

Assessment   This paper will be evaluated using the rubric provided on the back of this sheet. Please consult it as a guide throughout the writing process as it is designed to help you.

teachers. In this case, including the difference between serif and sans serif fonts, for example, stresses the new emphasis on design that is a growing part of teaching writing. The checklist helps me detect potential places to add substance; the list of readings, for example, was a last-minute amendment that adds both support and substance to the assignment.

As for the Standards section, one could argue that it should just say "All of the Above." Here, again, the template challenges me to stop and reflect with greater consistency on what I am trying to accomplish; identifying these few key standards also anchors my teaching in the more established context of the standards to show students that these are the skills and knowledge valued by not only me but society at large.

The Guidelines section, what others might see as the "prompt," is both the menu of the meal and the meal itself. Note the attention to the verbs throughout the section, drawn consistently and intentionally from the ideas and words listed in Figures 3 and 4. These are not merely verbs; they are the mental moves, the cognitive processes I want students to improve on or master through this assignment; these words constitute the equivalent of the academic

FIGURE 3 Teaching by Design Using Webb's Depth of Knowledge Model

Teach by Design: Using Webb's Depth of Knowledge Model

Created by Jim Burke

This page offers you a quick-reference guide to using Norman Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK) model when you are developing instructional units, assessment tasks, or specific assignments in your content area. Two central concepts in the DOK model are the **cognitive demands** the learning or assessment tasks make on students, and the **depth of knowledge or understanding** a given task or question requires to complete or learn it. The assigned DOK level reflects the degree of cognitive processing a task, topic, text, or test demands. Bloom's Taxonomy assumed certain verbs required a level of cognitive processing; in his DOK model, however, Webb, argues that it is what *follows* the verb that determines the complexity of the task. Thus, a word like *describe* could appear at any of the four DOK levels, depending on what one was asked to describe.

RECALL & REPRODUCE: We know but do not transform facts, details, terms, or principles.

LEVEL 1

DESCRIPTION: LEVEL 1

Asks students to *remember, list, locate, retell, identify, define,* or use similar skills on assignments or assessments to show that they know certain target knowledge or skills. At this level, the cognitive demands are basic, requiring knowledge and skills that students either do or do not know; that is, Level 1 questions or tasks do not ask students to *use* the facts or other details to solve any problems or figure out additional questions.

REPRESENTATIVE ACTIONS

- *Identify* all metaphors used in a passage.
- *List* three examples of irony from the text.
- *Retell* what happens to _____ in the text.
- *Define* the word _____ using a dictionary.
- *Locate* all details to include in works cited.
- *Label* each of the types of sentences in a ¶.
- *Memorize* a passage or a complete poem.
- *Recall* the questions to ask about a poem.
- *Find* the key facts about _____ in a text.
- *Search* online using the terms provided.

ASSIGNMENT & ASSESSMENT TASKS

- Which definition is more accurate for the word _____ as it is used in line 4?
- What does the author say is the most memorable quality of _____ in his essay?
- What are the elements of a Shakespearean sonnet?
- In his second soliloquy, Hamlet describes himself as: a.___ b.___ c.___.
- What different definitions does the dictionary offer for the word ____?

SKILLS & CONCEPTS: We process/transform specified knowledge—then *use* or *apply* it.

LEVEL 2

DESCRIPTION: LEVEL 2

Asks students to *infer, organize, predict, compare, classify, show cause-effect, solve simple problems,* or complete similar processes that require students to determine what a word or concept means––based on any available context or background information––then to go beyond the obvious meaning of the word or concept, using it to *estimate, classify, summarize, revise, translate,* or *modify* something to show they understand it.

REPRESENTATIVE ACTIONS

- *Organize* details in order of importance.
- *Compare* how X is similar to Y.
- *Predict* what X will do next based on ___.
- *Display* data as a table or graph.
- *Summarize* an author's argument.
- *Translate* a table/graph into a paragraph.
- *Paraphrase* a specified portion of the text.
- *Distinguish* the effect of X from Y.
- *Define* ___ based on context clues in text.
- *Represent* the story using a plot diagram.

ASSIGNMENT & ASSESSMENT TASKS

- How would you visually represent the relationship between X and Y?
- What other words could you use to describe X based on what you know?
- What question is the author trying to answer in this essay or presentation?
- What other defendible claims could you make about this text?
- Which of the following sentences makes the clearest, most effective claim?

STRATEGIC THINKING & REASONING: We integrate in-depth knowledge & skills to solve/produce.

LEVEL 3

DESCRIPTION: LEVEL 3

Asks students to *assess, develop, draw conclusions, explain events/processes in terms of concepts, solve complicated problems,* and engage in similar higher order thinking skills that require planning, reasoning, analysis, and evaluation. Students combine their deepening conceptual knowledge and growing array of skills to think strategically about how to solve and create. Level 3 emphasizes deep understanding of *one* text or source.

REPRESENTATIVE ACTIONS

- *State the reasoning* behind a position and *provide relevant evidence* that supports it.
- *Investigate* a problem or question, *explaining* its origins and how it has evolved over time as a result of human intervention.
- *Develop a logical argument* about how a literary character changes over the course of a story and how they contribute to the meaning of the text as a whole; *provide textual evidence* to support any claims.

ASSIGNMENT & ASSESSMENT TASKS

- What tone is most appropriate given your task, audience, occasion, or purpose?
- What logic informs the sequence of information in this text and how does it relate to the author's (or your own) purpose?
- How could you revise your paper to improve the logic or cohesion of your ideas?
- Explain how this poem honors *and* departs from the sonnet form, and how that departure affects the poem's meaning.

EXTENDED THINKING: We extend our knowledge to address complex, real problems or questions.

LEVEL 4

DESCRIPTION: LEVEL 4

Asks students to *extend, integrate, reflect, adjust, design, conduct,* and *initiate* or *monitor* authentic problems that have no obvious or predictable solution, drawing on a range of sources, texts of different types and perspectives, often in collaboration with others and over an extended period of time. Level 4 thinking demands we extend our thinking across sources, disciplines, and perspectives to solve a problem or create a final product.

REPRESENTATIVE ACTIONS

- *Design* a multimedia slide presentation that *documents* the civil rights movement from different perspectives, *analyzing* key moments and *explaining* their effect on the movement and the people involved.
- *Investigate* a substantive topic for an extended time from multiple perspectives that results in a 10-page formal paper presented in a 3-5 minute multimedia TED-Talk format to parents and peers.

ASSIGNMENT & ASSESSMENT TASKS

- Identify themes that are common to the different texts provided, explaining how these themes are treated and developed.
- Analyze how identity contributes to the meaning of each text, choosing a metaphor that effective captures what these various sources are saying about identity.
- Write an analysis of two (or more) sonnets, constructing and supporting with evidence a claim about what they say about a subject they have in common.

DNA in all assignments and are thus vital to students' success across all subject areas. Without a sound understanding of not just the word *analyze* but the cognitive processes required to analyze a text, students are unable to join the academic game from the start.

Designed as a template, such a document as Figure 2 becomes a useful checklist for both students and teachers alike. Writing about the use of such checklists for complex procedures after an extensive study of their use in different fields, Atul Gawande (2009) observed that

> Good checklists… are precise… efficient, to the point, and easy to use even in the most difficult situations. They do not try to spell out everything… . Instead, they provide reminders of only the most critical and important steps—the ones that even the highly skilled professionals using them could miss. Good checklists are, above all, practical. (p. 120)

Wiggins (2014), commenting on templates and their use in teaching, concluded,

> As with any tool, the template is meant to be a helpful aid, a mental check. The idea of a good checklist is what's key…. An instructional planning template can save *intellectual* lives, we think. By having to think of the big ideas; by focusing on transfer as a goal; by worrying about whether goals and assessments align, by being asked to predict misconceptions and rough spots in the learning, the Template keeps key design questions front and center

that tend to get lost in typical planning, where teachers too easily think about content to be covered. (paras. 13–14)

In the same blog about planning, which Wiggins (2014) calls "one of the more interesting 'black boxes' in education" (para. 5), he reflects on his evolving thoughts about planning in light of what he has learned from his model of "Understanding by Design" the last 20 years. In the blog, he offers the following questions based on his book *Understanding by Design* (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005):

- Bottom line, what should learners be able to do with the content?…

- What thought-provoking questions will foster inquiry, meaning-making, and transfer?

- What specifically do you want students to understand? What inferences should they make? What misconceptions are predictable and will need overcoming?…

- What assessments will provide valid evidence of the goals?…

- Does the learning plan reflect principles of learning and best practices? (Wiggins, 2014, para. 16)

Judith Langer (2002), synthesizing her study of middle and high school English language arts instruction in *Effective Literacy Instruction*, offers what can be used as a set of guiding principles (as opposed to a mere checklist) when designing lessons:

1. Students learn skills and knowledge in multiple lesson types.

2. Teachers integrate test preparations into instruction.

3. Teachers make connections across instruction, curriculum, grades, and life.

4. Students learn strategies for doing the work.

5. Students are expected to be generative thinkers.

6. Classrooms foster cognitive collaboration.

✓ To learn more about Langer's study, visit www.albany.edu/etap/Judith_Langer.php.

To help me more consistently create the most robust and cognitively complex assignments and lessons, assignments which would also prepare my students for the demands of the Common Core assessments, I created two additional design tools to help me. My own synthesis of Donald Webb's (2002) Depth of Knowledge (DOK) model (Figure 3) combines on a single page his four levels and the representative academic tasks I need to be sure my units include if they are to adequately challenge my students and help them grow intellectually.

✓ Learn more about Webb's DOK model by reading Karin Hess's (2013) detailed *Guide for Using Webb's Depth of Knowledge With the Common Core State Standards*.

✓ See *Academic Moves for College and Career Readiness, Grades 6-12* by Burke and Gilmore for more information and a detailed treatment of these words and Webb's DOK model.

Webb (2002) emphasizes cognitive verbs, which helped me see these words not as academic vocabulary words (though they certainly count as those as well) but as *mental moves*, as *cognitive processes* which my students need to make fluently to succeed in my class and in college or their careers. These "academic moves," all of which appear repeatedly in any major standards document, are meant to be used in conjunction with Webb's DOK model, which I sum up in Figure 3. These two documents have been transformative, making me infinitely more aware of and purposeful in what I am trying to accomplish when designing assignments, instructional materials, daily lessons, and assessments with those two documents near at hand.

Designing Daily Lessons

On the more day-to-day level, all the previously mentioned tools culminate in the daily lesson plan. To

bring the same degree of intentionality and consistency to this most immediate aspect of our teaching, I created a lesson plan template (Figure 5) to help me remember what I am trying to accomplish. In the top corner, I placed my own "Instructional Checklist" to guide me in my daily design and implementation of lessons. Even if I cannot check off each box, it at least reminds me to ask if I am sure there is not a way to "ask students to generate" during this lesson.

The notion of breaking the lesson plan into three "acts" stems from the observation that a class (my periods are 51 minutes long) cannot be divided into more than three major "instructional moves" and remain intact. If the period is broken into smaller units, the instructional narrative degrades, the lessons and activities having no cohesive or logical connection to each other.

More recently, I have begun experimenting around with digital variations on this lesson plan, trying to adapt the same basic approach into a spreadsheet in Google Sheets that I can create, revise, share, and review more effectively when planning the next day's lesson. Though I am early into the trial of this web-based version (using Google Sheets so I can collaborate and share the document with colleagues, special education teachers, and members of my PLC), it shows promise, despite its less elegant format due to the constraints of the spreadsheet software.

Designing Assessments

To some extent, assessment is baked in to all that I have described till now. What criteria I will apply or rubric I will use for the different performances and other assignments along the way—these are all part of the planning process. However, a few examples of how the Academic Moves words and Webb's DOK model have changed the way I design prompts, tasks, and rubrics will suffice to give you some sense of how these play out in my class.

When it came time to read Orwell's *1984* in our senior class, I used the Academic Moves (Figure 3) and Webb's DOK model to formulate very different types of questions than students were used to getting on typical quizzes in most classes. Here are a few representative examples:

Chapters 1.4–1.5

1. There are two parts to this question, both of which you must answer correctly to receive credit:

   a. **PART A:** Define the word *rectify* as given by the dictionary.

   b. **PART B:** Explain the meaning of the word *rectify* as it is used in the context of Winston's job in *1984* (pgs. 38–39). Discuss the implications of the word (and the act of rectifying) as it is used in *1984*.

2. Reread the discussion about "truth" and "facts" on pages 40–41. Generate **three questions** one can ask to determine (in our world today) with certainty if something is true, is a fact. Explain briefly how each sentence works to determine if something is true—and why you would be vaporized for even thinking, let alone asking, those questions.

3. Which of the following diagrams best represents the relationship between people in Oceania. Explain why that diagram best illustrates the nature of the relationship.

A.   **B.**   **C.**
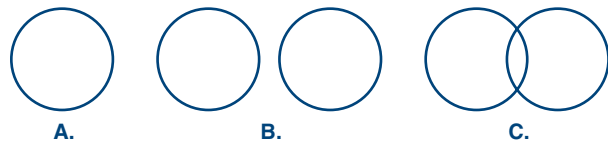
4. Determine the type of power, according to French and Raven's model, that best describes the Ministry of Truth's source of power. Then explain your answer. You may circle more than one.

   a. Reward

   b. Legitimate

   c. Referent

   d. Expert

   e. Informational

   f. Coercive

   g. None of the above

   h. All the above

5. Read the following claim and respond as directed below:

   "The woman with sandy hair" (pg. 42) is complicit in the systematic murder of thousands because she "tracks down and deletes from the press the names of those who have been vaporized."

   State and explain why you (a) agree, (b) disagree, or (c) agree *and* disagree.

These questions served as assessments, but also were then used as the basis for classroom discussions

FIGURE 5 Daily Lesson Plan Template

DAILY LESSON PLAN

Date		Class	Unit

Instructional Checklist

- ☐ Provide the necessary conditions.
- ☐ Establish and communicate clear, specific learning objectives.
- ☐ Make explicit connections.
- ☐ Prepare students.
- ☐ Integrate assessment throughout; include time for reflection.
- ☐ Teach students strategies.
- ☐ Demystify literacy practices and performances.
- ☐ Use different instructional methods, modes, and media.
- ☐ Ask students to generate.
- ☐ Provide meaningful opportunities to practice, perfect, and perform all lessons in class and at home.

Checklist

Did you:
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐

Remember and Reflect

Objectives:

ACT 1:

ACT 2:

ACT 3:

Homework

afterward. The reference to the French and Raven model of power in question number 4 shows where the assessment intersects with what would eventually become the performance toward which all this eventually led: a substantial paper in which they applied French and Raven's power model to the novel.

It is worth noting that these questions were also intended to at least echo the sort of tasks and moves expected on the Common Core assessments by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium and the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers. Students were, as a rule, genuinely engaged by these questions and found they not only challenged them but helped them understand key ideas in the book.

The Elements of Instructional Design

Maybe we need our own version of that succinct, wise, and elegant book *The Elements of Style* (Strunk & White, 2009). In this enduring classic about writing, which many authors claim to reread every year to remind them of the essential elements of effective writing, Strunk and White stress, in one of their "elementary principles of composition," that one should strive to "omit needless words" for, as they go on to say:

> Vigorous writing is concise. A sentence should contain no unnecessary words, a paragraph no unnecessary sentences, for the same reason that a drawing should have no unnecessary lines and a machine no unnecessary parts. This requires not that the writer make all his sentences short, or that he avoid all detail and treat his subjects only in outline, but that he make every word tell.

So it is with teaching: We have so little time and so must endeavor to make every move, every minute count. In his study of great teachers, Doug Lemov consistently finds that such teachers "obsessed on things like how efficiently they used time in the classroom. They fought a running battle for seconds and minutes by paying careful attention to how (and how quickly)" they could get things done and "perseverated on the words they used to explain a concept" (Lemov, Woolway, & Yezzi, 2012, p. 5).

The tools and techniques I have discussed in this article are those I have developed over time, guided by the examples of my colleagues at school and the work of other writers whose ideas have made my own practice more effective and allowed me to be the teacher I am still trying to become. That elusive ideal teacher is

not some automaton reading from a script, but perhaps a bit like the legendary basketball coach John Wooden who "timed his practices to the minute, husbanding every second to ensure its precise and careful allocation. He kept a record of every practice on note cards, which he filed away for future reference: what worked; what didn't; how to do it better next time" (Lemov, Woolway, & Yezzi, 2012, p. 2).

> ✓ Those interested in learning more about Wooden's coaching methods, especially his legendary "Pyramid of Success," can visit www.coachwooden.com.

This is what it looks like to be deliberate, to plan with an end in mind. Wooden, like great practitioners in every field, realized that *everything* mattered, that everything he did was a form of coaching, down to teaching his team on the first day how to properly put on their socks and shoes so they would not lose a game because someone got a blister. This is how I want to work as a teacher, to be constantly reflecting on my own game even as I design those lessons and create those units that will help students improve theirs. So, like Wooden and E. B. White, I want my every instructional move to "tell" so that when my students enter the arena of their adult lives, they are ready to play hard and well.

What I have tried to do in this article, more than anything, is share what I have learned along the way, to extend to you an invitation to reflect on and conduct a similar audit of your own teaching. Take time in the coming months, whenever you begin to prepare for or are reflecting on a unit you just finished, to identify the verbs (the mental moves) you asked students to make, and to consider whether this latest assignment asks more of the students than the previous assignment. Study your classes, your students: this is what my work as a teacher-writer has taught me to do more than anything else. What works in my classes may not work perfectly in yours, but the time you take to reflect on yours, through conversations with your colleagues and even your students, will make your students' work and your teaching itself performances in which you can take great pride.

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