

Brenda Stein Dzaldov

Inspiring Meaningful Learning

6 STEPS TO
CREATING
LESSONS THAT
ENGAGE
STUDENTS IN
DEEP LEARNING

	<p>Content (circle one):</p> <p>Reading Writing Math Science Social Studies Other</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Check in on progress <input type="checkbox"/> Reteach content and skills <input type="checkbox"/> Provide enrichment instruction</p> <p>Instructional Focus:</p>
<p>Checks for Understanding and Ongoing Formative Assessment</p> <p>(10 minutes)</p>	<p>Content knowledge/Skill checks for understanding: Focus on learning goals and success criteria</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Observations that focus first on strengths <input type="checkbox"/> Conversations that support assessment and promote rapport <input type="checkbox"/> Products (for feedback)</p>
<p>Closure</p> <p>(5 minutes)</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Lesson review and wrap-up/Reflection <input type="checkbox"/> Recording of homework, important information <input type="checkbox"/> Closure question/prompt (to spark curiosity for next lesson) <input type="checkbox"/> Appreciations</p>
<p>Resources/Materials:</p>	
<p>Assessment:</p> <p><i>for learning:</i> <input type="checkbox"/> observation <input type="checkbox"/> anecdotal notes <input type="checkbox"/> checklist <input type="checkbox"/> conversations/conferencing <input type="checkbox"/> work samples/products <input type="checkbox"/> check-ins</p> <p><i>as learning:</i> <input type="checkbox"/> rubric <input type="checkbox"/> success criteria <input type="checkbox"/> self-reflection <input type="checkbox"/> other</p> <p><i>of learning:</i> <input type="checkbox"/> quiz <input type="checkbox"/> test <input type="checkbox"/> presentation <input type="checkbox"/> assignment <input type="checkbox"/> other product</p> <p>Notes:</p>	

Welcoming Students into Learning — The RAN Chart

The Reading and Analyzing Non-Fiction (RAN) chart, adapted from Tony Stead's work, is a fantastic alternative to the typical KWL chart. Students can activate prior knowledge by sharing what they think they know about a topic, and build knowledge over time by confirming what they think they know, uncovering misconceptions, as well as questioning and wondering about the topic they are studying.

RAN Chart				
What I Think I Know	Confirmed!	Misconceptions	New Information	Wonderings

Sample Guided Reading Lesson Plan

This lesson plan may be used during the guided portion of your lesson. Guided instruction is an opportunity for teachers to work with students in small groups or provide one-on-one attention to support student learning. This plan includes ideas for teaching before reading, observing and prompting during reading, and responses and reflection after reading.

SAMPLE GUIDED READING LESSON PLAN: GRADES K-8

Text:	Genre (circle one):
Level:	Fiction Non-Fiction Poetry/Prose
Author:	

SETTING THE STAGE: BEFORE READING (5 minutes)
(Explicit strategy instruction)
Strategy instruction linked to chosen text and learning goal:

- Orientation to the new book/text introduction/activating prior knowledge/making connections
- Point out new vocabulary/unusual language structures
- 2-3 new words from the text to solve/word work:

- Whiteboard/magnetic letters/digital approach to work on spelling or show the student a word in another context
- Share during and after reading goals (can be co-constructed)

Instruction or Assessment Notes:

DURING READING: PRACTICE (10 minutes)
(Students read either quietly or silently and the teacher listens in, prompts, and praises)

- Let the student read part of the text independently
- Praise the student for use of strategies/meaningful attempts at solving
- Prompt the student for visual cues: *Does it look right? Get your mouth ready for the first letter. Look for a part in the word that you know.*
- Prompt the student for meaning cues: *Does it make sense? Check the picture.*
- Prompt the student for structure: *Does it sound right? Can we say it that way?*

Instruction or Assessment Notes:

AFTER READING: DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION (5 minutes)
(Responding to reading)

- Descriptive feedback: individually or to the group
- Praise point: based on what you noticed during the reading
- Teaching point: connected to praise point, if possible
- Comprehension dialogue: teacher and students discuss the story
- Follow-up responses: points of view, connections, details, summarize, key concepts, draw conclusions, share insights and understandings

Assessment Notes:

Checks for Understanding — Feedback

There are a number of different types of feedback, and teachers may use each one at different points in the lesson/unit. This helpful chart explains three important types of feedback used during checks for understanding.

Type of Feedback	Examples	Best if...	Effect
Motivational Feedback	“Well done.” “Good for you.” “I really like the way you are trying.”	...focused on the task, not the learner.	This type of feedback affects self-concept and perceptions about motivation and intelligence, and so should be used carefully.
Evaluative Feedback	Marks, Percentages, Summative comments	...given at the end of a feedback cycle. ...not the only type of feedback for learning.	Clarity about overall achievement at the end of a learning cycle
Descriptive Feedback	Information about current achievement in relation to a goal and success criteria	...shared with students as strengths/next steps.	If focused on the task and structured effectively, it can support students to improve learning and achievement.

Self-Assessment

This self-assessment form supports assessment as learning. Once students are aware of the goals for learning and the criteria for success, they can assess their own learning in relation to the success criteria, and determine their own next steps for learning.

Self-Assessment Form			
Product	Success criteria I am checking on	My rating from 1 to 5 1: <i>I still don't get it</i> 5: <i>I understand it all</i>	Next step for my own learning

Closure Activity — Ponder that Quote

Provide 3 or 4 quotes directly related to the lesson. Students choose one of the quotes and respond to it, using some or all of the prompts provided on the template.

Ponder That Quote
<p>Choose one of the quotes above. Respond to it in one of the following ways (your choice):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Explain it (to a friend/to your group/to the class) using your own examples.2. Make a personal connection to the quote.3. Tell us something you agree with or don't agree with and why.4. Share a question that you have about the quote.

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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