

### M1-S5: Instructional Planning Across Learning Environments

GK	Hello Christina!
CLH	Hello Gina!
GK	So today we're talking about teaching across learning environments, and in particular, about instructional planning across learning environments.
CLH	Yup, today we're going to explore strategies that promote resilient teaching and deeper learning.
GK	Christina, do you think planning for instruction is fun?
CLH	No Gina, I do not. why?
GK	Well, I do, some teachers do think it's fun. Instructional planning, for me, is an art and a science; it draws upon my highest powers of creativity and professional knowledge, and one of the great things about planning vs teaching is the plan always goes so well in my head.
CLH	Okay, sure I see what you're getting at. I do get that , effective lesson planning is the bedrock of successful learning outcomes for students. But what exactly is effective instructional planning, especially when we're talking about planning across learning environments?
GK	I'm glad you asked, because today we're going to explore how the 3 principles of resilient pedagogy apply to instructional planning across learning environments. Specifically, we will go back to the 3 Principles of Resilient Design from Session 1, and look at Extensibility, using Essential Questions; Flexibility, using Backwards Design; and Redundancy, using Universal Design for Learning.
CLH	Okay, I'm interested. If I recall, extensibility is the vacuum cleaner - and it refers to designing the most basic version of a lesson with the goal of extending it as you address various learning styles and needs.
GK	Yes, with those specialized attachment heads. And flexibility, that's the custom-tailored suit - it's about responding to changes in the learning environment and adapting to suit individual needs. Then we have the third one, Redundancy - aka the back-up generator - is all about making sure that we have some good substitutes, reserves, and alternatives in case things don't work out the way we planned or students need access in a certain way. In planning for learning across all environments, it's important to connect each of these concepts to a specific strategy for instructional planning.
CLH	Okay, so can you explain to me how I as a teacher can make the connection between these concepts and my instructional planning? Because I'm not seeing it yet.
GK	Sure! Let's talk about the vacuum cleaner - the idea of extensibility. We can use the planning strategy of essential questions as an example of extensibility. Do you use essential questions?

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CLH	<p>Yes, definitely. There is one essential question per lesson, and students must be able to answer this question by the end of the lesson. With essential questions, teachers really have to be intentional about what they want the students to be able to do, and it has to be at the highest-level of learning. The students have to be able to analyze and apply; they cannot just answer the question with a yes or no. It has to be an extended response.</p> <p>Essential Questions are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>–Open-ended: the question does not have a definite answer</li> <li>– Engaging and thought-provoking: the questions are relevant to students’ everyday lives</li> <li>– Promoting critical thinking and further inquiry; the questions lead to other questions.</li> </ul>
GK	<p>Right, so teachers who plan using Essential Questions engage their own higher-level thinking skills to activate the thinking skills of their students. In fact, they set out a “vacuum cleaner” – a critical question– that undergirds learning across modalities. That can happen anywhere. The essential question allows individual students to create their own “attachments”. These attachments – previous experience, personal interests, cultural assets – allow each learner to make a deep connection to the content of the lesson.</p>
CLH	<p>OK! I’m with you. Let’s go to this custom made suit. Are we talking Italian wool or what?</p>
GK	<p>So when we’re talking about this metaphor of the custom suit, it’s something that you can let out the fabric from when you gain a couple pounds - we can use the planning strategy of Backwards Design as an example of how to work with this customization.</p>
CLH	<p>OK, we’re talking about my teacher training language here. Backwards design is when teachers consider the learning goals of the course first. These learning goals embody the knowledge and skills instructors want their students to have learned when they leave the class. Once the learning goals have been established, the next move is to consider what the evidence of learning is – we ask ourselves: how do we assess our learners? The backwards design framework suggests that teachers should frontload the learning goals and how students will be assessed before they consider how to teach the content. For this reason, backward design is considered a much more intentional approach to course design than a traditional method of design.</p>
GK	<p>Yup. So we can think of this “back-mapped” plan as a loosely-tailored suit; the basic structure is there, we know what the end product should look like, but we are leaving room in the build in order to stay flexible. We want the “suit” to match the “customer” – in other words, the learning experiences should match the goals and how we plan to assess the goals. So the movement is learning outcomes, to assessment, to learning experiences.</p>
CLH	<p>Okay and there’s one more right?</p>

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GK	Yes! It's the backup generator, the flashlight, the matches, candles, whatever! If the power goes out, it's what you use to keep on keeping on.
CLH	So what's the planning strategy example for this?
GK	It's Universal Design for Learning. (UDL)
CLH	Ah, yes. I know something about this, but give me the details.
GK	<p>To get a sense of what UDL is really about, think about the sidewalk ramps that are at most intersections. They were originally mandated by law to make it safer for people using wheelchairs or visual assistance canes to cross the street. But, once in place, their benefits began to be remarkably inclusive. The ramps make it easier for parents pushing strollers, for elderly people using walkers and for skateboarders and bicyclists.</p> <p>A modification to a basic sidewalk design, originally done to address a specific disability, ended up benefiting everyone, regardless of ability or the reason they were using the sidewalk. That's Universal Design: the idea that design can make things better for everyone by focusing on what makes things the most accessible for the greatest number. Applied to education, Universal Design for Learning embraces this principle of accessibility, not just because it can help those students who need it the most, but because it helps all of our students learn better.</p>
CLH	<p>Okay so, you're saying that each student learns differently and can benefit from having a variety of learning formats to choose from, flexible assessments, and tools to help with organization of new information and skills. And UDL provides us with a variety of strategies and resources to help meet diverse learning needs. It improves accessibility to learning opportunities, and increases student success. It seems a little different from the concept of differentiation, because UDL occurs before instruction, anticipates student needs and builds choice into the lesson.</p> <p>Sounds about right?</p>
GK	<p>That's great I'm glad you made that distinction between differentiation, which is something that teachers do after instruction, as a response to student needs versus UDL which is a way of planning ahead of time to anticipate and remove barriers. So you got it.</p> <p>UDL is a framework for designing lessons, it's not like a cookbook. There are Three Principles of Universal Design: Teachers should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. Provide multiple means of engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stimulate interest and motivation for learning</li> </ul> </li> <li>II. Provide multiple means of representation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Present information and content in different ways</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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	<p>III. Provide multiple means of action or expression (that's on the student end) Differentiate the ways that students can express back or show what they know</p> <p>Universal Design for Learning creates a significant amount of redundancy in any given unit or lesson. Students are able to select from equivalent access points –in fact, this principle is embodied in the READ, WATCH and LISTEN options given throughout this course. Like our listeners, our students can choose the methods of engagement, representation and expression that work best for their learning.</p>
CLH	<p>Sounds like we covered all 3. So, what should I look for when I'm thinking about instructional planning and when I'm doing so with teaching across learning environments in mind? So like when I'm planning but I'm also thinking about how to integrate this with teaching across all the different types of modalities in mind.</p>
GK	<p>I guess we should all have a Post-it note somewhere in our work area to look for when we're planning. We should ask ourselves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Is it extensible? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Look for a basic format that has multiple attachment points: in person, hybrid and remote.</li> </ul> </li> <li>– Is it flexible? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Look for outcomes that generate assessments that generate learning experiences, in that order.</li> </ul> </li> <li>– Is redundancy built in? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Look for multiple means of engagement, representation and expression for students.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Whether we teach in person or online, or both, are we planning with the end in mind? Do we know what is essential to the lesson? Do we center the learning of students by developing multiple means of engagement, representation and expression? These are the core structures of planning that firmly anchor our preparation to our desired outcomes in any learning environment.</p>
CLH	<p>Well that's super helpful. I will now go forth and plan.</p>
GK	<p>Enjoy! That's it for today.</p>