Preparing for the real world: 21st-century learning skills.

Description



In a globally interconnected world, learning is no longer confined to the classroom, and it extends to virtual networks and international partnerships. It has become more critical to teach 21st-century skills, such as problem-solving, communication, collaboration, creativity, information literacy, media and digital literacy, and computational thinking because students need these skills to succeed in the digital world (Acedo, 2014). With 21st-century learning, we prepare students for the realities of the world, equip them to tackle complex, real-world problems, and empower them to become adaptable, innovative individuals well-prepared to thrive in their future careers, communities and personal lives (Care et al., 2017).

Question: How do you plan a lesson to teach 21st Century Learning Skills, applying instructional design principles like Understanding by Design (UbD)?

Solution:
It is important to note that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to teaching 21st-century skills. Co-planning a lesson to teach 21st Century Learning Skills using instructional design principles like

Understanding by Design (UbD) requires understanding the skills and competencies students need and incorporating them into planning (Shaffer, 2022). The coach and the partner educator must:

Identify Desired Outcomes:
Begin by clarifying the specific 21st-century skills that students should acquire and why. Consider what success looks like for students in terms of these skills.

Determine Acceptable Evidence:
Decide how to assess whether students have acquired the targeted skills. This may involve performance tasks, projects, presentations, or other authentic assessments. Ensure that the assessment methods align with the real-world application of these skills.

Plan Learning Experiences:
Design engaging and interactive learning experiences to help students develop the identified skills. Consider project-based learning, group activities, discussions, and hands-on experiences that encourage problem-solving, collaboration, and creativity.

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Consider Essential Questions:
Develop essential questions that prompt students to think critically and deeply about the subject matter and encourage them to apply 21st-century skills. These questions should spark curiosity and guide the learning process.

Incorporate Technology and Tools:
Integrate technology and digital tools relevant to the skills being taught, like software, online resources, or platforms that foster digital literacy. Ensure students understand how to use technology responsibly and ethically.

I chose collaboration as an essential 21st-century learning skill to demonstrate creating a lesson plan. Collaboration is the key to unlocking the full potential of collective intelligence in the classroom. Teaching collaboration skills equips students to engage with peers from different backgrounds and cultures, promoting cultural awareness and fostering a sense of global citizenship (Kurshan, 2017). I designed a lesson on collaboration using the Understanding by Design (UbD) framework and incorporated Padlet as a digital tool to engage students. Here is a sample lesson plan with the UbD framework suggested by ChatGPT:

Title: Exploring Collaboration through Padlet

Grade Level: Middle School (6th-8th)

Duration: 2 class periods (45 minutes each)

Enduring Understanding:
Students will understand the importance of collaboration and effective communication in the 21st century.

Essential Questions:

What does effective collaboration look like in the 21st century?
How can technology tools like Padlet enhance collaborative work?

Learning Objectives: Students will be able to:

-Define collaboration and its significance in the 21st century.
-Identify and apply effective collaborative strategies.
-Use Padlet to collaborate and share ideas with peers.

Materials:

-Computers or tablets with internet access
-Projector
-Classroom whiteboard and markers
-Student notebooks

Lesson Plan:

Stage 1: Understanding

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Activity 1: Introduction to Collaboration (20 minutes)

Begin by discussing the importance of collaboration in the 21st century. Explain that teamwork and effective communication are crucial skills.

Ask students to brainstorm and share their thoughts on what collaboration means and why it is important. Record their ideas on the whiteboard.

Introduce the essential questions for the lesson.

Activity 2: Collaborative Success Stories (15 minutes)

Show a video or share stories of successful collaborations or teamwork in real-world scenarios, such as in the business world or scientific research.

Discuss what made these collaborations successful and how they relate to the studentsâ?? ideas about collaboration.

Stage 2: Assessment and Exploration

Activity 3: Exploring Padlet (10 minutes)

Introduce Padlet and explain its purpose as a collaborative digital platform.

Provide a brief tutorial on how to create a Padlet board, add content, and collaborate with others.

Activity 4: Collaborative Padlet Creation (30 minutes)

Divide the class into small groups of 3-4 students.

Assign each group a specific topic related to collaboration, such as â??Effective Communication in a Teamâ?• or â??Benefits of Collaboration.â?•

Instruct each group to create a Padlet board with their assigned topic and encourage them to brainstorm ideas and add text, images, and links that represent their chosen theme.

Circulate the classroom to provide support and guidance as needed.

Stage 3: Consolidation

Activity 5: Group Presentations (20 minutes)

Have each group present their Padlet board to the class, explaining the content and its significance in the context of collaboration.

Encourage students to ask questions and provide feedback to each group.

Activity 6: Reflection (15 minutes)

In their notebooks, have students write a reflection on what they have learned about collaboration and the role of technology tools like Padlet in the collaborative process.

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Discuss some of the key takeaways as a class.

Homework (Optional):
Assign students to explore Padlet further and create their own individual Padlet boards on any topic of their choice, encouraging them to invite classmates to collaborate.

A lesson plan like this encourages students to collaborate while utilizing a technology tool. It aligns with the 21st-century learning skill of collaboration and emphasizes the importance of effective communication and teamwork (Care et al., 2017). When students learn how to work effectively in teams, they not only tap into the diverse perspectives and expertise of their peers but also develop the ability to communicate, negotiate, and compromise, which are all essential life skills (Kurshan, 2017). After the lesson, a coach and the educator should reflect on the effectiveness of the lesson and the studentâ??s development of 21st-century skills. Also, encourage students to self-assess and reflect on their progress, making necessary revisions to the lesson plan and assessment strategies based on observations and feedback (Shaffer, 2022).

Implementing 21st-century learning skills requires a deliberate plan that goes beyond just envisioning the desired outcomes. With a framework like UbD, a coach can co-plan lessons with educators to model and teach these skills, integrating them into professional development. Supporting teachers with the implementation of lesson plans for 21st-century skills ensures that students not only learn about these skills but also internalize and apply them, setting them on a path to thrive in the digital world, meeting the demands of 21st-century employment (Kurshan, 2017). *ISTE-C-Standard 4 states that as a Learning Designer, Coaches model, and support educators to design learning experiences and environments to meet the needs and interests of all students. Coaches: a. Collaborate with educators to develop authentic, active learning experiences that foster student agency, deepen content mastery and allow students to demonstrate their competency. d. Model the use of instructional design principles with educators to create effective digital learning environments*, making a difference in studentsâ?? lives and preparing them for the real world.

References

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