



Topic: Developing A Reference Guide for Distance Learning

Grade: Community
College

An integrated lesson plan
covering 1 session of
approximately 3 hours.

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Lesson-Planning Approach

Some learners perceive their “world” as a whole, where all things are interconnected and dependent upon each other. These “integrated” students face major challenges in coping with our dominant educational, social, and economic systems, which tend to present information in a linear fashion without the necessity of integration into meaningful context. Integrated students are at-risk of failing as they attempt to grasp information in ways that do not match their experience. Among large populations of at-risk students are many from Native American and similar cultures who do not regard their world as a sum of parts but as a blend of all that they experience.

This lesson plan does include some traditional, linear approaches to delivering information (checklists, rules, analysis, problem solving and organization). In addition to the traditional, linear delivery of information, this lesson plan also includes some of the following strategies, designed to appeal to at-risk students as they learn academic/life skills:

- ❖ Integration of technology
- ❖ Story telling/anecdotal information
- ❖ Non-competitive group and team work
- ❖ Performance-based assessment and rubrics
- ❖ Visual presentations and practice through technology and other means
- ❖ Project-based assignments that integrate family and community
- ❖ Activities appealing to multiple intelligences (Gardner)

Lesson Overview

This lesson provides students with the opportunity to identify their learning style. They then compare their preferred learning style with the tasks required in a distance-learning course and develop a learning plan for themselves. They may choose not to enroll in a distance learning course if the adaptations required of them are too difficult or too time consuming.

Lesson Objectives

Name of Project: Developing a Reference Guide for Distance Learning

Project Objectives: When students complete this project, they will be able to:

1. State their preferred learning style (
2. Compare their preferred learning activities with those in distance-learning courses delivered over various media
3. Develop a plan for their own learning in a distance-learning environment
4. Evaluate their plan for time and effort compared to the demands of their lives.
5. Make a decision as to whether or not to enroll in a distance-learning course

Integration of Other Functional/Academic Skills: (Critical thinking is required throughout the lesson.) Students will be able to:

- ❖ Utilize technology to access and complete the lesson
- ❖ Read and integrate information from the website with their personal learning experience.
- ❖ Accurately read and follow online instructions

Websites

Required for students enrolled at Pueblo Community College:

<http://teton.pcc.ccoes.edu:8900>

Support: www.active-learning-site.com/vark.htm

<http://www2.ncsu.edu/unity/lockers/users/f/felder/public/ILSdir/ilsweb.html>

Pre-requisites

Ability to read at 10th grade level

Ability to use a computer to access the Internet

Required Materials

Paper and pencil or pen

Handouts

My Style for Distance Learning Is DL for Me?

Required Equipment/Technology

Computer with Internet access
Word processing software

THE LESSON

Note: Students do not learn from what you do but from what you have them do.

Preparation

Activity	Instructor Notes	ET
<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Determine the suitability of this lesson for your course.❖ Visit the websites listed in the resources. Add any other websites you would like your students to visit.❖ Post course materials to your college's online learning server if you will deliver the class via Internet.❖ Adjust the lesson plan to reflect your goals for your students.❖ Prepare handouts for classroom presentation.	<p>The method of delivery (web, classroom, or combination of the two) how you prepare for the lesson.</p> <p>If you haven't used the discussion, project, and chat functions of your web courseware in the past, meet with your technician to learn the procedures for these functions. You may want to practice some of them with the technician or a group of instructors before utilizing them in your course.</p>	3 hours

Presentation

Activity	Instructor Notes	ET
<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Introduce the topic of learning styles.❖ Handout the copied lesson or have students access the lesson on your institution's course website.	<p>This is a self-directed learning experience to help students evaluate whether or not DL is a good fit for them. It is most effective if you observe rather than participate.</p>	1 hour

❖ Provide time for students to access the linked/listed websites		
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Performance and Practice

Instructions for students	Teacher notes	ET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Give students the website address for the class. ❖ Have them contact you in person, by phone, or by email if they encounter difficulties with the lesson. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Be available online or in person to assist students as they complete the lesson. ❖ Allow students to work through any problems they encounter. 	2 to 3 hours

Lesson Assessment Strategy (Formative – As the lesson progresses)

Preparation, Presentation and Overall Implementation (Instructor)

- ❖ Have I used the most appropriate media for delivery of this material?
- ❖ Are computers available for student use during the lesson?
- ❖ Do I have a strategy for bringing students back to the topic at hand after they explore the listed/linked sites (if I'm teaching in a classroom setting)?
- ❖ Have I allowed sufficient time for students to explore appropriate websites?

Performance and Practice (Student)

- ❖ Are students able to access the lesson online?
- ❖ If the lesson is being delivered in a classroom, do the students have access to the Internet?
- ❖ If the lesson is being delivered in a classroom, are the students staying on-task or are they visiting websites unrelated to the lesson?
- ❖ Are the students able to identify some information they can share with distance learners?

Technology

- ❖ Do the websites load quickly enough to hold the students' interest?
- ❖ Do the students seem comfortable using the technology?
- ❖ Which students require a lot of assistance as they progress through the lesson? These students may not have the necessary skills for a distance-learning course.

My Style for Distance Learning

Where Did You Learn THAT?

If all of the things we learn over our lifetimes could be measured, we would see that formal education in schools actually accounts for a relatively small portion of our learning. The things we learn outside of the classroom, from learning to talk to recognizing the song of a robin, are generally not things we later find on tests. Because this informal learning happens almost without our noticing, we tend to take it for granted.

Most of our formal learning has been in classrooms with teachers in front of us and other students around us. If we think about it, though, we have learned a lot of things from watching TV, listening to the radio, or using the Internet. For instance, we know which teams will be in the Super Bowl by listening to or watching sports newscasts or by reading newspapers, not by attending all of the preceding football games.

Both formal and informal learning happen in a variety of ways for each of us. The culture and family in which we grow up will affect how we learn. Each of us also has genetic preferences for excitement or quietness, physical activity or stillness, and being with others or being alone. All of these factors come together to form our learning style.

What is Learning Style?

Just as we all have our favorite foods and our favorite colors, we each have favorite ways of learning things. And just like other favorites, when we have a choice of how to learn, we almost always choose our favorite! We can certainly eat enough to stay healthy even when our favorite foods are not available, like when we visit a foreign country. And, we can learn things even if our favorite style doesn't work in certain situations. I love to read, but I couldn't learn to drive a car just by reading. I had to get in the car a practice. I remember how scared I was, and how everyone else in driver's training seemed to be better at driving than I was.

Let's Explore Learning Styles:

Do you like to read? Do you hate to read but love to do things with your hands? Do you like to study where it's quiet, or do you like to have the radio or TV on while you study? Did you have a favorite teacher? That teacher probably taught in your favorite style. All of these things reflect your learning style.

A learning style describes how you learn most quickly and easily. That does not mean it is the only way you can learn. Some people can use a variety of learning methods equally well; others have a very strong preference for a particular way of learning. No matter what your preferred way of learning, you also use other learning styles part of the time.

One of the easiest ways to discover your learning style is to take a Learning Style Inventory. Here are two links for learning style inventories. They will identify your learning style, and also have suggestions for learning in your preferred style. You may want to take both of them. While you are there, download or save to disk the study suggestions given for your learning style.

www.active-learning-site.com/vark.htm

<http://www2.ncsu.edu/unity/lockers/users/f/felder/public/ILSdir/ilsweb.html>

Now, email the Distance Learning Department and tell us what your learning style is:

Kathy.rousset@pcc.ccco.es.edu

Is Distance Learning Right For Me?

Now that you know your preferred learning style and some approaches you can use to learn more easily, let's look at how personal style affects learning. Are you someone who turns things in early or on time without being reminded? Or, are you someone who tends to forget when assignments are due? This and other factors in your personal style will be important in your success in a course whether you take the class in a classroom or online.

The next exercise helps you consider the factors that make distance learning a good or a poor choice for you as an individual.

Is DL My Thing?

1. When I have something important to say to someone, I prefer to:
 - a. met them face to face
 - b. call them on the telephone
 - c. write them a short note
 - d. share it through art or music

2. Of the choices listed, my favorite thing to do is:
 - a. read
 - b. watch TV
 - c. surf the web
 - d. play sports

3. When I call or email someone and they don't get back to me, I usually:
 - a. think they don't want to talk to me
 - b. call or email them again within two days.
 - c. wait a week or two to see if they answer.
 - d. try contacting them another way.

4. If I don't understand directions that someone gives me, I would:
 - a. try to figure it out from a map.
 - b. ask someone else.
 - c. tell them I don't understand and ask them to explain it again.
 - d. give up and go home.

5. When I need to learn to do something new with a machine, I prefer to:
 - a. read the instructions, try it out, and make changes if it doesn't work.
 - b. get someone else to do it for me because I'm not good with machines.
 - c. try different things until I get it to do what I want.
 - d. ask someone who has done it to explain it to me.

6. I use the computer mostly to
 - a. chat or send email
 - b. surf the net
 - c. produce reports and spreadsheets
 - d. find specific information or do specific tasks.

7. In class, I learn the most from
 - a. reading the assignments
 - b. listening to class discussions
 - c. filling out the study guide
 - d. listening to the instructor lecture

8. My main reason for taking a distance learning class is because:
 - a. the course is required for graduation.
 - b. I don't have time to go to class
 - c. my schedule doesn't allow me to be in class at the same time every week
 - d. I want to try something different.

9. If I were given a choice of assignments, I would choose to
 - a. write a report
 - b. do a group project
 - c. produce a work of art
 - d. take a test

10. My assignments are usually
 - a. turned in early or on time
 - b. turned in within a few days of the due date
 - c. hard to get done on time because I'm so busy
 - d. done before the end of the class because teachers usually let me have extra time if I need it.

11. To get up in the morning, I prefer to
 - a. ask my roommate to wake me up before they leave
 - b. set my alarm and get up when it first goes off
 - c. set my alarm and hit the snooze button a few times
 - d. wake up on time without an alarm clock

12. Most of the time, I expect to class work to take
 - a. about two hours out of class for every hour in class
 - b. not more than an hour out of class for every hour in class
 - c. not much time out of class because I take good notes
 - d. three or four hours outside of class for every hour in class.

13. I think my reading skill is
 - a. good enough to get by, but not great
 - b. about average.
 - c. better than average.
 - d. excellent.

14. I expect a distance learning class to take
 - a. less time than a regular class.
 - b. about the same amount of time as a regular class.
 - c. more time than a regular class.
 - d. much more time than a regular class.

15. I do my best work when I
- a. plan it out and do it in parts.
 - b. know I have to get it done because it's due the next day.
 - c. wait until I get a good idea or feel ready to do it.
 - d. schedule it out with work and family obligations.
16. Things I do weekly or more often include (mark all that apply)
- a. send email
 - b. find information on the Internet
 - c. chat online
 - d. program my VCR
 - e. change the message on my answering machine
 - f. leave phone messages for other people
 - g. read a book that isn't assigned
 - h. exercise
 - i. watch TV for more than 3 hours in one day
17. My VARK learning style is:
- a. Visual
 - b. Auditory
 - c. Reading/Writing
 - d. Kinesthetic

Is DL My Thing? Scoring Tool

1. When I have something important to say to someone, I prefer to:
 - a. meet them face to face (0)
 - b. call them on the telephone (1)
 - c. write them a short note (3)
 - d. share it through art or music (2)

2. Of the choices listed, my favorite thing to do is:
 - a. read (3)
 - b. watch TV (1)
 - c. surf the web (2)
 - d. play sports (0)

3. When I call or email someone to ask a question and they don't get back to me, I usually:
 - a. think they don't want to talk to me. (0)
 - b. call or email them again within two days.(2)
 - c. wait a week or two to see if they answer.(1)
 - d. try contacting them another way.(3)

4. If I don't understand directions that someone gives me, I would:
 - a. try to figure it out from a map. (2)
 - b. ask someone else.(1)
 - c. tell them I don't understand and ask them to explain it again.(3)
 - d. give up and go home.(0)

5. When I need to learn to do something new with a machine, like program my VCR, I prefer to:
 - a. read the instructions, try it out, and make changes if it doesn't work.. (3)
 - b. get someone else to do it for me because I'm not good with machines.(0)
 - c. try different things until I get it to do what I want.(2)
 - d. ask someone who has done it to explain it to me.(3)

6. I use the computer mostly to
 - a. chat or send email (0)
 - b. surf the net (1)
 - c. produce reports and spreadsheets (2)
 - d. find specific information or do specific tasks.(3)

7. In class, I learn the most from
 - a. reading the assignments. (3)
 - b. listening to class discussions.(1)
 - c. filling out the study guide. (2)
 - d. listening to the instructor lecture. (1)

8. My main reason for taking a distance learning class is because:
 - a. the course is required for graduation. (1)
 - b. I don't have time to go to class. (0)
 - c. my schedule doesn't allow me to be in class at the same time every week. (3)
 - d. I want to try something different.(2)

9. If I were given a choice of assignments, I would choose to
 - a. write a report. (3)
 - b. do a group project. (1)
 - c. produce a work of art. (0)
 - d. take a test. (3)

10. My assignments are usually
 - a. turned in early or on time. (3)
 - b. turned in within a few days of the due date. (1)
 - c. hard to get done on time because I'm so busy. (0)
 - d. done before the end of the class because teachers usually let me have extra time if I need it. (0)

11. To get up in the morning, I prefer to
 - a. ask my roommate to wake me up before they leave. (0)
 - b. set my alarm and get up when it first goes off. (3)
 - c. set my alarm and hit the snooze button a few times. (1)
 - d. wake up on time without an alarm clock.(3)

12. Most of the time, I expect to class work to take
 - a. about two hours out of class for every hour in class. (3)
 - b. about an hour out of class for every hour in class. (2)
 - c. less than an hour out of class because I take good notes. (1)
 - d. three or four hours outside of class for every hour in class. (2)

13. I think my reading skill is
 - a. good enough to get by, but not great. (0)
 - b. about average.(1)
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 - d. excellent. (3)

14. I expect a distance learning class to take
- a. less time than a regular class.(0)
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15. I do my best work when I
- a. plan it out and do it in parts. (3)
 - b. know I have to get it done because it's due the next day.(1)
 - c. wait until I get a good idea or feel ready to do it.(0)
 - d. schedule it out with work and family obligations. (3)
16. Things I do weekly or more often include (mark all that apply)
- a. send email (2)
 - b. find information on the Internet (2)
 - c. chat online (1)
 - d. program my VCR (3)
 - e. change the message on my answering machine (1)
 - f. leave phone messages for other people (1)
 - g. read a book that isn't assigned (3)
 - h. exercise (2)
 - i. watch TV for more than 3 hours in one day (0)
17. My VARK learning style is:
- j. Visual (3)
 - k. Auditory (1)
 - l. Reading/Writing (3)
 - d. Kinesthetic (2)

Activity Checklist

	Activity
	I read the lesson.
	I visited the recommended websites.
	I took the VARK learning style inventory.
	I took the inventory "Is DL for Me?"
	Based on these inventories, I have decided whether or not I will enroll in a distance-learning course.

Technology Checklist

	I accessed the lesson online.
	I visited the recommended websites.
	I followed a series of links within one or more of the websites.
	I saved the study guidelines for my learning style to disk or a computer file.

Lesson Rubric

The rubric below gives an indication of how well your learning style and personal fit with the demands of a distance-learning course. These are general guidelines. If you have fewer points than are recommended for distance learners, you may still be successful if you are willing to commit extra time and effort to the course. On the other hand, if you scored in the recommended range but don't take responsibility for your learning in the course, you will not be successful. Personal dedication and effort are a prime factor in success in any college course, regardless of the means of delivery.

Points	Probability of Success in a Distance Learning course
52 and above	Your score indicates an excellent chance of success in a DL course
44-51	Your score indicates a good chance of success in a DL course.
35-44	You may succeed in a DL course if you make a strong commitment.
Below 35	Because you are a very social person, you will find DL courses challenging. DL is not recommended for you.