

A Day in the Life of Learning BY J WEST

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So you're a **Sage on the Stage**, but you want to be a **Guide on the Side**. Or maybe you just aren't convinced—you know you're set in your ways. Do you know where to begin? How to design curriculum that fits? Maybe it'll help if we take a look at a typical day in the life of learning for a specific Guide on the Side—me. Let me share a way I leverage blended learning and cognitive psychology to design and deliver modern instruction.

8:00–8:45 AM

Engage

Let's begin the day with a collaborative meeting. This is a chance to prepare learners for the day by

- energizing and engaging them;
- helping them feel their input is important;
- explaining the agenda;
- defining the goals of the instruction;
- assessing previous experience;
- discussing learner needs; and
- establishing a safe, collaborative environment.

9:00–9:45 AM

Flipped Class

In a flipped classroom, the learners are asked to interact with course content on their own or in a small group before they gather as a class. Let's call this self-study.

Self-study is intended to explain knowledge and skills that learners will need in order to build and demonstrate expertise in a specific task critical to workplace performance.

Suffice it to say, when they gather together, they should be prepared to discuss or practice the course content they engaged.

10:00–10:45 AM

Challenge

Design exercises where learners are challenged to practice the skills they need to complete a critical task. Be sure to place exercises in the context of real-world problems, so they will consistently simulate those critical tasks. The exercise must have an outcome or product that can be shared with the class.

There are many exercise types. Among the most common ones are

- role playing typical scenarios;
- predicting outcomes from real case studies;

- critiquing (video, stories, etc.);
- troubleshooting equipment problems or test results; and
- building props.

Try to plan small-group or solo exercises. The size of the group (including solo) is normally dictated by class size and resources.

The ability to support and facilitate these exercises is critical for an effective Guide on the Side.

11:00–11:45 AM

Exercise Delivery and Peer Review

Pull up your big-person facilitator boots for this part of the day. Encourage respect and elicit positive, meaningful peer feedback. If you can maintain some semblance of order and respect, the learners will really benefit. The goal for a peer review is to motivate students.

11:45 AM–12 NOON

Topic Review

You might want to hand out a quiz to complete in class or show images on the monitor and ask learners to use what they learned to describe or critique them.

12 NOON–1:00 PM

Lunch

When the learners' minds get saturated, they stop learning. Make sure they get a solid lunch break. I always avoid the old if-we-work-through-lunch-can-we-leave-early deal.

1:00–1:45 PM

Game Time

There are few options after lunch that engage the learner better than a game. Gamification is based on the idea that humans like to interact and have fun. And that keeps people alert after a double cheeseburger. For examples of great learning games, Google

- Better Me;
- Critical List;
- Facts in Five;
- Hit or Myth; and
- Jeopardy (you probably don't need to Google that one).

2:00–2:45 PM

Self-Guided Discovery

Design this activity as a solo or partner (if you have a large class) event. The goal is to let learners take full responsibility for their own learning. This is a great way to introduce a second topic or subtopic for the day. Formats include

- scavenger hunts;
- critical lists; and
- flash presentations.

3:00–3:45 PM

Challenge 2

Try a different exercise than you did earlier in the day.

4:00–4:45 PM

Discuss and Prepare (AKA Flex Time)

If you're like me, your instructional events tend to run long. If it isn't a piece of technology that fails, it's a delay returning from lunch or an alien abduction. It's a good idea to plan some flextime at the end of every day.

Use the time to ask for the learners' opinions and feelings about their experiences. Also, take time to make sure they are prepared for future classes.

4:45–5:00 PM

Daily Wrap-Up

Have each learner share something that he or she learned today. Try to make each student provide a personal response. It's a good idea to start the activity with something you learned. Be sure to demonstrate the proper format for the class.