

THREE PART LESSON DESIGN

"Our commitment is to every student. This means [ensuring] that we develop strategies to help every student learn, no matter their personal circumstances." (Reach every student: energizing Ontario education 2)

"The kinds of experiences teachers provide clearly play a major role in determining the extent and quality of students' learning..." (National Council of Teachers of Mathematics 20)



WHAT is the "three part lesson design"?

The three part lesson design is a framework for lesson planning, originally employed in mathematics, which has expanded into differentiated instruction across curricular areas. The chart below lists terminology for the three basic phases used.

Differentiated Instruction (2010)	A Guide to Effective Instruction in Mathematics K-6 (2006)	TIPS/RM (2005)
Minds on	Getting Started	Minds on
Action	Working on It	Action
Consolidation and Connections	Reflecting and Connecting	Debrief

For the purpose of this document the terminology used will be:

Getting started / Minds on..., Working on it / Action!, and Consolidation and connections / Debrief.

Getting started / Minds on...

Getting started / Minds on is the initial phase designed to focus and engage students by establishing a positive learning environment, allowing students to connect to prior learning and/or experiences, and to set the context for new learning. Pre-teaching and guiding students may limit students from making these connections.

Working on it / Action!

The Working on it / Action phase, or middle phase, is designed to introduce new learning or extend and deepen prior learning. It provides students with opportunities to practise or apply this learning.

Consolidation and connections / Debrief

The Consolidation and connections / Debrief phase, or final phase, provides students opportunities to consolidate and reflect on learning as well as to make a wide range of authentic connections to self, other curricular areas, and the world. The teacher debriefs the lesson while reflecting on learning that has taken place to inform subsequent lesson planning.

Throughout the three part lesson, teachers should reserve judgment on the quality or correctness of a solution or conclusion. By reserving comments for strategic moments, active listening and greater participation will likely result. Ultimately the role of the teacher is to check for understanding, prevent or correct any misconceptions and assess the students in order to plan for the next lesson.



WHY is the three part lesson design effective?

A three part lesson design is built upon our understanding of how the brain learns. It is a flexible framework which allows us to incorporate variety and keep learning alive and exciting. The length of a three part lesson may vary from one to several periods, classes or learning blocks.

Benefits of a three part lesson are that students:

- build on prior learning and connect to prior experiences
- become active learners, not just recipients of knowledge
- become emotionally vested in the learning at the outset as their interest and attention are immediately captured and they are ready to engage in learning
- are provided both formal and informal opportunities for dialogue and vocabulary building
[⇒ [4.2 Explicit Teaching of Vocabulary](#)]
- make more connections as they are constantly exchanging ideas with each other and with the teacher
- are encouraged to take risks through dialogue with peers and reflecting on others' opinions
[⇒ [4.3 Accountable Talk](#)]
- self-regulate learning through metacognition and monitor their progress toward their learning goals
- are provided more formative assessment opportunities as learning is diagnosed in the **Getting started / Minds on** phase and monitored by both the teacher and student during the **Working on it / Action** and **Consolidation and connections / Debrief** phases
- are provided learning opportunities that are differentiated based on their readiness, interests and learning preferences/styles

The three part lesson design creates learning opportunities with student differences and the curriculum in mind. The lesson templates assist teachers in planning curriculum with the end in mind, as well as deciding what and how elements, structures and strategies for differentiation may be incorporated. The following lesson templates found at www.edugains.ca may assist teachers in planning curriculum: *Differentiated instruction lesson planner*, *Math GAINS MATCH template* and *Posing powerful questions template*.



HOW is the three part lesson design implemented?

Following are some suggestions of how a three part lesson design can be implemented. Since some of the activities may be used in other parts of the lesson, teachers should use their professional judgement in selecting activities when planning the progress of the lesson design.

Getting started / Minds on...

Possibilities include:

- giving the class a short and engaging brain teaser connected to the learning goals of the lesson
- using an anticipation guide to activate prior learning or to connect to prior experience
- providing a quotation, a film clip, newspaper article, children's story or historical story to launch a lesson
- generating and testing hypotheses
- referring to word or concept wall
- prompting student thinking by providing an analogy, metaphor or simile supported with a visual
- providing students with an open-ended problem or task to launch an inquiry process
- asking a provocative question to launch an inquiry process
- beginning with the end in mind, providing students with a differentiated assessment task to be completed over the course of learning and an opportunity to deconstruct work samples to make expectations clear
- ensuring that the students, depending on their cognitive ability, understand the context of the learning activity, task or problem in which they are about to engage
- establishing a scenario and asking students to make predictions
- introducing a concept or problem using a variety of instructional tactics such as brainstorming, placemat, inside/outside circles, think / pair / share, value line, four corners
- presenting an enigmatic situation or a puzzle to solve connected to planned teaching and learning

Some simple patterns of thinking that serve to invite students into the learning process include:

- KWL (What do I know? What do I want to know? What did I learn?)
- See-Think-Wonder (What do I see? What do I think about that? What does it make me wonder?)
- Claim-Support-Question (Make a claim about a topic. Justify or support the claim with evidence. Ask a question related to the claim.)
- Think-Puzzle-Explore (What do I think about the topic? What questions do I have or what puzzles me? What do I want to explore further?)
- Perceive-Know-Care About (What do I perceive? What do I know? What do I care about?)

Working on it / Action!

Students work together to solve a problem [↪ [3.5 Problem Based Learning](#)] or complete a series of learning tasks that have been strategically chosen to uncover the big ideas from the curriculum.

Students are provided opportunities to:

- work in learning groups that are flexible, based on prior assessments of student learning, interests and/or preferences, follow collaborative group norms and enhance learning through accountable talk [↪ [4.3 Accountable Talk](#)]
- make choices that:
 - are based on their learning needs, readiness, interests and learning preferences
 - are reasonable in number
 - address the same curricular learning goals
 - are assessed using the same success criteria
 - are interesting, relevant and engaging
- learn within a wide range of structures, using differentiated strategies including choice boards, cubing, learning centres and/or stations, learning contracts, RAFTs, tiering, graphic organizers, and technology
- model and explore a problem or task in a range of modalities, including concrete and visual, allowing them to deepen their understanding through the interaction with their peers and the materials
- share approaches to their learning, assess their understanding, ask probing questions and coach or encourage each other when necessary

Note to teacher: Reflect upon what important solutions may not have surfaced and how they could be presented as other possible solutions during the debriefing. Remember that it is important for students to struggle in order to learn. Be sensitive to students' level of frustration. A well-chosen question or subtle redirection may support those on the verge of disengagement.

Prompts that keep students engaged in their learning might include:

- How do you know?
- Is this always true?
- Show me another way.
- Are there any strategies you could use to help you with successfully completing the task or investigation?
- What do you think would happen if...?
- Do you see a pattern?
- What connections do you see between...?
- What evidence can you give to support your thinking?
- How would a picture or a diagram help make your explanation clearer?
- Can you explain your partner's or group's thinking in your own words?
- What do you notice when you...?

Consolidation and connections / Debrief

The class comes together as a community to make sense of their learning. Through class discussion the variety of strategies, ideas and solutions generated in the action phase of the lesson are shared. Wait time is essential to allow students to formulate their thoughts and retrieve the language that will help them communicate their ideas effectively.

A debriefing strategy should be chosen before meeting with the students for this final phase to determine how and which solutions will be shared.

Ideas to focus on:

- the sharing of conclusions, solutions or learning, and the learning strategies and thought processes used to support them (verbal, concrete, visual). Strategies may include paraphrasing, using think-alouds, identifying patterns supported with the use of thinking tools, etc.
- reflections on the approaches, strategies and processes used by the student and by others along with the identification of next steps to help the student meet a learning goal

Some examples of debriefing styles include Bansho, Guided Gallery Walk and Math Congress.

Bansho

This debriefing strategy organizes and annotates student solutions to encourage student thinking and classroom discussion.

Process

1. Students post their solutions to a problem, with similar solutions grouped together.
2. The teacher determines which solutions are shared and in what order.
3. Students explain and justify their solutions. The teacher uses strategic questioning to illuminate the relationships between the various solutions and to uncover the big ideas inherent in the problem. The teacher annotates the continuum of solutions to make these connections explicit.

Ultimately the display becomes an artefact documenting the development of thinking through the problem. It remains posted so students can rethink, revise and revisit the important ideas presented.

Guided gallery walk

A guided gallery walk is a debriefing strategy in which student solutions are displayed—usually on their desks—and the class moves from one display to another. At each stop on the gallery walk, the authors share their visual representations (e.g., concrete, numeric, symbolic, written explanations, etc.), explaining and justifying their thinking. The teacher and students ask clarifying questions. Teacher questions are designed to pull out the big ideas associated with the problem.

Math congress

It is important that a safe, collaborative classroom environment is established prior to conducting this debrief style.

When students have solved a problem, they chart out their solution for display. This representation must clearly show the important ideas and strategies they used to solve the problem.

The teacher examines the solutions, and keeping in mind the big ideas driving the learning goal, determines which ones will be shared and in what order. Not all student solutions need to be shared. Students convene in a whole group setting. The students then share their solutions, explaining and justifying their thinking. Students who are listening have an active role to play as they seek to clarify, question and understand the key ideas presented. The teacher facilitates the discussion, ensuring that students make important connections and build their understanding.

Ideas for actions following the debriefing strategies:

The teacher gathers formal or informal evidence of individual student learning to help inform future lesson planning, for assessment purposes or to simply have students consolidate their learning. Strategies may include exit tickets, homework tasks, writing of reflections, extension tasks, etc.

Students make connections between new learning, self, other curriculum areas, and the world.

Students should have an opportunity to start their independent work in class, while teacher and peer supports are still available to assist in clarifying understanding of assigned tasks.

Independent learning tasks should:

- consolidate understanding
- prepare students for new learning
- build confidence in working independently
- make a connection to life beyond the classroom
- give students some choice through differentiated activities/tasks

"Much more learning occurs and much more assessment information is available when a class works on a single problem and engages in discourse about the validity of the solution." (Van de Walle 44)