

Becoming an effective instructor: A decision making guide for planning your studio

By Maryam Ashkan

This planning guide is arranged based on 5 key components of curriculum: focus, approach, content, process, and structure

1. Focus

1.1. Where are you? To examine the situation

- ✚ Which students enroll in this studio in terms of their prior knowledge, experience, motivation, etc.
- ✚ What role does this studio play in the overall educational experience of the student who takes it? Is it accelerated design studio or just design studio
- ✚ How does it relate to other courses including supporting courses? What supporting courses and studios does it build on? What courses or studio follow it?

1.2. Specify 3 to 5 general outcomes for the studio

- ✚ What do you want students to be able to DO at the end of your studio? Is it a change in learner's knowledge, skills, or attitude?
- ✚ What would students have to KNOW in order to achieve your stated goals?

2. Approach

2.1. Determine teaching methods and strategies to achieve your outcomes and goal

- ✚ What the general structure of learning activities or features¹ will best assist the students in achieving the outcomes you have established?
- ✚ What are the specific learning activities for the studio? What are students are going to do?

¹ For further information on the definition of “Teaching features”, please see section entitled: “*Features of Inductive Teaching Methods*” in Ashkan, M. (2016). The Phenomenological Evaluation of Teaching Professionalism in the Architecture Design Studio Culture: A Case at the University of Kansas. *International Journal of Architectural Research: ArchNet-IJAR*, 10(1), 41-61.

- ✚ Are a series of limited primary projects sufficient? Or writing?
- ✚ For each your stated outcomes, what learning activities will generate the kind of learning you envision?

2.2. Develop a sequence of activities based on a weekly routine for the whole of semester

- ✚ When are you going to do what?
- ✚ How will students work through a series of developmental stages? (e.g. build knowledge, skills (3-5 weeks), work on small application projects (3-5 weeks), do a couple of reflection papers on their projects, and/or do research papers simultaneously with their projects to name a few)
- ✚ What activities need to come first?
- ✚ What activities do you want to conclude with?
- ✚ What activities do you need in the middle?

3. Content

3.1. Identify availability of resources

- ✚ What resources do you need or do you have, or you are able to get in order to achieve your stated outcomes.

4. Process

4.1. Determine the assessment of the process of student learning and achievement

- ✚ How would you know if the students achieved your intended outcomes or learning goals?
- ✚ How would you gain a holistic picture of a learner achievement?
- ✚ For each of your goals that you specified before, what information can you gather that shows how well the outcome was achieved for every student individually? And for the studio as whole?

4.2. Establish your grading structure

- ✚ How you are going to grade? Your grading system should reflect the full range of both learning outcomes and activities? (It is necessary to recognize that NOT everything is gradable like attitude)

- ✚ In general, the relative weight of every stage on the studio grade should reflect the value and significance of that activity relatively.

5. Structure

5.1. Evaluate/analysis/ assess the first designed draft of your teaching plan

- ✚ What could go wrong?
- ✚ What types of situations might arise as you implement this designed plan
- ✚ Will students get motivated to do the project? What if they are not?
- ✚ Does the plan encourage student engagement?
- ✚ Will students get sufficient feedback at the right time during their design process?
- ✚ How would you prevent and/or minimize problems?
- ✚ Modify the necessary revisions in your plan and design

5.2. Organize your plan evaluation itself during the semester and your own teaching performance.

- ✚ How will you know how the studio is going?
- ✚ What types of middle and end studio feedback will you need?
- ✚ What specific questions do you have about your studio process? How effective are the certain learning activities? To what degree are your stated outcomes achieved? etc.
- ✚ What kinds of assessment tools can help you answer these questions? (Audio/video recording, student feedback and interviews, questionnaires, peer observers?²)

² For further information on this resources and more visit: www.cte.cornell.edu