LEARNING MODEL ARCHITECTURE

"The Learning Model entails the creation of a common framework for learning and teaching that extends across every discipline, course, and learning experience. All will be grounded in a shared approach . . ."
Kim B. Clark, President's Report, 2006

PURPOSE

The second step in the Learning Model Process is to design a course architecture that best develops your learning outcomes. This means building the cycles of Prepare, Teach One Another, and Ponder/Prove into the design of the course to support learning outcomes. These patterns frame the sequence of activities in your course. Clarifying this architecture will help the students better understand the rhythm and expectations for learning in the course.

DESCRIPTION

When asked "What is your strategy for implementing the Learning Model?", many instructors rightly respond by discussing the key principles of the Learning Model—such as bringing the Spirit into the class, or increasing student responsibility. Consider how the processes of the Learning Model directly link to the course design. How does Prepare, Teach One Another, and Ponder/Prove connect to your overall course structure and learning outcomes? When designing courses, you can ask the following questions:

- What are my course learning outcomes?
- How can the Learning Model strengthen the architecture of my course?
- What is my plan to prepare?
- What is my plan for teaching one another?
- What is my plan to ponder/prove?

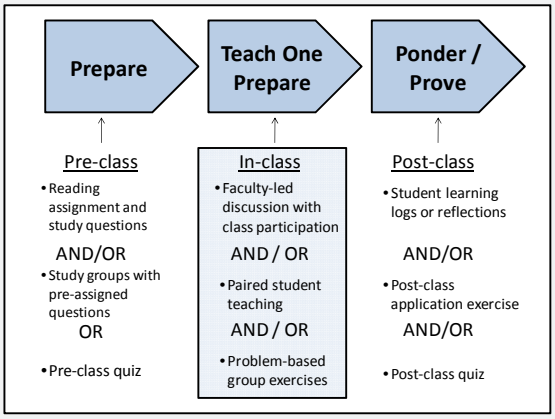
While specific strategies, tools, and pedagogies will vary considerably across campus, all instructors can discuss these shared questions. This will allow deeper conversations among faculty members from different disciplines as they have a common framework in which to interact. The framework also presents benefits for students, who experience the Learning Model across different courses, and you, by learning to come prepared for each class in ways that allow them to teach one another, ponder, and prove what they are learning.

EXAMPLES

There are many ways to align the Learning Model Process to your course design. The following three examples are built around different course rhythms—one class, one week, and two week architectures. There are also examples of instructors designing a semester-long strategy around the Prepare, Teach One Another, and Ponder/Prove architecture. However you choose to implement the Learning Model Architecture, it should align with the learning outcomes for your course and fit your own skills and teaching strengths.

One-Class Cycle

The first example shows the Learning Model Process aligned to a single classroom experience. Students prepare before class through pre-assigned activities. They can then teach one another in class through faculty-led instruction or paired teaching. They ponder and prove their learning after class through reflection activities or post-class quizzes.

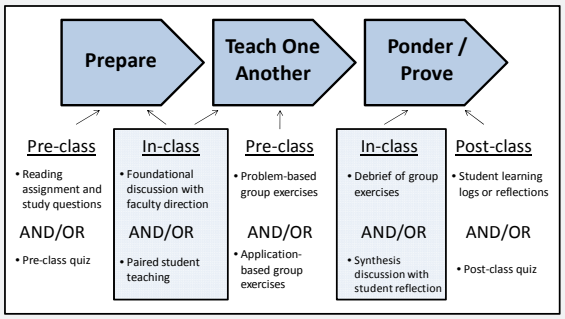


This is the simplest alignment to the Learning Model Process; many will use this cycle because of its straightforward pattern. In a course taught by multiple instructors, each might use different Prepare, Teach One Another, and Ponder/Prove activities, while keeping the architecture the same.

One-Week Cycle

The second example models a one-week cycle for a Tuesday/Thursday course. Note that preparation occurs both in and out of class. Students prepare for

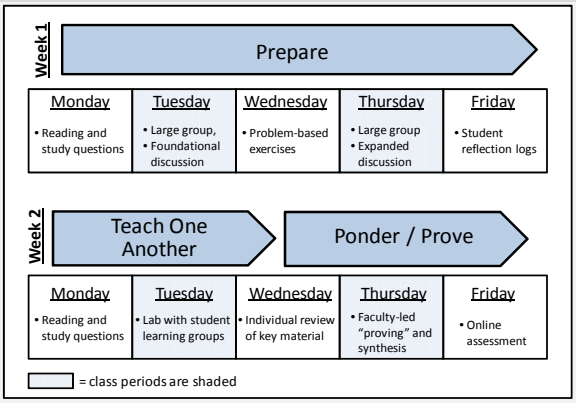
Tuesday by completing out-of-class assignments. Tuesday's class in itself is also preparatory—it lays the foundational theory for application later in the week. A multi-day application of the Learning Model Process may work best when you are moving students along a progression of learning levels—for example, advancing students from basic recall, to comprehension, to application (see Bloom's Taxonomy). In the example below, Tuesday might be used to teach a key doctrine in a Religion class or a theoretical principle in a Physics class. Students then teach one another in group activities that occur out of class later in the week. The learning is proved in Thursday's class and an end-of-the-week quiz that tests both basic knowledge and application.



Two-Week Cycle

The third example expands the idea of moving students along a progression of learning in a two-week cycle. The first two days are foundational, wherein key principles, doctrines, or theories are taught. Preparation activities and problem-based exercises support the work of the first two class periods. The third class period might provide an opportunity for students to engage in more focused and structured activities that are team-based and require multiple peer-based tools. Students can then begin to apply what they are learning in later assignments. The last day of class provides an opportunity to prove this learning through additional application exercises done in class.

An example of this is given through the Family Foundations course wherein six key doctrines about the family are taught in two week cycles. The key doctrines are taught on the first two days of class in large group settings. Students then work in labs on the third day of class where they engage in problem-based activities. The final class provides an opportunity to prove learning and synthesize key lessons from the cycle.



TIPS

- **Be explicit.** Make your Learning Model Process explicit in your course syllabus and review it on the first day of class.
- **Use multiple strategies.** Use multiple strategies to teach one another in class. For example, you might blend problem-based with discussion-based learning.
- **Keep it simple.** Keep your pre and post-class activities simple, focusing on one or two key learning activities.
- **Consider your grading.** Consider grading that aligns with Prepare, Teach One Another, and Ponder/Prove processes.

PITFALLS

- **Don't overdo it.** Because many approaches to the Learning Model Process exist, there arises the temptation to use more methods than are necessary.

CAMPUS PRACTITIONERS

Phil Allred, Alan Holyoak, James Helfrich

KEY ARTICLES

Fink, L.D. (2003). *Creating significant learning experiences: An integrated approach to designing college courses.* Jossey-Bass.

Wiggins, G.P., & McTighe, J. (1998). *Understanding by design* (2nd edition). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

OTHER RESOURCES

- Family Foundations Syllabus
- Bloom's Taxonomy