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**95**

Strategies for  
**REMODELLING  
INSTRUCTION**

IDEAS FOR INCORPORATING  
THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM



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# Preface

**H**ave you ever had a room or area in your home that was quite functional, perhaps attractive, but you had some ideas to make it even better? If so, you probably took on a remodelling project. Remodelling usually means we keep the useful and positive aspects of a space, but we improve on other aspects.

This book applies that very concept – remodelling – to instruction of students. As a teacher, you’ve probably developed many great lessons and units. And you probably have some that could be improved on too. This book provides you with a process to reflect on and critically analyse your instruction and the tools you need to refresh those lessons.

You’ll begin the journey by first examining some of the evidence – research and best and promising practices – of what we know works when it comes to students’ learning. This will provide you with the basis against which to analyse your lessons. Next, you’ll learn about the process of remodelling and ways in which you can remodel either by yourself or with a group of peers in a professional learning community. Finally, just as you can’t remodel a space without the right tools, you need tools for lesson remodelling as well. To achieve that, we offer you a compendium of 95 strategies to remodel your lessons, along with reproducibles where possible, to ensure that you can implement them in your classroom. These strategies are the tools you can use to efficiently and effectively remodel lessons for any subject and just about any year level.

## Using This Book

This book is designed to both outline processes and act as a reference guide. It has been piloted in various versions with more than 100 members of the education community and can be used in several ways:

### Practitioner Uses

- For teachers planning a lesson or unit, who can flip through the compendium of strategies and select those they wish to use, inserting them directly into their lessons and making copies of the relevant reproducible
- When revising courses and lessons to remodel their existing lessons by flipping through the compendium of strategies and revising the lesson accordingly

### Tertiary-Level Staff Uses

- A teaching tool and textbook to support preservice teachers' unit and lesson planning
- A resource for inservice courses and workshops

### School Uses

- A basis for professional development for teachers to guide lesson remodelling in workshop-driven inservice education
- A basis for building professional learning communities aimed at improving instruction at either the school or regional level

## An Evidence-Based Approach

Research suggests that students retain only 20% of what they learn (Gardiner, 1998). Increasingly, we see calls for evidence-based practice (EBP) to define *what works* in education and inform practices in classrooms and schools. EBP is concerned with looking to research evidence to see what types of teaching/learning approaches are effective.

But what counts as evidence? The answer, which happens to be “many things”, is a bit complicated. Evidence can be as simple as one teacher's experiences, where trial-and-error in the classroom can identify what works in *that* classroom, with *that* teacher and with *those* students. Evidence can be as sophisticated as large-scale, international comparisons of teaching/learning approaches and their system-wide outcomes. The bottom line is that experience and analysis, together, lead to evidence, which can inform practice. But as these examples suggest, some pieces of evidence are stronger than others. Figure P.1 provides a guide to understanding the strength of evidence (adapted from Hyde, Falls, Morris and Schoenwald's [2003] hierarchy for medical evidence). It should be noted that educational research is increasingly qualitative. When the research design is sound, both qualitative and quantitative

studies can provide strong evidence, through very different types of useful information. In this book, we've drawn on evidence at just about all levels of the hierarchy.

Part of the teacher's role is to gather, assess and apply evidence – in part, based on its strength, and in part, based on the teacher's professional judgement within their own classroom, school and community. One caution to bear in mind is that though some evidence may be very sophisticated, this does not mean that it is applicable to other contexts. What works in the United Kingdom, for example, may not be appropriate for the United States. What works in rural Queensland might not work in Brisbane. It's up to educators to analyse and make sense of the factors that may or may not make sense.

The authors have been mindful of using and applying evidence in the design of this book. In particular, the following important evidence informs both the process of remodelling and the strategies we've included:

**Figure P.1** Hierarchy of Evidence-Based Information

Higher level of evidence ↑	Experimental designs with control groups having random assignments that have been replicated in a variety of contexts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In education, these typically appear in the academic literature; because education is a social science, not all phenomena can be controlled in this way.</li> </ul>
	Experimental designs with control groups having random assignments that have only been investigated in one context	
↓ Lower level of evidence	Evaluation of student outcomes; empirical (qualitative and quantitative) data collected from educational stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consumer feedback</li> <li>• Pilot tests of strategies and approaches</li> </ul>
	Expert consensus agreement among a number of professionals; best practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Best practices achieved largely through professional discussion among teachers and PLCs but also through some published research</li> </ul>
	Anecdotal evidence based on experiences of teachers or researchers; promising practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action research publications</li> <li>• Professional discussion among teachers and PLCs</li> </ul>
	Single-case studies, teachers' action research; promising practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Checklists and process charts established by individuals</li> <li>• Action research publications</li> </ul>

NOTE: PLCs = professional learning communities.

- Geoff Petty's (2009) extensive research into effective teaching suggests that a Present-Apply-Review (PAR) model is most effective to address shortfalls in student learning. This is the research that guides the structure of the book. Petty's research reflects a high level of evidence.
- Research on the importance of student engagement in the learning process and the efficacy of constructivist approaches in meaning making is presented throughout Chapters 1 and 2, which supports the strategies in Chapters 3, 4 and 5. Moreover, the strategies have been used by the authors and those who have been involved in pilot versions, offering the strategies themselves as best practices via expert consensus. Similarly, the process of lesson remodelling as it is articulated in this book has also been tested and is a best practice among practitioners.
- Finally, we present compelling empirical evidence in Chapter 2 to support the efficacy of teacher learning and professional learning communities as major drivers in improving student outcomes. This suggests that, if applied judiciously, lesson remodelling can contribute to better, more effective teaching *and* learning.

## Book Features

Because of its intended purpose, this book is designed for teacher convenience. Some of the important features to be aware of include the following:

- *Process diagrams* and *examples of pre- and post-remodelled lessons* offer guidance on how to approach lesson improvement and how to use the various strategies.
- *Strategies organised within the three categories of learning* offer a balance of PAR strategies to choose from when remodelling. But keep in mind that many of the strategies can be adapted to fit into multiple categories.
- *Very brief and very clear instructions* demonstrate how each strategy works within the following headings for easy reference: Rationale, Ideal for..., Materials, Description and (where applicable) Cautions.
- *Reproducibles* are included for many of the strategies, as well as for use in professional learning communities.



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# 1

## Pedagogies in Context

### Why Remodel Lessons?

**T**he purpose of this book is to apply the best practices emerging from research and theory in order to help you, the teacher, build lessons that are creative, engaging to students and as effective as possible in facilitating the learning process.

To achieve this, you'll begin by exploring the context of what's known about pedagogies, tracing some of the major developments in learning theory and recent research to support effective lesson planning and design. By the end of Chapter 1, you should have a basis for understanding how to improve lessons.

In Chapter 2, you'll be introduced to the process of lesson remodelling and, by applying the content of this book, walk through the re-creation of several sample lessons that are connected to Australian Curriculum content descriptions for English, Humanities and Social Studies and Science. We then invite you to do the same for your own lessons, drawing on the 95 pedagogical strategies in Chapters 3, 4 and 5 to create better, more creative and evidence-based lessons. The payoff will be increased student engagement, and perhaps even enhanced teacher engagement, as you challenge yourself to reinvent your lessons by infusing new strategies into the learning process.



## Pedagogies as a Dance to the Music of the Content

The word *pedagogy* comes from the ancient Greek *paidagogos*, a slave who took little boys to and from school. The *Macquarie Dictionary* defines pedagogy as “the function, work, or art of a teacher”. Put in simpler terms, pedagogy is the *how* of education – what teaching/learning/instructional strategies are used. Chapters 3, 4 and 5 of this book provide you with a library of pedagogies to use.

One helpful analogy is that of the dance. Think of pedagogy as the steps in the dance, the body movements and so on. You cannot dance knowing the steps alone; you also need music. And you need the right music for the steps (or vice versa); salsa dance steps will not work with waltz music. In our analogy, music is the content or topics taught. When you put the music and the steps together, you can dance. Similarly, when you put the pedagogy and the content together, you can teach and students can learn.

While pedagogy is defined as a discrete part of education, it does not happen in isolation from content or from educational philosophy. It influences and is influenced by content and topics (e.g. a teacher must ensure that pedagogies fit with content and topics). Educational philosophy shapes pedagogies as well, and in turn, a teacher’s educational philosophy might be shaped by the pedagogies they use. This is illustrated in Figure 1.1.

**Figure 1.1** The What, How and Why of Education

