

Fink Dream Exercise¹

Seldom do we have an opportunity to follow our students after they complete our courses. But let's see what would happen if we had an opportunity to sit down and talk with them about their educational experiences. Think about the course you are working on for this online course design project and imagine the conversation you might have several years from now with these students who had taken your course.

- What do you want and hope your students (audience) to be, to have, or to have learned?

Although students will not be able to learn everything they will need to know about teaching online in a single course, my main focus is to provide a toolbox of skills and strategies that they can continue to use and develop as they design both online and face-to-face courses in the future.

Actually going through the Fink process will give them a process they can use over and over again. It is also simple enough that it will not intimidate them and it will help them break down a potentially overwhelming task of designing and developing an online course into a series of steps to make it easier, more manageable and more efficient.

They will also learn there is really no mystery about teaching online – it is still about meeting the needs of the students and designing objectives they can measure so they can document student growth.

But most importantly I hope that students will develop a comfort level with the technology tools and the online environment. They will not be experts but they will have enough skills to feel comfortable experimenting and “playing around” so they customize the tools to their own needs. Everyone has their own style teaching in a F2F environment and they should feel like they can be creative and also customize their online environment to match their objectives, goals and philosophy too.

What would distinguish students who have taken this course/lesson/unit from students from students who have not?

- They will be willing to login and click around without a fear of wrecking something
- They will continue to want to teach online or at least feel comfortable teaching online if they are asked to do so.
- They will continue to use available resources to keep learning about teaching and learning online.
- They will not be so negative about learning online, they will see both the advantages and disadvantages and be able to articulate those to others asking about teaching online.

¹ Adapted from Fink, L. D. (2003). *Creating significant learning experiences: An integrated approach to designing college courses*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

