Lesson Planning

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What is a Lesson Plan? (top)

- A teacher’s plan for making learning happen
- An outline of activities that results in student learning
- A road map for a given period of instruction – generally for one class period.

Components of a Lesson Plan

Lesson plans have various components each serving a specific role in propelling learning. For example the interest approach serves to stimulate student interest in the lesson topic or lesson activity. Lesson components can be categorized into three general sections:

- Components of the lesson plan that prepare students to learn – “Setting the Stage”

Interest Approach
• Link or connection
• Motivation
• Preview or Overview

• Components of the lesson that actually serve to teach the students the new skill or knowledge (content) – help them understand or comprehend – “Input”
  • Teaching strategies

• And components of the lesson designed to help students retain the new information – “Reinforcement Activities”

**Reinforcement Activities**

• Application
• Review
• Closure or contextual summations

### Lesson Design

How much time do you actually spend on each section? Here is a guideline for a 50 minute period:

• Setting the stage – 5 – 10 minutes
• Input — 15 – 20 minutes
• Reinforcement Activities – 20 – 30 minutes

### Lesson Plan Writing Guidelines

Before you begin the creative process of crafting a lesson plan, here are some guiding principles to keep in mind:

• People have short attention spans - change activities every 15 minutes.
• Vary the type of activity – fun, risk taking, independent, group, reflective, sitting – action, silly, straight forward, etc
• Make learning fun - the brain works that way
• Engage the students – have them do something
• Be enthusiastic
• People have different learning styles and intelligences. Try and address each style.

### Nine principles of learning

1. My brain is a complex, adaptable, social system.
   a. So, what does that mean? The human brain is capable of processing at a very high level – can respond to stimulation, able to adapt to changing situations, and responds to being with other humans.
      i. Use group problem solving challenges – social systems
ii. Create community and belonging – social systems  
iii. Utilize Colorful charts - complex  
iv. Simulations – complex and adaptable  
v. Field trips– complex and adaptable  
vi. Projects– complex and adaptable  

2. My search for meaning is innate (inborn) and occurs through patterning.
   a. O.K. so what do you mean by that? Our brain naturally tries to put new information into a pattern for example categorize things, connect new information to previous knowledge, or put new information into a grant scheme.
      i. Tap into prior knowledge  
      ii. Create thematic environments  
      iii. Employ multiple strategies  
      iv. Let learners teach  

3. Emotions are critical to patterning and making meaning.
   a. Definition? We learn – remember when there is an emotion attached to the new information for example we are excited about the new skill or we were inspired by speech content. On the same token, very little learning happens when we are emotionally involved in something else – stressed, afraid, depressed.
      i. Release stress – humor, games  
      ii. Increase rapport with students  
      iii. Partner learning  
      iv. Dialogues  
      v. Celebrate learning  

4. My brain simultaneously perceives and creates parts and wholes.
   a. When we learn we want to see the big picture and its parts and our brain can process that at the same time.
      i. Provide global overviews  
      ii. Sequence the steps for mastery  
      iii. Alternate between big pictures and detail  

5. My learning involves both focused attention and peripheral conscience, and non-conscience processes.
   a. Our brain is an amazing organ that can learn what we are focused on as well as things in our peripheral vision such as posters on the wall. Also, we can learn what we are processing in our conscience state as well as in the non-conscience state.
      i. Display content in icon form  
      ii. Charts, diagrams, models, color coded,  
      iii. Post positive  

6. My brain remembers best when facts and skills are embedded in contextual memory.
   a. Learning happens when we put new content in context – in a particular time and place, setting. So, for example if we are learning how to select cattle, if we put
ourselves in the shoes of a cattle producer, the content becomes relevant and we are more apt to learn it.

i. Develop mnemonics
ii. Create intense sensory experiences
iii. Role play
iv. Act
v. Use body motions
vi. Stories
vii. Metaphors

7. My learning is developmental.
   a. Our learning is dependent on our stages of maturity and mental development. We are able to process higher order thinking skills – analysis as we mature. Also, we can only focus for a given period of time before we mentally check out.
      i. Explore age appropriate concepts

8. My learning is enhanced by challenge and inhibited by threat.
   a. Our learning is propelled by challenges.
      i. Hold debates
      ii. Assign multi-faceted projects with deadlines for display
      iii. Inject surprise, suspense, and disorder
      iv. Link subjects to other subjects

9. My brain is unique.
   a. People learn differently – learning styles.
      i. Differentiate teaching strategies
      ii. Use music
      iii. Remember, there are different learning styles – visual, auditory, and kinesthetic
      iv. People are intelligent in different ways – Multiple intelligences
      v. Provide choice
      vi. Cross age tutoring

Writing a Lesson Plan (top)

The order in which you write the lesson is different than the order in which the parts of delivered. Typical order of writing:

- Identifying lesson objectives
- Finding content outline in books or other resource
- Identify teaching strategies for each objective or objectives
- Identify or create an application
- Identify or create a review
- Write a closure
- Identify or create the connection motivation, and preview
- Creating transitions and start up (more on this later)
Standards Met

If the lesson is addressing standards then list them here for reference (ex. B1.1, 10.0). Lesson may help meet several standards or parts of standards. By referencing standards in your lesson plan you can review your curriculum Standards List

Objectives

Description: The objectives are a statement identifying what the teacher wants the student to know or be able to do at the end of the lesson – as a RESULT of the learning experiences that the teacher facilitated during the class period.

Educational Value: Everything speaks in the classroom! All activities crafted in a lesson plan are targeted at the objectives - designed to facilitate student learning of those very specific objectives – learning outcomes. They are the ultimate learning goals for the lesson.

Examples – The students will:

- Identify the 3 macro-nutrients required by all plant life.
- Discuss the events leading to, during, and after parturition.
- Demonstrate four types of chemical application band, spot, broadcast, and direct spray.
- Differentiate between U.S. Customary and metric measurement units (in linear, area, and volumetric measurements).
- Pack a survival kit.

Well written objectives are very specific, observable, and measurable.

Teachers should try to write objectives at various levels of Blooms Taxonomy to facilitate students gaining higher order thinking skills. See the following web site for a description of Blooms Taxonomy and sample objective verbs:

http://www.personal.psu.edu/users/h/z/hzl101/bloom.htm

Input

Content Outline

Description: Outline what you intend to cover and in the order you intend to cover it. This helps keep you focused on the lesson.

Example of a portion of a content outline:

A. Purpose of Committees:
   1. Saves time for the larger group.
   2. Allows individuals to be responsible for specific tasks.
   3. Enables more detailed discussion or exploration of a topic.
B. Skills Necessary to Work on Committees Effectively
   All committee structures have four common components. They are:

1. A leader or chairperson
2. A recorder or secretary
3. Committee members
4. Issues to be dealt with accordingly.
   a. The leader or chairperson:
   b. Helps the committee to get acquainted
   c. Establishes and maintains an informal atmosphere
   d. States the issues or helps the committee state them
   e. Stimulates and directs the discussion towards the solution of the problem
   f. Keeps the committee moving
   g. Promotes participation by all members
   h. Encourages the timid soul; discourages the monopolizer
   i. Stimulates thinking -- sees that all sides of the question are heard
   j. Helps the group check up on itself by using and assisting the secretary
   k. Summarizes when necessary

Teaching Techniques

Description: A technique or strategy used by the teacher to help students comprehend and retain new knowledge or skills

Educational Value: The acquisition of new knowledge is what teaching is all about. Some are more effective than others.

Here is some thing to keep in mind when selecting teaching techniques. We learn:

10% of what we read,
20% of what we hear,
30% of what we see,
50% of what we see and hear,
70% of what we say,
90% of what we say and do.

Dr. Vernon A Magnesen, 1983

We learn best by doing! We learn when the teacher designs a purposeful focused lesson. Learning is work!!! If we can build in 7 experiences for students to manipulate the information, learning happens!

Examples of experiences:

- Hear it from the teacher
- Reads about in a text book, on a visual and/or a hand out
- Writes it down in on some thing – notebook, report, hand out, visual, lab write-up etc.
They create a model of it as an application (more on this shortly).
The students engage in a review activity (this too)
The students have a review quiz on it the next class period
Teachers ask questions about the previous day’s lesson the next day.
Students read through their notes and highlight the key concepts prior to the exam
See it demonstrated
Try it under the guidance of the teacher
Model it to a neighbor
Use the skill in a laboratory
Participate in a review activity
Assessed on it – exam, quiz, presentation

Examples of teaching techniques

- Lecture – Lecture alone is very limited in its impact on student learning.
  - See above - 20% learned
  - Lecture with visual (power point, chalk board, hand out). Learning is increased to 50%. Still limited in its effect.
- Variations on lecture
  - “Little Professor Moment”
  - Lecture in a little book
  - Lecture with graphic organizer
  - Interactive hand out (blanks left in lecture notes) True or false pre-quiz
  - “What you already know about this subject” and fill in the gaps
  - Guest speaker
  - “Go Get it” e-moment
- Reading assignments (out loud as a class or individually – 10%
- Teacher Lead Discussion – 70%
- Peer teaching – 70%
- Demonstration – 50%
- Problem solving & discussion – 90%
- Activity and processing – 90%

*It is very difficult to find alternatives to lecture or reading activities to introduce new content. So what we must to as effective teachers is to reinforce the input with activities that increase comprehension and retention. More on these later.

Reinforcement Activities

Applications/Guided Practice

Description: An activity where the students use the information during an activity or practice the skill.

Educational value: Applications or guided practices increases comprehension and retention. “Active bodies’ equal active brains” This component can really propel student learning.
Remember, we all learn best by doing. Engaging reinforcement activities break through language in that English Language Learners can see or watch the activity modeled and then do it.

Examples:

- Create something – model, visual, song, poem, weather report
- Solve a problem
- Debate
- Write an essay, speech,
- Practice the skill
- Role play
- Laboratory
- Conduct an interview
- Evaluate a sample
- “Go with the Flow” moment
- “Einstein” moment
- “Eye Witness” moment
- Create an involvement plan – card
- Create a resume with activities included in which they plan to participate
- Create an 8th grade recruitment program
- Convince an administrator role play
- “Convince your Neighbor” contest
- Create “Doubting Thomas” questions
- “Above the Line” activity
- Personal “Weigh the Benefits” exercise

Things to think about:

- The more real, the more effective?
- Variety is the spice of life – evaluate other activities and mix up the type of activity – active vs. passive, etc Involve all the senses
- Consider age, risk level, degree of freedom, audience

**Review Techniques**

**Description:** Students “visit” the key points of the content again.

**Educational value:** Increased retention as this is one of the seven manipulations of the content.

Examples:

- $10,000 pyramid
- Hieroglyphics moment
- Graphic Artist moment
- Party Host moment
- Contests – baseball, horse racing, football,
• A to Z review
• Ball Toss review
• Games
• Pair share
• Charades
• “Ticket out the Door”
• “Show what you know” moment
• Highlight your notes

Things to think about:

• This component of a lesson is often neglected and becomes a few questions that teachers ask of a few students.
• An effective review engages ALL students
• Allot an appropriate amount of time for review

Setting the Stage  (top)

Interest Approach

Link or Connection

Description: A link connects the lesson topic to something that the students have previous knowledge or experienced. It may be an activity that you open the lesson. This way a teacher knows that the students have all had the same experience.

Educational value: We know from research that our brains attach new knowledge to existing knowledge so we use that in lesson design. So if someone has learned how to add single digit numbers, we can build on that to teach them how to add multiple digit numbers. Or if all of your students have enjoyed ice cream, we can link to that experience at the beginning of a lesson on the dairy industry.

Examples are

• Personal stories,
  o Story about: a life long friend that I met at a FFA or HS activity
  o Travel experience
  o An activity that helped you get a scholarship
  o Speaking experience
  o Time management issue
  o Job story
  o SAE experience
  o A note on stories – the best ones are your own, the second best are things that happened to someone that you know and the last choice are stories from a book.
  o Stories should touch the heart, funny bone or intellect
• Activity,
• Mock FFA event – mini judging contest
• “Unequal Resources” leadership activity
• PREP Team Building initiative
• Decision Making Activity
• Resume evaluation “Who Would you Hire?”
• Conversation Stack
• Hand Shakes
• Talent Identification activity
• Market Plan activity – “Making yourself marketable”
• Want Ad poster activity
• Create an ideal employee – clay or supplies
• “That’s Me” activity
• 2-3 rhetorical questions that students can answer yes to
  o “How many of you like to travel?”
    o "What is the coolest place that you have ever traveled to?"
    o “Would you like to continue to travel during high school?”
  o “How many of you have ever done any public speaking?”
    o “How many of you enjoy public speaking?”
    o “When you think about your perfect job, will you need to communicate with others?”
  o How many of you have ever played a team sport?”
    o “Was it a good experience?”
    o "What makes up a good team player?”

• Game
• Video clip
  o School of Rock
  o Hoosiers
  o Travel
  o Friends
  o College

• Music

Things to think about

• The link is one of the very first things that you will do in a lesson.
• What will their comfort level be in engaging in a risky activity?
• This could set the tone for the entire lesson – begin with a bang.
• The connection should be age and maturity appropriate

**Motivation**

**Description:** Something is a lesson that arouses or stimulates the interest in the students. Something that motivates them to want to learn or participate in the lesson activities. The question “What's In It For Me?” (WIIFM) is answered.
**Educational value:** When we want to learn we are receptive. This step is essential. Without it, anything else you do is a waste of time as the students are not receptive to your teaching.

Examples of motivators

- Share real life value of knowing knowledge or skill
- Story of how it helped you to know the topic
- Data or evidence
- Your own enthusiasm for the topic or lesson
- Building instant rapport with the students
  - Meeting them at the door
  - asking them questions
  - Smiling
  - treating them with respect and dignity
  - listening to them
  - having patience with them
  - asking them to help you
  - listening to them when they contribute
  - writing down their comments exactly as they stated them (do not rephrase)
  - being prepared
  - making an effort to remember names and using them during the lesson
  - asking them for their opinion
  - Preparing a valuable lesson for them
- Rewards,
- prizes,
- incentives
- Hold them accountable for their learning – expectation that they will perform later
- Peer pressure – win over opinion leaders
- Food
- Create a safe and secure environment where they can risk competitions

- Hand shakes and processing
- Processing of unequal resources
- Story about the benefits of active participation in activities – scholarship
- Samples of job applications for the students to look at (applications should request list of activities involved in).

Things to think about:

- Tap into their experiences, age, interests, etc
- Time
- You may need to motivate along the way – periodically in the lesson – I.e before an activity
- Some students will be intrinsically motivated, some will not
- Just having new faces, new style, will motivate (at least for a while).
Preview

**Description:** An preview is a statement by the teacher telling the students what they are going to learn and/or do today.

**Educational value:** Some thinkers want to know what to expect. They will be the kind of students that frequently ask “What are we doing today?” in class. A preview helps to answer that question.

Examples:

- “Today we are going to help you get that ideal job.”
- “During our time together, we are going to investigate the cool world of FFA and how it can help you get into a college.”
- “By the end of this period, you will be empowered to lead a group, your chapter or other organization that you have an interest in.”
- “So together, we are going to become experts in the area of resume writing.”
- “So today we are going to play a little, share a few ideas, and each one of you will develop a plan of success…

Something to keep in mind about overviews

- You don’t have to spell it all out for them. Sometimes, being a bit vague can arouse their curiosity even more. Sometimes you preview activities in the lesson as opposed to what they will actually learn – especially if you can not find a way to make it sound exciting. “Today we are going to learn how to fill out a job application.” “Today, you will be empowered with the skills necessary to get the job that you want!”

Closure or Contextual Summations (top)

**Description:** A closure “wraps up” the lesson – puts a bow around it and causes the students to leave the period feeling good about what they have just learned.

**Educational value:** The contextual summation re-connects the learner to the overarching schema or theme – “key points.” Then they can stay mindful of the importance of what they learned, and how this new information fits with previous or upcoming information. The brain tends to remember best what it experiences first and last (primacy and recent).

Effective closures have three components:

- sense of movement, meaning that we started in one place and now are at another place,
- a sense of validation, meaning that what we learned today was important,
- and a sense of celebration, meaning an emotional connection that evokes “We did it.”

Closure Examples:
Today was a great day! Well done! (celebration) We actually unraveled the mystery of consensus building. We learned that not everyone must agree that the solution is necessarily the best option, but they must agree that they will commit to it and give their best effort to see it through. This becomes especially important when we answer tomorrow’s question, “How do we facilitate consensus building in a group?” Thanks for being attentive, for taking notes, and asking questions today. Your effort made learning worth it!

Thanks for a good day, your commitment to excellence, cooperative spirit, and focus. So, here is the deal. Next period when you enter the classroom – shock your teacher – walk up to them and shake their hands in the professional way, look them in the eye and say “good morning, Mr. …” Be prepared to share with us how that went tomorrow! And tomorrow, we will investigate strategies for establishing and maintaining conversations with other adults. Stay tuned! Thanks again for being there today!

Materials Needed

List all of the materials you will need for the lesson. This may include handouts, references, and equipment. Making a complete list will help you prepare for the lesson.

Vocabulary and Terms

List all words and terms that will be introduced during the lesson. These may the technical terms associated with the lesson, or names of special tools and equipment.

Evaluation

List or describe ways that you will assess or measure student success in achieving the outcomes that you planned to reach. This can include a variety of ways to evaluate student performance.

Teacher Reflection

This section is to be completed after lesson. It represents what you think worked, or what did not work, and why. It is meant to give you some insight into practice and will hopefully help you to make adjustments and modifications where necessary.

Facilitating the Lesson

Most problems with lessons is not in the design, but in the facilitation of the lesson!

Once the lesson plan has been crafted, there are facilitation strategies that teachers need to implement to assure that the lesson goes as planned. It is like a coach, if he/she has a game plan but not the skill set to carry out the plan, the team’s chances of winning is decreased. Many of the strategies can be called start up and/or transitions, meaning things that teachers do to start a lesson and in between the components of a lesson plan.
State Facilitation by setting context (Contextual sets)

**Description:** Contextual sets can keep students aware of the importance of what they are learning and keep them in an optimal state to learn. Contextual sets contain three components:

- A sense of anticipation,
- A sense of worthiness, meaning what we about to learn is worthy of our time and attention
- A sense of connection, meaning that what we are about to learn fits with other content.

**Educational value:** Our brains tend to store information more efficiently when placing information contextually. Context provides us with a time-space continuum and a schema in which to construct our knowledge. By attaching the information we are learning to what we did yesterday, and how it affects the goal we are attaining, we provide relevance. As a learner I want to know where I’ve been in light of where I am going!

Contextual sets affect the learner’s state of mind and attitude of readiness toward learning. More on this later.

**Example:**

*In our previous episode of “Romance in the greenhouse,” we discovered that plants reproduce sexually like animals do. We labeled the parts of a plant as we examined a real flower. Now, remember, our overarching theme is “Every living thing reproduces itself.” Today we’ll uncover how each part interacts with the other parts based on its function, let’s remain curious today so we can build on what we already know. If anyone can master this information it’s you so recover your notes from yesterday and tell two people near you two parts of a flower.*

There are several factors associated with context. They are:

- Environment – lighting, seating, type of learning activity – lecture or lab
- Atmosphere – feeling tone in room
- Policies and procedure
- Expectations
- Directions
- Transitions (start this, start that)

There are three kinds of contextual sets

- Macro-contextual set – occurs at the beginning of the lesson
- Micro-contextual set – occurs at the beginning of one chunk of a lesson
- Contextual summations (closures) – occurs at the end of the lesson

Ways to set context:

- Metaphors
- Story
- Relationship questions
- Speak to best self
- Reference to something done yesterday
- Providing guidelines
- Facilitate student focus
- Theme incorporation
- “Where have we been, where are we going?”
- Connect to teaching technique
- Mind set
- state what you hope to have happen.

Questions teachers ask themselves when developing a lesson and the context to establish:

- “What do you hope to gain this week?” (goal)
- “What do I want for my students and myself?” (goal)
- What do I feel will hold me back from having what I want?” (challenge)
- “What will it take for me to achieve what I want? (commitment)

Now, back to the notion that setting context affect the learner’s state of mind and attitude of readiness toward learning. Our state of mind is determined by three things:

- What we are thinking,
- What we are feeling,
- What we are doing with our bodies.

So, as teachers we can affect the state of mind of your students by:

- Changing the way they are thinking (Cognitive)
- Changing the way they are feeling (Affective)
- Changing what they are doing (Kinesthetic)

We want to shuffle the existing state of mind of our students and recreate an optimal state for learning! If all learning is state dependent as Eric Jensen (Brain based learning guru) suggests then it is imperative that we focus energy and attention to facilitating the student’s state or psycho-physiological condition to maintain their interest and focus their thinking on the content.

Examples of states

- Confused, creative, alert, interested, intrigued, frustrated, bored, fascinated, cooperative, curious, focused, and courageous.
- Many of these states are conducive to learning and some are not - it is not a good or bad thing.

Examples of state changing strategies:
• Take a deep breath and exhale slowly
• Switch seats to gain a fresh perspective
• Stand and take a bow as you applaud
• Stand and stretch
• Directions, e-moments, area all about state facilitation

Here are some examples of changing the state:

• Sit up tall and lean forward
• Clap three times
• Shout the answer -
• Whisper the answer
• Stand up for the next part of the lesson

**Effective Language**

**Description:** Everything speaks in a lesson – the environment, teacher-student interactions, lesson design, and the language teacher’s use. As verbal communication is limited in its impact on the communication process, it behooves us as teacher to be efficient (economy of language), clear, and welcoming (inclusive language) in instruction, direction, conversations with students. Also, we can appeal to our diverse learners by using words that connect to their learning style (modality language).

**Economy of language:** When crafting your directions or instruction be brief, direct, clear and student centered. Eliminate phrased like “I want you to,” “you need to” “Go ahead and..” Script out your directions while you learn how to be more efficient with language.

Remember, the longer you talk, the further away the minds of the students go.

**Using Modality Language**

**Description:** We know that there are different learning styles. A common model categorizes learning styles as visual (learn best by seeing), auditory (learn best by hearing), and kinesthetic learners (learn best by movement).

An obvious strategy we as teacher can use to reach all students is to vary our activities utilizing those that appeal to each learning modality daily. Another strategy is to use modality language, meaning using words and phrases that appeal to each modality.

Examples:

Visual language
   can you envision…
   picture this
   look into your minds eye
   focus in on
let’s take a panoramic view of
can you see
Auditory language
   Does this ring true…  
   Can you hear it 
   Talk it out in your mind 
   What would that sound like 
Kinesthetic
   Wrap your brain around
   Grasp this
   Hammer this home
   Climb the ladder
   Catch it
   Adventure
   Journey
   As we move from

Effective Directions

Description: Ever let students begin an activity or assignment (especially group related) only to have someone ask, “What are we supposed to do?” Or ever give a set of directions and before you finish students are already moving? Within effective directions reside essential components that maximize students’ responsiveness.

Educational value: Deploying students to a task, activity, or assignment requires clarity. Lack of clarity leads to confusion. The brain needs specific information to create the appropriate images. Once the image is clear corresponding actions occur.

When movement increases, hearing decreases. Although this may not be biologically true, it is psychologically true. We see this happen when we give simple directions such as, “Open your books to page 127.” As students grab their books someone inevitably asks, “What page?”

Time focused on learning is a precious commodity. For everyone minute students are confused about the directions is a minute of lost learning time. For example, if 10 students take 2 minutes to clarify the teacher’s directions that equates to 20 minutes of lost learning time. If this occurs multiple times in a lesson you can imagine the impact on learning.

Effective directions include the following components:

- set context
- signal word, statement, sound or motion - “When you hear Go,…”
- begin with action verbs – “Read, draw, grab, …
- address visual, auditory and kinesthetic characteristics (KEG)
- time frame
- check for understanding (with directions with 3 or more steps)
• WD (What to do when done.)
  • stand still
  • use supporting non-verbals

Example:

_We’ve captured the 5 levels of leadership according to John Maxwell. Take a few short moments to silently review your notes with yourself._ [Pause for independent review.]

_We’ll refer to these often so let’s make sure we’ve got them nailed. In your mind, create a poster that would capture the important characteristics of each of the 5 components. Be sure your poster has the name of all five levels, and a definition for each._ [Pause for visualization of poster.]

_Now add to your poster a simile for each. For example, “leadership by position” is like the a sheriff’s badge. In your mind, create a simile for each component._ [Pause for visualization of poster. Then allow them to open their eyes.]

_You’ll create a poster that contains 1) the names of 5 levels of leadership, 2) definitions for each component and 3) a picture of the simile for each component. Be ready when I call on you to tell us what your poster contains._ [Elicit responses.]

_When I say, “Posterize” you’ll have 10 minutes to accomplish your Leadership Masterpiece. During these 10 minutes I’ll be able to see words and pictures neatly produced and hear creative conversations. We’ll do this in partners. Posterize._

(top)