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## Teaching for Lifelong Learning:

### How to Prepare Students for a Changing World

*By Elliott Seif*

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#### Study Guide

This study guide is a companion to the book *Teaching for Lifelong Learning: How to Prepare Students for a Changing World* by Elliott Seif. The study guide is organized chapter by chapter, enabling readers to either work their way through the entire book or focus on the specific topics addressed in a particular chapter. It can be used by individuals, small groups, or an entire team to identify key points, raise questions for consideration, assess conditions in a particular school or district, and suggest steps that might be taken to promote a positive school culture oriented toward lifelong learning.

We thank you for your interest in this book, and we hope this guide is a useful tool in your efforts to create educational culture, programs and practices in your classroom, and schools or districts that support lifelong learning.

You can find more information about the book and reproducible exercises on the Solution Tree website at <https://bit.ly/3tVXIKd>. Elliott Seif's website, [www.lifelonglearninged.org](http://www.lifelonglearninged.org), also has

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more information about the book as well as additional resources and blogs about teaching for lifelong learning.

## **Introduction to the Study Guide**

In today's world of change, uncertainty, and longer lives, a key educational goal for each educator should be to help prepare students for a lifetime of learning. Most students today will likely live well into their seventies, eighties, even nineties, meaning their thirteen years of formal K–12 education will comprise only a small percentage of the years of learning. Also, as we prepare students for college or career, we need to provide them with the necessary background knowledge, tools, and dispositions to be continual, lifelong learners.

The book *Teaching for Lifelong Learning: How to Prepare Students for a Changing World* explores a variety of ways to adapt teaching to better support a lifelong learning education. The book examines four major goals for a lifelong learning education, with an emphasis on developing and sustaining curiosity and interest in learning, building a knowledge base of understandings and key lifelong learning skills, promoting independent and deeper learning, and broadening student experiences and enriching student lives. The book also suggests many specific ways to implement these goals by adapting instruction, assessment, and curriculum programs and practices to better promote lifelong learning.

The questions and exercises below are designed to help pre-service and current teachers at all levels of experience, grade levels, and content areas learn about and digest the ideas in this book, and then decide which to apply to current or future teaching situations. Administrators and other educators may want to use these questions and exercises as a guide for understanding the many ideas and practices in the book and consider how they might apply them to their own

schools and circumstances. While not specifically stated, the exercises are designed not only for individual reflection but also for large and small group sharing and discussion. The exercises should be selectively used as appropriate to the reader.

Consider reading the book and completing the exercises as independent summer work, professional development for staff members during the school year, or in teacher preparation programs. If the book is read as part of professional development during the school year, it is recommended that each chapter be examined, exercises conducted, and the suggestions applied on a monthly basis. Once the introduction and six chapters are completed over a number of months, allow time for teachers to discuss and continue to work on different aspects of a lifelong learning education program, and to determine which work best for them and for their students.

## **Before You Read**

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1. Before you begin this book, read through the foreword and skim the table of contents, chapter headings, quotes at the beginning of each chapter, the book's text, and the remainder of this study guide to become familiar with many of the key ideas in the book. You might also want to develop a few of your own questions that you can discuss in advance of reading the book or save for later when reading each chapter.
2. Once done, read each chapter and examine the questions and exercises for each one, below.

## **Introduction**

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### **Key Questions**

1. Why teach for lifelong learning? What is it about the world today that makes this an imperative?
2. What does current research suggest are important learning principles to consider in today's teaching and learning situations? What are some of the implications of these principles for successful teaching and a lifelong learning education?

### **Exercises**

1. Pages 2–3 suggest several reasons for moving toward a lifelong learning education, such as changes to the nature of work and technology. Brainstorm a list of specific changes taking place in the United States and world that suggest the need for preparation for a lifetime of learning. What are the implications for the content and skills students will need in order to prepare them for living and working in this changing, uncertain world of the future?

2. Pages 1–2 suggest that we need a “more active, growth-oriented way of thinking about teaching and learning,” and pages 4–5 examine recent research on learning and suggest a number of learning principles based on this research. Review these pages and then use the reproducible chart on pages 14–15 to consider how the learning principles support a more active, growth-oriented way of thinking about teaching and learning, how they square with your own best learning experiences, and what they imply for successful teaching and greater student learning
  
3. Briefly review pages 9–11 to gain some insights into the contents of the remaining chapters of the book and some questions that will be explored as you read further. Which questions on page 11 are you most interested in exploring? Which intrigue you?

## **Chapter 1**

### **Understanding Educator Goals That Support Students' Lifelong Learning**

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#### **Key Questions**

1. What are the four key goals of a lifelong learning education suggested in this book?
2. What foundational understandings and skill sets are necessary for a lifelong learning education?

#### **Exercises**

1. Pages 17–36 describe a central idea in this chapter: that there are four key goals of a lifelong learning education. Some questions to examine about the goals:
  - a. *Growth Mindset*: What are some of the key indicators of a growth mindset? How might essential questions support a growth mindset (Dweck, 2006) and increase student curiosity? What are some other ways teachers might support the development of a growth mindset and increase student curiosity? (pages 22–26)



- b. *Building a foundation of key understandings*: A key lifelong learning goal is that big ideas, understandings, and concepts should be the driving forces for learning content and creating a student knowledge base (pages 26–29). How can teachers create a greater content focus on key ideas and understandings? If you are a classroom teacher, what does this suggest for your own teaching situation?
  
- c. *Building a foundation of key skills*: Another central idea in this chapter is that there are six foundational skill sets that should take center stage in a teaching for lifelong learning program. Review the six skill sets in the chart on pages 30–31 and then decide: How can teachers create greater focus on students’ developing these six skill sets? If you are a classroom teacher, what do these skill sets suggest for your own teaching situation?
  
- d. *Deepening learning and developing independent learners*: How can we provide greater opportunities for students to deepen learning and develop as independent learners (a goal introduced on pages 32–33)? How can we better build *automaticity* in students?
  
- e. *Broadening and enriching learning*: Pages 33–36 suggest that students be provided with many new experiences, choices and options that help them

broaden and enrich their learning through reading choices, unit and theme options, enrichment options, field trips, and passion projects. How can these and other experiences, choices, and options that broaden and enrich learning be better incorporated into classroom and school learning experiences?

2. Look at the websites, reflections, and action steps at the end of this chapter, pages 36–40. If appropriate, pick one or more to continue your work, do further research, and continue to reflect on the goals of a lifelong learning education program.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Adapting Instruction for Lifelong Learning**

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#### **Key Questions**

1. What do powerful sports and music learning suggest about ways to think about good instruction?
2. How can we best organize and plan for implementing the principles of a lifelong learning education? What are the underlying principles of instruction that drive this approach?

#### **Exercises**

1. A key central idea of this chapter is the introduction of a four-phase model of instruction. Use the musical illustration and the description and example of four-phase instruction on pages 43–46 to determine if this approach to planning and organizing instruction makes sense to you. Consider how a teacher might adapt instruction to incorporate elements of the four phases.
2. Pages 47–51 outline four general principles of a lifelong learning instructional approach that underlie the four-phase model. How do these principles fit in with your own

approach to instruction? What are the implications of these principles for teaching and learning?

3. Read through the suggested phase-related activities from pages 51–64. Which ones would be easy to adapt and add to a repertoire of useful instructional activities? Which would be the most helpful to teachers and students?
4. Pages 64–74 describe six types of activities that are adaptable to all phases of instruction and promote the development of lifelong learning understandings and skills. Which are most useful and applicable to a teaching situation? If you are a teacher, which are currently part of your own teaching repertoire? Which would you like to add or increase?
5. Page 74 suggests a way to think about lesson design using a set of questions built around the four phases of instruction. How can these questions help teachers design lessons? How can they help teachers plan lessons as part of units of instruction?
6. Look at the websites, reflections, and action steps at the end of this chapter, pages 75–79. If appropriate, pick one or more to continue your work, do further research, and continue to reflect on how to develop a lifelong learning education instructional framework.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Assessing for Lifelong Learning**

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#### **Key questions**

1. What are three key types of assessments? How might all three be integrated into a lifelong learning education?
2. What assessments can be used as both formative and summative assessments? What types of assessments can also be used as major lifelong learning activities?
3. What are two key ways for students to collect assessment data and show their understanding, skills, and progress over time?

#### **Exercises**

1. Review the bike-riding example on pages 81–82 that illustrates three major types of assessments, and then read pages 82–88 to learn more about the three types of assessments depicted in the bike-riding example. How might these three types of assessments be used more effectively in schools and classrooms? If you are a teacher, are

these three types of assessments effectively used in your classroom? School? What changes could make them more effective?

2. Read pages 88–94 to learn more about seven types of assessments that function as both formative and summative assessments. How might these assessments be used more effectively in schools and classrooms? If you are a teacher, which of these assessments are currently used in your classroom or at your school? Which might be used more frequently?
3. Four of the seven types of assessments described from pages 88–94—open-ended assignments, performance tasks and projects, visual organizers, and self-reflections—are also powerful activities that are described in chapter 2 (pages 66–74). How can these become a more central part of both instruction and assessment in classrooms and schools? If you are a teacher, how are these manifested in your own classroom? How can they become a more central part of your instruction and assessment activity?
4. Limited response assessments such as multiple choice, true-false, and short answer are a common feature of many classrooms, and are described from pages 88–90. Since they are a frequently used summative assessment, how can they also be used as formative assessments? What changes would be required?

5. Read pages 94–95 on rubrics. Why are rubrics so important as assessment tools? How can they be better incorporated into the assessment process?
6. Two key ways for students to collect assessment data over time is through interactive notebooks (pages 90–91) and portfolios (pages 95–99). How might one or both of these assessment collection strategies be used effectively in a classroom or school setting?
7. Pages 99–100 describe three principles teachers should consider as they review and adapt assessments. Which of the three are helpful to you? Which suggest a new way to think about assessments? What are the implications of these principles for developing a strong assessment process?
8. Look at the websites, reflections, and action steps at the end of this chapter, pages 101–104. If appropriate, pick one or more to continue your work, do further research, and continue to reflect on developing a lifelong learning education assessment process.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Developing a Lifelong Learning Curriculum**

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#### **Key Question**

1. How can we best develop a curriculum that supports lifelong learning?

#### **Exercises**

1. Read pages 105–106. Why is a powerful, focused, high-quality curriculum so important?  
Summarize your own reasons based on the reading and your own ideas.
2. Pages 106–113. These pages suggest twelve criteria for developing a curriculum focused around lifelong learning goals and practices. Which of these criteria do you consider to be the most important? If you are currently teaching, pick a curriculum and rate your current curriculum using the most important criteria. A more extensive exercise for curriculum analysis can be found in the reproducible on pages 123–124.
3. If you are currently considering a curriculum for adoption, use the reproducible on pages 123–124 to analyze the curriculum being considered. How well does this curriculum align with the twelve criteria? Where is the curriculum especially strong? What are its



weaknesses? How does this analysis help you decide whether or not to adopt the curriculum?

4. The curriculum design model *Understanding by Design* (UbD) is also a potential way to rethink the curriculum and redesign it to align with an ideal lifelong learning curriculum. Read through the pages 114–119 and the UbD examples on pages 125–135 to examine how a current curriculum might be adapted to promote understanding, develop critical lifelong learning skills, apply the four-phase instructional model and key assessments, and more. If appropriate, redesign part of your own curriculum using the UbD model described in the book.
5. An important part of curriculum design work is to develop a way to share and communicate key aspects of the curriculum with parents and the community at large. Read page 119 and look at examples of parent-community curriculum guides online to determine how a parent-community guide might be developed or improved. If you are a teacher, do you currently have high-quality parent and community curriculum guides? If not, how might you and your school develop and share these in the future?
6. Look at the websites, reflections, and action steps at the end of this chapter, pages 120–124. If appropriate, pick one or more to continue your work, do further research, and continue to reflect on how to develop a lifelong learning curriculum.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Including Project-Based Learning and Civic Education**

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#### **Key Questions**

1. How does project-based learning fit in with a lifelong learning educational approach?
2. How can civic learning be better incorporated into classroom and school programs?

#### **Exercises**

1. Pages 138–149 describe how project-based learning can be infused into a lifelong learning education program. Use the first reproducible reflection on page 156 to demonstrate your understanding of PBL by developing a PBL visual organizer.
2. Once the visual organizer is completed, complete the first action step on page 157. Review figure 5.3, on page 146, and then develop your own classroom project example around the four phases of instruction.
3. Complete the civics education reflection on page 156 and the action step civics education task on page 157.

4. Look at the websites, reflections, and action steps at the end of this chapter, pages 155–157. If appropriate, pick one or more to continue your work, do further research, and continue to reflect on how to better incorporate project-based learning and civic education into classroom and school programs.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Taking the Next Steps**

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#### **Key Question**

1. What are the best ways to change what we do to support a lifelong learning education?

#### **Exercises**

1. Review the several teaching examples and the key ideas for a lifelong learning education from pages 159–161. How do these teaching examples illustrate how many of the key ideas in this book might be put into practice? Do the indicators of a lifelong learning education on page 161 accurately portray the key ideas infused into these examples? What would you add? Subtract? Modify? Use these indicators as a starting point to create your own version of the key indicators of lifelong learning education in practice.
2. Use the first reflection activity on page 178 to write your own haiku depicting one or more of the key ideas of a lifelong learning education.

3. Review and reflect on the four change principles of highly successful organizations described on pages 161–164. What do these change principles suggest for how to go about changing classroom teaching? Changing a school or district situation?
4. Review one or both of the scenarios from pages 164–170 that illustrate an elementary and secondary teacher’s movements toward a lifelong learning educational approach. In your opinion, do they illustrate a realistic and workable progression? How do they help suggest a change process?
5. If you are a teacher, use the reproducible on pages 183–184 to create your own analysis of your current strengths and challenges in implementing a lifelong learning education. As a result, what do you conclude are some priority changes to work on? How will you go about making changes and improvements to your teaching?
6. Pages 170–176 describe how to use the four-phase instructional model as a planning framework for professional development. Use the reproducible on pages 180–181 to create a plan for developing a lifelong learning education program based on the four phases of instruction. If you are a teacher, consider how you will go about implementing the plan you created. What sequence of steps will you take to make changes and adapt your teaching based on the plan?

7. Look at the websites, reflections, and action steps at the end of this chapter, pages 177–184. If appropriate, pick one or more to continue your work, do further research, and continue to reflect on how best to develop a lifelong learning education program over time.

## **Epilogue**

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### **Key Questions**

1. Where are you now?
2. Where would you like to be?
3. How will you get there?
4. What's realistic and doable?
5. Who are your allies? Who can be helpful?

### **Exercises**

1. Pages 185–186 ask you to consider what you now value about the education of children—things like building and maintaining curiosity, creating greater understanding, developing complex learning skills, being able to learn independently and interdependently, and so on. Based on the reading of this book, and your own ideas, what

is it that you now most value about the education of children? What would you like to see inculcated in the children that you teach?

2. Pages 186–187 suggest that implementing changes is often a slow and gradual process, often complex and challenging. The key questions on page 187, also listed above, are a good beginning set of questions to help you on this journey. What are your answers to these questions?

Remember—“A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.”