The HyperDoc Handbook

DIGITAL LESSON DESIGN USING GOOGLE APPS

Lisa Highfill
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“...allowed us to move deeper within the SAMR model.”

If I had to pick my favorite tech tool of 2015 it would be without a doubt the amazing HyperDoc. To say that I LOVE HyperDocs would be an extreme understatement. HyperDocs are a game changer for us at Sun Terrace Elementary. The creating and implementing of HyperDocs by almost every teacher in grades 1-5 at our site has allowed us to move deeper within the SAMR model, from Substitution to Modification and even Redefinition. HyperDocs give our teachers a way to clearly integrate technology tools into their instruction and in turn cultivates a classroom of creators not just consumers of information.

Connecting with other educators on Twitter (using the hashtag HyperDocs) has given me the opportunity to not only share the HyperDocs I have made with others, but it has expanded my professional learning network to include an amazing group of teachers from all across the country who have shared their creations as well. No more “reinventing the wheel” since a shared HyperDoc can be copied and revised to fit the exact needs of your students. Because of the collaborative nature of Google Tools and HyperDocs I was able to connect with a fourth grade teacher in VA (Justin Birckbichler) to create an awesome Digital Citizenship HyperDoc focusing on Plagiarism and we have yet to meet in person! I feel like this is what it means to truly be a connected educator.

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HOW TO CREATE A HyperDoc

Even when we’re delivering the “same ol’ district-mandated curriculum,” creating HyperDocs makes us feel alive again. We find real joy when we feel empowered as lesson designers. That’s why we encourage you to draw inspiration from your students, your colleagues, and your life itself. Believe it or not, some of our best HyperDocs have come about after watching a touching video on YouTube and saying, “We need to ‘HyperDoc’ that!”

Sitting down to create a HyperDoc is an opportunity to craft a meaningful, powerful experience for students. We have done our best to simplify the creation process, and while this is certainly not an exhaustive list of design tips and packaging options, it is a starting point. That’s due in part to technology. Part of what makes technology so wonderful is that it is always changing, offering new tools and ideas for innovation. But at the same time, part of what makes technology so challenging is that it is always changing, insisting we constantly adapt and grow.

Technology sparks innovation, and while HyperDoc creators adapt to utilizing a variety of web tools, there are countless ways to design and create a HyperDoc. You will find yourself personalizing HyperDocs to fit your classroom, your students, and your needs. And HyperDocs aren’t meant to replace your school’s or district’s set curriculum; rather, they should enhance it. Catlin Tucker, author of Blended Learning in Grades 4-12, notes, “Teachers must be the architects of learning.” We want you to feel empowered—you’re not just an assigner, you’re a designer! Create. Transform. Enjoy.

Create a HyperDoc in Five Steps:

1. Determine your objectives.
2. Select which learning cycle you will use.
3. Select your packaging.
4. Build the workflow.
5. Design your HyperDoc.
**STEP 1: DETERMINE YOUR OBJECTIVES**

As educators, we are content designers. Day in and day out, we ask ourselves, “What is my content? And how will I deliver the content?” These are fundamental questions in a teacher’s daily life. Whatever jargon we use to express our lessons’ learning objectives, there are some universal core elements we should consider when designing HyperDocs.

**Grade Level**—A HyperDoc can be adapted up or down to meet students’ needs, grade-level-specific content needs, and state standards—meaning students of all ages and all grade levels can benefit from the engagement strategies embedded within the document. For primary learners, in transitional kindergarten through second grade, a HyperDoc becomes a launch pad for the day’s lesson. A primary school teacher might work off of one HyperDoc and do more demonstration strategies with his students, whereas students in second and third grade are becoming more and more independent, so a teacher can ask them to log in and access information using Google Apps for Education. And students in fourth through twelfth grades are absolutely capable of accessing a HyperDoc and independently working through the digital lesson plan.

**Content Area**—Elementary school teachers are expected to create and implement lesson plans for multiple subjects, including reading, writing, math, science, social studies, character education, and art. To fit all of these subjects within a given day or time period, teachers prepare cross-curricular lessons and projects. HyperDocs are the perfect solution for the elementary school teacher who wants to either focus on a single subject area or combine multiple disciplines into one digital experience.

Secondary school teachers are masters of their content, and they work to develop innovative ways to deliver their particular subject area’s content. Lessons are typically part of a larger study unit, and they may be individual or repeated throughout the day in different periods and classes. HyperDocs allow the teacher to curate specific content and individual lessons over a course of study. Teachers could even promote collaborative conversations across their classrooms on a given topic. For example, by eighth period, multiple classes would have communicated in one HyperDoc.

**Length of Lesson**—One HyperDoc might be given as a pre-unit exploration where students revisit the HyperDoc over the course of a week, while another HyperDoc might span an entire unit of study for a few weeks. When creating a HyperDoc, ask yourself, “How long will my class use this?”
Specific Objective—As you begin to think about your HyperDoc, establish clear objectives. You may have a simple, singular teaching point or purpose in mind or an overarching set of essential questions that serve a more comprehensive outcome. You could take a direct approach in your HyperDoc and clearly state the purpose at the top for students to see, or you could be more subtle in the delivery of your learning objectives. Whatever you choose, as you set out to design your digital lesson plans, consider the vision you have for your learning objectives.

Desired Outcome—When you begin designing your HyperDoc, think about what your desired outcome for the learner will be. This could include:

- **Exploring** a concept or topic in depth or simply piquing interest
- **Discussing** collaboratively online
- **Creating** something from scratch to engage learners
- **Applying** knowledge to extend a concept
- **Assessing** student learning

STEP 2: SELECT WHICH LEARNING CYCLE YOU WILL USE

New and veteran teachers alike will agree that lesson design is a complex, personal process. Every single lesson plan and unit of study we create requires both formal and technical components. As time progresses and we become more experienced, lesson design begins to feel more personal, and yet very technical. As we craft lessons, we should be considering the following questions:

- How do I craft an *essential question*?
- What does an *anticipatory set* involve?
- How can I immediately engage students with a powerful *hook*?
- Is there a set amount of time for *reflection*?
- What artifact will students create to show that my teaching has stuck?

HyperDocs can address these questions as well as many others in the design stage.

Popular Learning Cycles—Some learning cycles have stood the test of time, while others are more
progressive, more recent models. Some of the more prevalent learning cycles in today’s classrooms include:

- Explore-Explain-Apply or Explore-Flip-Apply
- Workshop Model: Connect, Teach, Engage, Application, Reflection
- 5E Instructional Model: Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, Evaluate3
- HyperDoc Model: Engage, Explore, Explain, Apply, Share, Reflect, Extend

Many of our HyperDocs are a hybrid of these learning cycles, with each lesson’s purpose deciding which learning cycles are used. We recommend that you first determine which of these learning cycles (or your own) is best suited for your HyperDoc before getting started so that you can provide a structure for your lesson design. Like us, you probably teach with intention and purpose, so you’ll find yourself using different cycles of learning for different reasons in your classroom. We encourage you to take liberties to create and personalize your HyperDocs to fit your individual needs.

**STEP 3: SELECT YOUR PACKAGING**

While the HyperDocs concept may initially seem complicated, a HyperDoc is really just smart packaging. Think about it: What draws your attention to and piques your curiosity in a new task? What would make your students curious about learning in a new, unexpected way? Could you share that in a Google Doc?

HyperDocs move away from large blocks of text on a standard piece of white paper to an online document that is succinct, easy to comprehend independently, and engaging. Start by reimagining a course syllabus or project. Instead of giving your students a paper handout or packet, package the content in a way that makes them excited about their tasks.

Thinking about lesson design and packaging is critical. Will your HyperDoc be a view-only document that you share through a link? Do you want students to complete a form or watch a video? Do you want them to click away from the initial document, opening new tabs to access other parts of the assignment? There is no one right answer, but that’s the beauty of a HyperDoc—it’s unique and can reflect the needs of your lesson and the students accessing it. You may choose to create a HyperDoc using one tool, only to switch to another as you realize the new tool would better support the group you’re working with.

How To Create A HyperDoc

As you create your HyperDoc, take time to process what you want your students to gain from it, and try to stay open to the idea that even once you’ve created it, nothing is permanent—you can always make changes. That, in and of itself, is an important step in the design process.

How you choose to package your lesson may play a big role in its effectiveness. Consider the following options when creating your HyperDoc:

**Google Docs**

Using Google Docs has always been like creating a fast and simple web page. It is our go-to choice for creating a HyperDoc for so many reasons:

- Accessible from any device
- Simple to edit and revise
- Can serve as a launch pad for incredible learning experiences
- Offers numerous font choices that can help with clearly identifying tasks
- Enables you to embed images so that visual learners can better comprehend the content
- Allows you to adjust the background colors to reduce the glare of the white page for sensitive eyes
- Helps you organize your content and expectations using visible tables
- Permits you to hide links behind words like “here,” decluttering an assignment and leading learners to external locations where the lesson continues (see Figure 2-1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity 2 Theme</th>
<th>HyperDoc</th>
<th>Thinking/wonders/ideas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What defines a place?</td>
<td>#PlaceProject HyperMap*</td>
<td>Explore and think about the many examples on the Google map that help define what a place is all about. Record your thinking <a href="#">HERE</a>.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2-1