

Table 9 Designing a task: Example 1

(for the description of the task used in this example see Table 2 of the Guide)

1	Outcome oriented task design	Discipline Area: Early Childhood Education	
2	Explicit communicative strategies	Level: PG	Mode: Blended (Flexible)
3	Interactional scaffolding		
4	Clear expectations for participation		

Learning Outcome(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the role of young children’s talk in their learning and development: • It is important for young children to talk aloud when problem solving to guide their thinking. • Talking aloud is an essential part of young children’s learning and development.
Is the task authentic? How is it linked to learning outcomes?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The task includes a problem solving episode which is similar to the episodes that early childhood educators would observe in their everyday teaching practice • The task is linked to the learning outcomes because it exemplifies the phenomenon of ‘talking aloud’ and asks the students to discuss why it is important.
What is the ‘controversial’ element, issue or problem to solve?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The controversial element is that the statement for the discussion contradicts the view that students need to understand. • The problem that the students have to discuss is whether the statement made by the character in the case (Ivan) was correct. • The students will have to argue for, and against, the statement thus refining their understanding

Anticipate / prepare for when you expect students will need steering (e.g. when the students do not address the concepts which you anticipated them to)

In their discussion I expect the students to address the following concepts

- Young children talk aloud to assist their thinking and problem solving
- Children have difficulties in solving problems if their talking aloud is discouraged
- Early childhood educators need to encourage young children's talking while doing any activity including problem solving

If the students do not touch upon these points in their discussion, I would have to prompt them by questioning or providing an example ('interactional scaffolding')

What communicative strategies will students be focusing on?

In this forum students are explicitly asked to use the following strategies:

- Justifying their position through explanation
- Presenting alternatives
- Challenging the idea(s)

Language choices are provided for each strategy. Additionally, students are reminded to use the 'positive social interaction' strategies which they used in the introductory forum, including 'addressing by name', 'acknowledging' and 'supporting others' ideas

Explicit instructions for student participation

It is made clear to students that it is compulsory for them to participate in all the forums; however, their participation is not graded, but counted towards class attendance.

Students have to contribute to each forum with at least 2 messages. Each message should be short, and written in a spoken-like manner. The suggested strategies should be used.

Planning for lecturer participation (e.g. what do you anticipate your own participation will be? How will you organise discussion structure to suit your class?)

My participation in the forums will include

- Reading all the messages which students post but responding only when necessarily
- Identifying the moments when the students need clarification or prompt to keep them moving towards achieving the identified learning outcomes
- Replying to students who did not receive any responses to keep them feeling included
- Model the communicative strategies when posting my messages

Organisation: The subject enrolls 11 students so I keep them as one discussion group