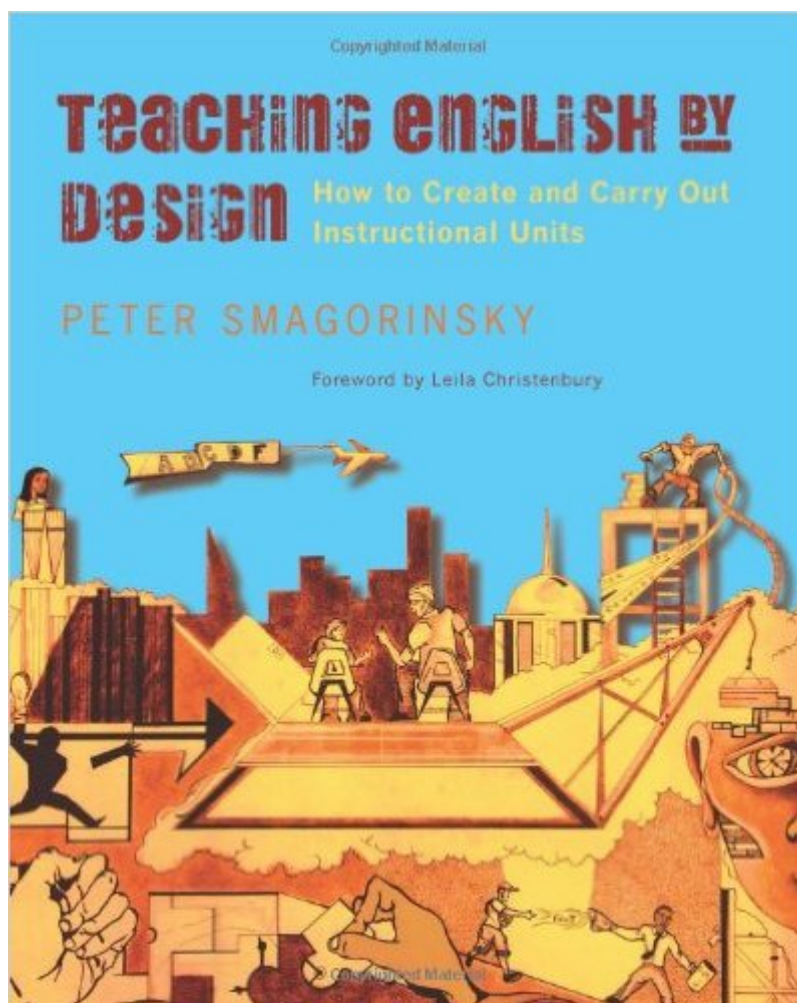


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# Teaching English By Design: How To Create And Carry Out Instructional Units



## Synopsis

The Teaching English by Design Instructor's Guide presents a flexible framework for an English Methods course. Its week-by-week suggestions for in- and out-of-class activities support students as they learn to design units for use in their first classrooms. Peter Smagorinsky, the leading scholar and researcher of his generation in the field of English education, shows English teachers how to turn every hour of classroom instruction into an authentic and powerful learning experience in his inspiring new book, *Teaching English by Design*. It's a wonderful book and represents a challenge to all of us to teach better than we usually do. Sheridan Blau Author of *The Literature Workshop* Peter Smagorinsky, a highly respected figure in English Education, here offers new teachers principled and practical ways of authoring curriculum, even in traditional settings. Randy Bomer Author of *Time for Meaning* Many books on English/language arts instruction describe the teaching of units, but how many of them actually show how to create the units, make them meaningful to students, and use them to support your curriculum from September to June? *Teaching English by Design* does it all. It helps avoid a fragmentary curriculum by providing the rationale and the process for not only teaching well but also for producing integrated units that encourage students to deepen their thinking across the school year. *Teaching English by Design* is two books in one: a primer for teaching secondary English and a comprehensive guide to creating and using four to six-week instructional units. Peter Smagorinsky shares important insight about students, how they learn, and what kinds of classrooms support their achievement in reading and writing. Then he uses those findings to open up the key ideas of unit design to every teacher. Smagorinsky's units are organized around key concepts in English, such as: reading strategies writing strategies genres periods, regions, and movements in literature themes the works of a significant author. From original idea to construction, to implementation and beyond, Smagorinsky's practical advice supports teachers in extending, connecting, and integrating their units to increase the cohesion and power of the curriculum. Incorporating curricular theory, educational psychology, and fourteen years of high school teaching experience, Peter Smagorinsky's advice is both theoretically sound and grounded in the daily realities of today's teacher. Complemented by a wealth of web-based illustrations, *Teaching English by Design* is the ideal resource for preservice teachers as well as those in the classroom who want to take charge of their curriculum and find new energy in it.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This book has a terrific and accessible overview of educational theory, and it helps students set goals and plan units with sound rationales and instructional methods. But the real gem here is the website that goes with it, loaded with thoughtful unit plans that are consistent with the methods outlined by the book. A one star review I just read is way off the mark. He read a page off , and he took something out of context. Smagorinsky was talking about how the belief persists that there is one fixed body of knowledge, and he shows how there are other ways of knowing things than that, and that they are valid and help the teacher co-create knowledge based on the understandings that they (the teacher and student) both bring to any given subject. Smagorinsky is nothing if not hip. He brings a Writing Project sensibility to the book, and you'll recognize proven approaches in each chapter.

I used this book in a Secondary Education 5000 class that I was required to take while earning my M.Ed. The author gives wonderful insights and examples into how to teach a class that is designed for its students. I found the book to be extremely helpful and will use many of Smagorinsky's ideas in my teaching this year. I particularly liked his chapter on addressing the emotional issues surrounding writing and the section that discusses using focus correction areas rather than overwhelming students with ALL grammar and writing issues at once. It was good for me, with my background as an editor, to consider the importance of teaching writing a step at a time rather than overwhelming students with hundreds of corrections each time they turn in a paper. Smagorinsky also details how to create unit rationales, stances, strategies for teaching, and effective essay assignments. I have no complaints about the book and would recommend it to all teachers. Great

discussion on modeling and scaffolding in chapter 6. I wish more of my English teachers had used this method when I was in high school.

For the aspiring teacher this is a good reference book to ensure that you're designing your coursework in an appropriate manner. Smagorinsky discusses how a classroom is like a construction zone and that it is essential to establish the end goal before doing any work. Instructors need to start with what they want students to know and then design from there. It requires that we look at the end goals of our year or our units and then design work for students to accomplish from there. I find it helpful because he discusses why we should the way we do, what we can implement in our designs, and then proceeds to give an example of how to do it. The only reason this text doesn't receive a higher score is because there are many people who do not and cannot function explicitly as Smagorinsky would like us to (even though he states its his opinion).

How do we create instruction that matters--that leaves a lasting impression with students while guiding them to appropriate key ELA skills and strategies. In this wonderful book, Smagorinsky offers specific, constructive architecture for units of instruction that will create important experiences for students. I have personally shared this book with newer teachers who are grappling with lesson/unit design and with veteran teachers who are reinvestigating what they do.

Of all the texts we 'had to' read for my teacher's ed program (I had already taught for 12 years in private schools and knew useless books when I read them), this may well be the most useable for everyday teaching.

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