EXCERPT

Level Up English: World Explorer

Professional Diploma in Digital Learning Design — Distinction

The following pages are excerpted from a 101-page instructional design project by Kevin Dougan, shown here to illustrate how specific learning-design frameworks were applied in practice.

Pages included:

- Bloom's Taxonomy mapped to CEFR proficiency levels (learning outcomes)
- SMART learning outcomes model
- Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle applied to modular design
- Bloom's Taxonomy x CEFR, combined (reflective commentary)
- Mayer's Multimedia Principles, Gagne's Events of Instruction, and the C.R.A.P. model

This project served as the instructional design blueprint for VOWL: English World Tour.
The full 101-page project is available on request.

Level Up English: World Explorer

Professional Diploma in Digital Learning Design - Project

By Kevin Dougan

Index

ADDIE model

The ADDIE model—a widely recognised framework in instructional design—guides the systematic creation and delivery of this course. ADDIE stands for Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation, and each phase ensures that learning objectives are thoroughly planned, executed, and refined to meet learner needs. This project is structured into three main parts:

Learning outcomes

The course combines Bloom's Taxonomy with CEFR proficiency levels to provide a structured yet adaptable learning journey, integrating receptive (reading, listening) and productive (speaking, writing) skills. Learners select from Easy, Medium, and Hard levels at the start of each module, with tasks tailored to their proficiency and cultivating mastery through progressively challenging activities.

At the Easy Level, learners focus on lower-order thinking skills—such as Recall, Understand, and Apply—building a strong foundation. They also engage in Create tasks through branching scenarios and AI conversations, applying their skills in real-world contexts. As learners complete each module, the cycle repeats with increasingly complex content, ensuring iterative growth and deeper command with each progression.

Medium Level learners progress through the full cycle of Bloom's Taxonomy, revisiting lower-order skills while steadily advancing to higher-order skills, including Analyse, Evaluate, and Create. Each module builds upon prior knowledge, looping through the cycle with increasingly challenging content that deepens understanding and application.

Hard Level learners follow the same iterative cycle but with a pronounced focus on critical thinking, synthesis, and complex problem-solving. They engage deeply with tasks requiring advanced Evaluate and Create skills, promoting expertise and nuanced language competency.

This comprehensive, iterative approach ensures all learners, regardless of their starting level, continually progress through Bloom's Taxonomy in alignment with their CEFR proficiency, developing robust, practical, and meaningful language skills.

1	**Recall** and identify key vocabulary, grammar rules, and cultural elements relevant to each module's context. Activities will focus on retrieving information to strengthen core knowledge and build a solid linguistic base.
2	**Understand** and demonstrate comprehension by interpreting grammar structures, vocabulary usage, and cultural contexts, explaining their meaning and application through guided tasks and multimedia activities.
3	**Apply** knowledge in real-world scenarios, engaging in conversations, role-plays, and branching scenarios. Tasks are designed to reflect authentic language use and practical communication challenges.
4	**Analyse** language structures, cultural norms, and contextual nuances to make appropriate language choices in diverse situations, demonstrating critical thinking and contextual awareness.
5	**Evaluate** and adapt language use based on situational needs, cultural appropriateness, and feedback from AI-driven interactions, refining communication for clarity and effectiveness.
6	**Create** original spoken and written content by synthesising grammar, vocabulary, and cultural nuances, producing complex and meaningful communication tailored to diverse, real-world contexts and situations.

SMART outcomes

SMART model

The learning outcomes for Level Up English: World Explorer align with the SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) model, ensuring they drive high-quality, effective language learning experiences:

Specific	Each outcome clearly defines the expected skills and knowledge that learners will acquire, from recalling vocabulary to creating complex, authentic communication. This specificity guides learners in understanding what must be accomplished at each stage of learning.
Measurable	The outcomes include observable behaviours, such as applying knowledge in real-world scenarios or constructing spoken and written content. Progress can be measured through quizzes, AI-driven feedback, branching scenarios, and learner assessments, providing clear indicators of learner achievement.
Achievable	The outcomes are tailored to align with the CEFR proficiency levels and Bloom's Taxonomy, ensuring that learners progress at a pace appropriate to their skill level. Flexible difficulty levels and personalised paths make the outcomes realistically attainable for diverse learners.
Relevant	Each outcome directly supports the goal of building practical language skills through meaningful, real-world applications. The outcomes reflect current needs for engaging, adaptive, and culturally-rich language learning.
Time-bound	Learners progress through modules with structured activities that encourage steady advancement, providing checkpoints and milestones that ensure outcomes are pursued within a defined timeframe, promoting consistent growth and retention.

Reflective Commentary

Kolb’s Experiential Learning Cycle and Iterative Modular Design

David Kolb’s theory caught my attention in the early modules, especially when starting to think about the modular progression of my course. Adhering to Kolb’s experiential learning cycle works nicely for the iterative design of each module in Level Up English: World Explorer. Kolb’s cycle consists of four stages: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation, and active experimentation. Each module begins with concrete experiences, such as immersive videos or interactive activities that introduce themes and vocabulary in context. For example, the ‘Outback Adventure’ video sparks curiosity and connection. Next, learners engage in reflective observation, analysing their performance through comprehension checks and adaptive feedback, which encourages critical thinking about their progress. This is followed by abstract conceptualisation, where learners delve into grammar rules and vocabulary through scaffolded activities, linking language elements to real-world communication. Finally, active experimentation allows learners to apply their skills in dynamic tasks like AI-driven conversations and branching scenarios. This iterative approach ensures that learners continuously revisit and deepen their skills, aligning perfectly with the course's goal of real-world language mastery.

Gamification, microlearning, and AI

Incorporating gamification, microlearning, and AI has the potential to transform learner engagement and motivation in my course. Drawing from my ESL teaching experience, I’ve seen how games harness enjoyment and reinforce learning, I therefore integrated elements like coin-based progression and optional challenges for a sense of accomplishment.

It has been an eye-opener during the diploma to see all the different ways that AI can be used in the learning environment, while always staying cautious of not being too over-reliant on it. But the potential is mind-blowing and it will play a significant role in this course.

Microlearning principles guide the structure, offering bite-sized lessons that prevent cognitive overload. Together, these strategies create an engaging and effective learning journey tailored to individual needs, fostering intrinsic motivation and skill application while supporting real-world language mastery.

Reflective Commentary

Combining Bloom’s taxonomy and CEFR

I combined Bloom’s Taxonomy with CEFR to create a structured and dynamic learning progression. Bloom’s Taxonomy offers a cognitive framework that guides learners from basic recall to more complex skills like application and analysis. By integrating both frameworks, I ensure that learners not only grasp the material but can apply it in real-life contexts, maximising learning transfer and communication skills.

This iterative model allows learners to revisit Bloom's stages within each module at increasing complexity. Beginners build core skills, intermediate learners strengthen practical usage, and advanced learners enhance nuanced communication, driving consistent engagement and effective language transfer.

Exclusion of CEFR levels A1 & C2

I chose to exclude CEFR levels A1 and C2 from the course's Easy, Medium, and Hard difficulty levels for specific reasons. A1-level learners, being absolute beginners, require intensive foundational instruction that the immersive structure of Level Up English: World Explorer may overwhelm them. By starting at A2, learners have a basic understanding of English, allowing them to engage meaningfully with the course’s culturally rich scenarios and tasks. On the other hand, C2-level learners have advanced fluency and often need specialised content for further development. This course focuses on practical applications and cultural immersion rather than the complex material C2 learners require. By capping at C1, the course targets practical fluency and versatile language use. This strategic decision ensures the course remains engaging for A2 to C1 learners, maximising its impact while maintaining a structured, immersive learning environment that supports skill reinforcement through Bloom’s Taxonomy.

Principles

Mayer’s multimedia principles

- Signaling Principle: Key information is highlighted through visual cues and on-screen text, directing learners' attention to important content, such as the objectives, the interactive map and the coin system.
- Segmenting Principle: The video is short (less than 2 minutes) to cater for short attention spans. Also, each section is clearly divided into clear, manageable chunks, allowing learners to process information.
- Personalisation Principle: The friendly tone of Kev (the main character) creates an approachable, conversational atmosphere, making the learning experience more engaging.
- Managing Cognitive Overload: Information is presented in short bursts with a mix of visuals, OST, and narration, avoiding overwhelming learners with too much information at once, for example, the learning objectives OST is succinct for learners to process easily in conjunction with the narration.

Gagne’s events of instruction

The video adheres to Gagné’s instructional model by:

- Hooking the learner’s attention with an engaging introduction featuring the main character and a spinning globe.
- Outlining objectives clearly near the start, ensuring the learner knows what they will accomplish.
- Presenting the content in manageable segments, focusing on key tools, course structure, and activities.
- Next steps are provided through clear guidance on unlocking modules, using toolkits, and engaging in AI-driven interactivity. The final scene unlocks Australia (module 1) and gives a clear place for the learner to begin.

C.R.A.P model

- Contrast: I used a strategic colour palette to draw attention to key points and bright colours to build excitement for gamified elements. Main headings use a distinct font and font size to emphasise their importance.
- Repetition: Consistent use of colours, fonts, icons such as coins and the world map reinforces the course’s adventure theme and learning objectives. The main character is present throughout to give the feel of a guide.
- Alignment: All elements, including text and visuals, are carefully aligned to create a clean, professional look, ensuring information is easily digestible.
- Proximity: Related elements, such as items in the backpack and the level select, are placed closely together to help learners make connections.