4-2023

DDC Lesson Plan

Samantha Gates

Final Project- DDC Lesson Plan

Samantha Gates, 16/04/23, LIS9201, Instructor Mayhew

DDC Lesson Plan

Overview: This lesson is designed as a one-shot lecture to teach first-year library students how to classify under the Dewey Decimal Classification system. It is designed for students with little to no prior knowledge of the DDC, but can also serve as a useful refresher for those with prior knowledge. The lesson includes a detailed lesson plan with reference to learning objectives, directions, assessment and potential challenges as well as materials for both the instructor and students to support the lesson. Ideally, students will leave the lesson with a firm grasp on how to classify using the DDC as assessed through the learning outcomes as well as a sense of confidence in their abilities and desire to learn more about classification.

Learning Objectives:

- Able to explain in original words what classification is
- Able to cite a brief history and overview of the DDC
- Demonstrate an understanding of the hierarchy of the DDC
- Classify various works under the DDC including interdisciplinary cases
- Understand the opposition to the DDC and generate their own opinions about it

Materials:

- Provided PowerPoint to guide the lesson (see Appendix)
    - Includes key points to cover, examples, and practice questions
- Access to WebDewey for all students
- Student handouts
    - To be provided prior to the commencement of the class, either as print outs or digitally
    - Summaries from: https://www.oclc.org/content/dam/oclc/dewey/resources/summaries/deweysummaries.pdf
    - Table 1. Standard Subdivisions from: https://www.oclc.org/content/dam/oclc/webdewey/help/table-1.pdf

Directions:

1. 5 minutes- Warm-up (slide 1): Introduce yourself briefly (if needed) and announce the topic of the lesson as well as what the students will gain from it (the learning objectives)
2. 5 minutes- What is classification (slide 2): Read and explain the slide, check understanding by prompting students to ask questions.
3. 5-15 minutes- History and overview of the DDC (slide 3): Explain content on the slide. If desired, give a brief tour of WebDewey.

4. 10 minutes- DDC hierarchy (slide 4): Explain the summaries and the table. Make note that this is 1 of 7 tables but it is the only one that will be focused on in the lesson.
5. 15 minutes- Classifying with the DDC (slides 5/6/7): Go over the examples, showing students how to navigate the provided summaries and table 1. Assist students in the assessment activity as needed. Reveal the answers and prompt students to ask questions.
6. 15 minutes- Classifying with the DDC-Interdisciplinary cases (slide 8/9/10) Explain each rule and examples per slide 8. Assist students in the assessment activity as needed. Reveal answers and prompt students to ask questions.
7. 10 minutes- Opposition to the DDC (slide 11) and questions: Cover the topical slide content in an informational fashion, then prompt student discussion on their thought about the use of Dewey, suggestions for its successor, or questions about any aspect of the lecture in general.

Assessment: Learning outcomes can be assessed as the lecturer makes their way around the room to assist students during the two slides with practice questions. Learning outcomes 1,2, and 5 are assessed through the discussion at the end of the lesson (directions step 7).

Challenges: It is anticipated that this cohort will be engaged and attentive as they have chosen this specialized program. All of Dewey cannot be fit within a short lesson so only the most common scenarios that they might encounter will be presented. Further lessons will need to explore the use of other rules and tables.

Reflection

I chose to create a lesson plan for the final assignment due to my background in teaching. When presented with the opportunity to blend my two interests, Education and Library Science, I always take advantage of it. My rationale for choosing to focus on the DDC for the lesson was that, despite its flaws, it's important for library students to have a working knowledge of this classification system. I also wanted to draw attention to its shortcomings and, frankly, its outright prejudiced foundation. The ultimate goal is to provide students with a very brief introduction to working with the DDC while encouraging them to think critically about the system itself.

I drew on Taylor's (2006) article "Teaching the Dewey Decimal Classification System", which discusses problems in teaching the DDC. The author addresses issues such as lacking time, WebDewey conceptualization challenges, and terminology struggles. In my lesson plan, I ensured to provide a clear definition of the basic terminology needed prior to classifying with the

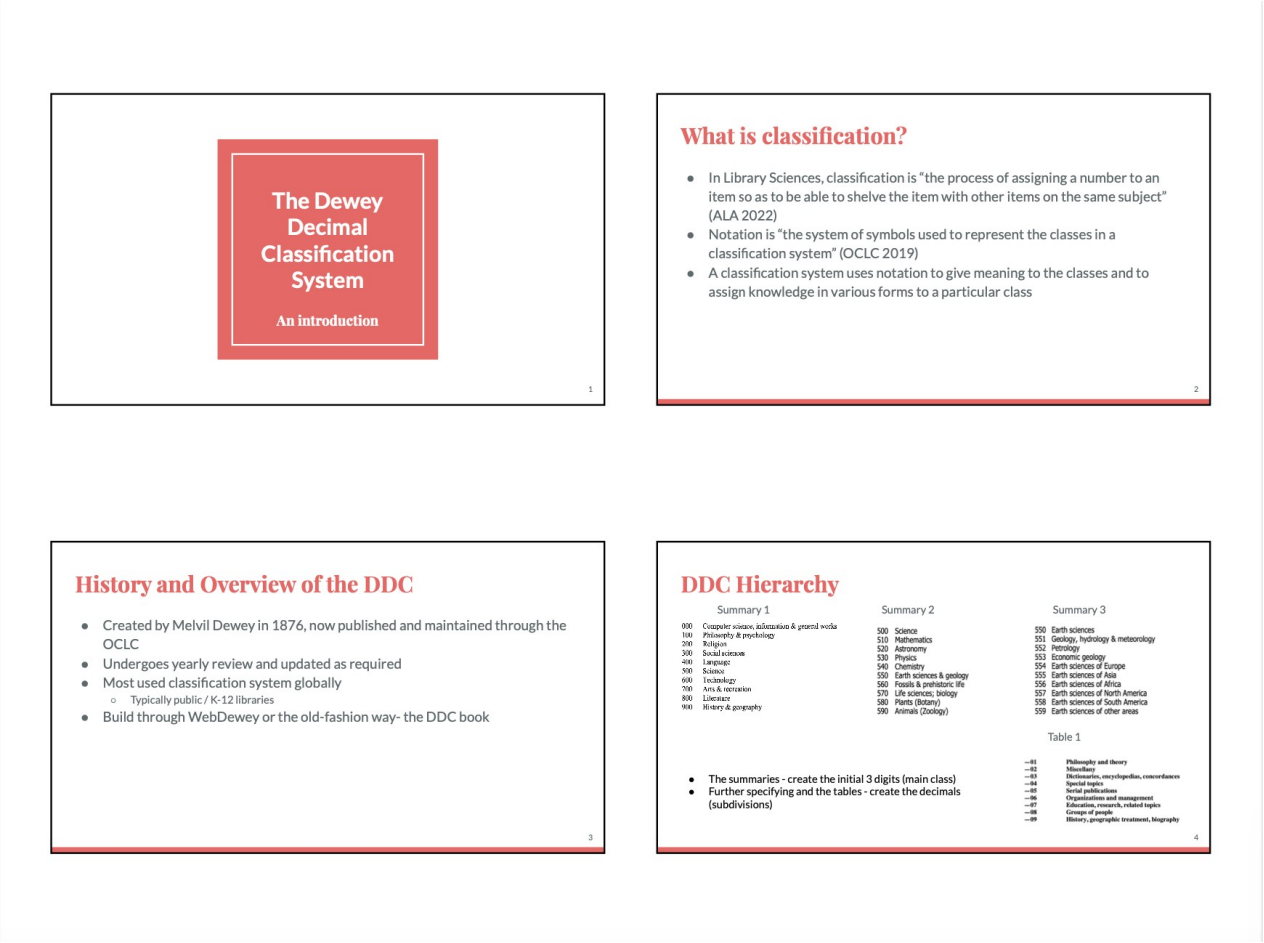
DDC. The issue of lacking time is one that I did not entirely agree with. I was taught how to classify within two 3-hour lessons at the start of the program. Though not every rule or scenario that I might encounter in the future was taught during those lessons, I feel as though they provided enough of a basis to be able to figure out challenges on my own. With the advent of Library 2.0, excessive time does not need to be spent on learning every minute detail of Dewey in the introductory course, but rather learning to use WebDewey and learning to search for resources to answer our own questions. Upon researching the future of the Librarian profession, I have come across many articles that seem to indicate that technological skills will be the most valuable abilities in librarianship; Partridge et al. (2010), to name one such article.

I have many of my own perspectives about the flaws within the DDC which I had planned on incorporating into the lesson. I decided against this because as a teacher myself, I would not include my personal bias as a major part of a lesson. Instead of thinking as a student, I had to think as a professional and cited well-known criticisms of Dewey. The two chosen articles take a critical approach to both the DDC and to Dewey himself: Joseph's "Move Over, Melvil! Momentum grows to eliminate bias and racism in the 145-year-old Dewey Decimal System" (2021) and Redihan's "Abandoning the Dewey Decimal System in Public Libraries" (2021). The first article discusses pressing social biases within the Dewey classification system that have yet to be resolved and the latter article suggests new systems that can be used in place of Dewey and the rationale for replacing it. By drawing on research that challenges Dewey, I avoid turning the lesson into a rant about how sexist and racist I believe it to be.

I think the one-shot lesson is undervalued in today's educational landscape, especially when it comes to content in professional programs that student can, and likely will, conduct their own research on. The impact that this lesson plan (and the many others like it out there) would

potentially have is to demonstrate the efficacy of a quick lesson that covers the basics, supplemented by teaching students where they can find their own resources.

Appendix



Classifying with the DDC

500 Science
550 Earth sciences & Geology
551 Geology, hydrology, meteorology
551.5 Meteorology
551.5072 Research about Meteorology

600 Technology
610 Medicine and health
616 Diseases

700 Arts and recreation
750 Painting
750 Painting and paintings
750.1 Philosophy of painting

Your turn!

Find the class/subdivision

600 _____

630_____

631_____

631.2_____

Build a number for: research on fishing (you will need to use Table 1)

Check your answers

Find the class/subdivision

600 Technology

630 Agriculture

631 Specific Techniques

631.2 Agricultural Structures

Build a number for: research on fishing (you will need to use Table 1)

700 Arts and recreation

790 Sports, games, and entertainment

799 Fishing, hunting, shooting

799.1 Fishing

799.1072 Research on fishing

Classifying with the DDC- Interdisciplinary

Rule of Application

- Classify based on the subject being acted upon

The effect of WWII on American Film is classified under American film

First of two rule

- When two subject are treated equally, class under the subject that comes first in the DDC

Workers with hearing and visual impairments is classified under workers with visual impairments

Visual (331.591) comes before hearing (331.592)

Your Turn!

Rule of Application:

Build the DDC number for: The Industrial Revolution influence on oil painting

First of two rule:

Build the DDC number for: Ecology of Canada and the United States

Check your answers

Rule of Application:

Build the DDC number for: The Industrial Revolution influence on oil painting

751.45 Oil Painting

First of two rule:

Build the DDC number for: Ecology of Canada and the United States

577.0971 Ecology-Canada

NOT

577.0973 Ecology- US

Opposition to the DDC

- Melvil Dewey- a history of racism, anti-Semitism, and sexual harassment (Joseph 2021)
- The system itself (Redihan 2021)
  - Western-centric
  - Not user friendly
- What do you think?

References

ALA. (2022). *Cataloging Tools and Resources*. ALA Library LibGuides. Retrieved April 16, 2023, from https://libguides.ala.org/catalogingtools/classification

Joseph, C. (2021). Move Over, Melvil! Momentum grows to eliminate bias and racism in the 145-year-old Dewey Decimal System. *School Library Journal*, *67*(8), 28+.

OCLC. (2019). *Introduction to the Dewey Decimal Classification*. Retrieved from: https://www.oclc.org/content/dam/oclc/dewey/versions/print/intro.pdf

Partridge, H., Lee, J., & Munro, C. (2010). Becoming "Librarian 2.0": The Skills, Knowledge, and Attributes Required by Library and Information Science Professionals in a Web 2.0 World (and Beyond). *Library Trends, 59*(1–2), 315–335.

Redihan, E. (2021). Abandoning the Dewey Decimal System in Public Libraries. *Public Library Quarterly*, *40*(2), 95–107.

Taylor, A. G. (2006). Teaching the Dewey Decimal Classification System. *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly*, *42*(3–4), 97–117.