

Spring 4-25-2025

## Designing Futures: Embedding Life Design Into Second-Year Seminar

Janel Doll  
*University of Nevada, Las Vegas*

Lauren Gatto  
*University of Nevada, Las Vegas*

Chelsie Hawkinson  
*University of Nevada, Las Vegas*

Anne Jacklin  
*University of Nevada, Las Vegas*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/btp\\_expo](https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/btp_expo)



Part of the [Educational Methods Commons](#), and the [Student Counseling and Personnel Services Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Doll, Janel; Gatto, Lauren; Hawkinson, Chelsie; and Jacklin, Anne, "Designing Futures: Embedding Life Design Into Second-Year Seminar" (2025). *UNLV Best Teaching Practices Expo*. 210.  
[https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/btp\\_expo/210](https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/btp_expo/210)

This Poster is protected by copyright and/or related rights. It has been brought to you by Digital Scholarship@UNLV with permission from the rights-holder(s). You are free to use this Poster in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s) directly, unless additional rights are indicated by a Creative Commons license in the record and/or on the work itself.

This Poster has been accepted for inclusion in UNLV Best Teaching Practices Expo by an authorized administrator of Digital Scholarship@UNLV. For more information, please contact [digitalscholarship@unlv.edu](mailto:digitalscholarship@unlv.edu).

# Designing Futures: Embedding Life Design into Second-Year Seminar

Janel Doll, Ph.D., Lauren Gatto, Ed.D., Chelsie Hawkinson, Ph.D., Anne Jacklin, Ed.D., College of Education

## Teaching Practice & Learning Outcomes

In COE 202: Second-Year Seminar (SYS), students engage in Life Design to build purpose-driven academic and career pathways. We use design thinking to help students:

- Identify values, strengths, and goals
- Explore possible life and career directions
- Reflect on academic choices in relation to future plans

### Life Design Portfolio — Includes:

- Worldview & Lifeview reflections
- Odyssey Plans
- Decision-Making Matrix
- Prototyping conversations and experiences

### Learning Outcomes:

- Apply design thinking to life and career planning
- Demonstrate reflective decision-making skills
- Articulate personal and professional values
- Connect coursework to long-term aspirations

## Resources and Tools

### Foundational Texts & Materials:

- Designing Your Life by Burnett & Evans
- Stanford Life Design Lab (free guides & activities)
- UNLV Career Services: assessments, advising, resume tools
- NACE career readiness frameworks

## Evidence it Benefits Students

### Research Supports Life Design Benefits:

- Increased career clarity, creativity, and resilience (Kernbach, 2019; Savickas et al., 2012)
- Improved ability to align academic and career goals

### In COE 202:

- Student reflections show deeper self-understanding
- Higher persistence and motivation
- Positive engagement with goal-setting activities

## How to Get Started

### Easy Entry Points:

- Add reflection prompts on purpose, work, and life
- Integrate mind-mapping or life planning activities
- Encourage “low-risk” experiments (e.g., job shadowing, informational interviews)

**Pro Tip:** Start with one Life Design exercise, then scaffold into a portfolio or semester-long theme.

**Figure 2** The Decision Matrix. A Life Design activity that builds decision-making skills they can apply beyond college—helping them navigate uncertainty and make life choices with intention.

**Figure 3** The Odyssey Plan. A Life Design activity that encourages students to envision multiple versions of their future—cultivating creativity, resilience, and openness to possibility while reinforcing that there is no single “right” path forward. Scan the QR Code to view a real student Odyssey Plan reflection.

**Figure 1** The Skill Enhancement Inventory. A Life Design activity that helps students identify essential skills for their intended careers and assess how course assignments support their development—promoting intentional learning and goal alignment. Developed by Dr. Chelsie Hawkinson for COE 202 at UNLV

Skill Enhancement Inventory		
Intended Career: Elementary Education Teacher		
List and describe the importance of five required skills in your intended profession.	Rank, order each skill based on your personal proficiency (1=low; 10=high)	Describe your current proficiency with identified skillset
1. Instructing: Teaching others how to do something	7	I can teach new skills or concepts to others using a variety of methods. I am best teaching in a hands-on approach where things can be manipulated. I need to improve teaching using real-world situations to make a connection.
2. Social Perceptiveness: being aware of others' reactions and understanding why they react as they do.	9	As a mother of six children ranging in age from 19-10, I have been given many opportunities to work on my social perceptiveness. I can understand why someone chooses to react the way