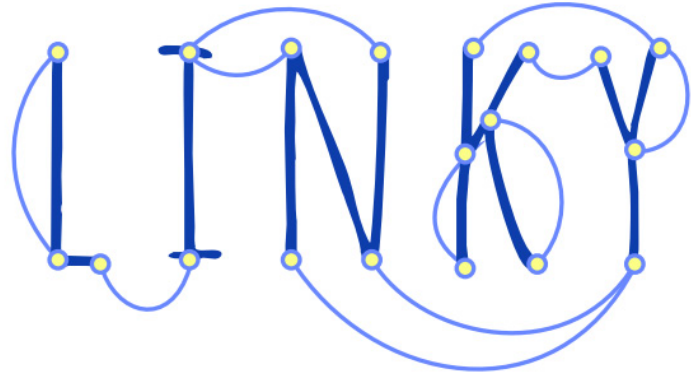


# LEARNING GUIDE

Experience first,  
tools second.



## So how do I use this thing?

At EDesign Lab, we keep a vigilant focus on designing digital learning **experiences**, or activities, not just technological **tools**. This distinction between experiences and tools is an important one: by learning experience, we mean a larger activity that allows students to take agency over their own learning. This prototype is a tool to help you create that experience!

### Experience vs Tool: Educator as Designer

A learning experience is a way to frame an objective or need within a compelling, authentic context or narrative. Learners use a tool to problem solve, try out certain skills, reinforce knowledge, create content, and more. A tool in its purest form doesn't tell learners how to use it; the experience of using it is designed. This is where you come in – as an educator, you design learning experiences around learning objectives everyday. This guide will walk you through designing an experience through Linky. Put on your designer hat and let's get started!

### Let's recap.

A learning experience...

- **frames learning** by **making connections** to the relevant objective or need
- **facilitates learners to activate skills and knowledge** from one context to another
- **makes it meaningful**: scaffolds context that allows students to sense-make by forming opinions, trying out strategies, and creating meaning
- **blurs the boundary** between the classroom and the real world, interests and other disciplines

## Resources

**Prototype Overview** <http://edesignlabs.org/prototypes/linky/>

**Prototype Walkthrough** [http://youtu.be/zHkyyZo32\\_I](http://youtu.be/zHkyyZo32_I)

**Prototype Website** <http://itslinky.herokuapp.com/users/login>

**Example Boards** <http://nilaratna.com/linky/users/login>

## STEP 1: Consider the learning objective.

### WHAT IS SYSTEMS THINKING?

Systems thinking considers how the interaction of individual elements impact the whole. As a framework for learning, it gives learners tools to deal with complexity in and across subject domains. By identifying a system and breaking down into smaller bits, learners develop an approach to problem-solving by critically considering how different elements affect each other.

Linky is a tool that allows learners to collect images about and make connections to different themes in a particular topic or domain. Specifically, Linky is designed to help students practice systems thinking through a multimodal approach.

### Questions to ask yourself

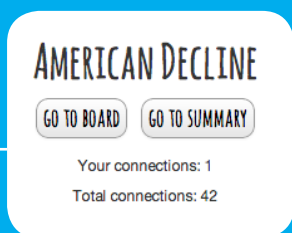
- What types of connections do you want them to explore and be able to make?
- What big idea should they take away from it?

## STEP 2: Plan the activity.

### USING LINKY: A Quick Overview

#### Part 1: "Go to board"

Collect images and write short responses ("make connections") around a theme that answers the prompt provided by the teacher. Do this for each theme (tab) on the board.



#### Part 2: "Go to summary"

Choose three images from the class pool of images to respond to a deeper question.

There are multiple scenarios in which you can employ Linky to facilitate learning, both in and out of the classroom. Linky can be accessed on a laptop and also mobile devices (smart phones, ipads, etc).. It is important to consider how you can build Linky into a unit or larger activity, instead of thinking of it as a discrete, one-off lesson. Further, it is also important to consider how you will introduce it and how you will scaffold student learning; through the framing prompts on the board and the summary question as well as in-person components to the learning experience. Different possible use cases include:\*

**Field trip.** Connect exhibits with content questions and to stimulate new connections. See Mystery Animal History or Photos of the Earth

**Abstract:** Connect philosophical concepts. See American Decline and Beauty

**Content.** Focus on creating interconnections in a content domain. See Civil Liberties

**Real World.** Connect real world examples to concepts learned in class. See Fulfilling One's Duty (note: this is an old board)

**Design Challenge.** Pose a design problem where students define different elements or perspectives of it. See Tower Research Office

\* To access these, visit the [Example Boards](#) page, create a login, and look around!

### Questions to ask yourself

- How will you use it?
- What experience do you want your students to have?
- How will you introduce them to it?
- What are the constraints (e.g. Can students pull images from the web or only take photos from their own experience)?

## STEP 3: Design the content.

### EXAMPLE BOARD CONTENT

**TITLE:** American Decline.

**BOARD DESCRIPTION:**

You have recently learned about the decline and fall of the Roman Empire. In recent years, some academics have made the argument that the United States, after dominating world politics for the past century, is also on the decline. Is the United States headed towards collapse, or are such fears imaginary? What evidence can you find to support either side of this argument?

**THEME:** Political Strength

**PROMPT:** America is currently the world's oldest democracy. What examples can you find to support the view that America is still strong politically?

**THEME:** Social Weakness

**PROMPT:** Has America lost its values? Are we divided as a nation?

**SUMMARY QUESTION:**

Look through the bank of images uploaded by your classmates. Is America on the decline, or are such fears imaginary? Explain. Support your answer with three images chosen from the image bank. (1 paragraph minimum)

Customizing the board guides and prompts is key to create a cohesive, creative, and clear experience for learners. There are four main content types you need to fill in: title, introduction, themes + prompts, and the summary question.

### PART 1

#### TITLE

Pick a title that captures the main goal of the learning. This is the type of system they are exploring.

#### INTRODUCTION

This appears under the title at the top of the board. This text introduces students to the what they will be doing, the goals of the activity, and the need to know. This section presents the system as a whole and poses a question about the nature of the system and the relationships that comprise it.

The screenshot shows a digital board interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links: LINKY, MY STUFF, MY ACCOUNT SETTINGS, CREATE A NEW BOARD!, and LOGOUT. The main title is 'AMERICAN DECLINE' with a sub-link 'EDIT THIS BOARD'. Below the title is the introduction text: 'You have recently learned about the decline and fall of the Roman Empire. In recent years, some academics have made the argument that the United States, after dominating world politics for the past century, is also on the decline. Is the United States headed towards collapse, or are such fears imaginary? What evidence can you find to support either side of this argument?' To the right of the text is a small image of an American flag with a large question mark. Below the text is a row of theme buttons: POLITICAL STRENGTH, ECONOMIC STRENGTH, SOCIAL STRENGTH, POLITICAL WEAKNESS, ECONOMIC WEAKNESS, and SOCIAL WEAKNESS. There is also an 'ADD MORE THEMES' button. Below the themes is a prompt: 'America is currently the world's oldest democracy. What examples can you find to support the view that America is still strong politically?' with an 'edit this theme' link. To the right of the prompt is an 'ADD A CONNECTION' button. Below the prompt is a 'THEMES' section with the text: 'Identify the themes you want students to consider and explore.' To the right of the prompt is a 'PROMPTS' section with the text: 'Framing these themes for students is an important part of designing the learning. Create a question or prompt to guide student response that helps students identify an element of the system.'

### AMERICAN DECLINE

Look through the bank of images uploaded by your classmates. Is America on the decline, or are such fears imaginary? Explain. Support your answer with three images chosen from the image bank. (1 paragraph minimum)



#### CHOOSE DIFFERENT PHOTOS

Your summary goes here, write to your heart's content.

#### SUMMARY QUESTION

This is the essential question students will respond to by choosing three images and supporting their choices with a short written text. This question should prompt students to reflect, evaluate, and/or synthesize on the nature of the system.

### PART 2

## STEP 4: Populate the board.

Since we are still a prototype, here is a quick walkthrough that shows you how to enter in all the great content you just created! To get started, login and click on "Create New Board."

### EXAMPLE BOARD CONTENT

**TITLE:** Tower Research Office

#### BOARD DESCRIPTION:

You Ed Labbers have been using the Tower Research office for many weeks. How does the office facilitate collaboration?

**THEME:** Face-to-Face Collaboration

**PROMPT:** How does the Tower office encourage face-to-face collaboration?

**THEME:** Encouraging Creative Thinking

**PROMPT:** What do you see in the Tower office that encourages creativity?

**THEME:** Inspiring Productivity

**PROMPT:** How does the Tower office inspire productivity?

#### SUMMARY QUESTION:

If you were to design a co-working space, what are the essential features to include to maximize productivity and collaboration?

Pick 3 images that you want to use for your summary. When you are ready, hit next.

LINKY MY

### EDIT YOUR BOARD

Board name

Board description

This is your introduction.

Image Uri

Enter your **TITLE** in the box labelled **Board Name**.

Enter your **INTRODUCTION** in the box labelled **Board Description**.

Don't forget to include an **IMAGE** that visually illustrates the activity!

LINKY MY STUFF MY ACCOUNT SETTINGS CREATE A NEW BOARD! LOGOUT

THIS IS YOUR TITLE

This is your introduction.

THEME #1

ADD MORE THEMES

### ADD A NEW THEME TO THIS BOARD

Theme title

Theme prompt

This is the question or prompt for theme #2.

LE EDIT THIS BOARD

Add **THEMES** by clicking on the **Add More Themes** buttons, then enter the title here.

Enter in the **PROMPT** under **Theme Prompt**.

After you have created all of your themes and prompts, click the **Edit This Board** button.

LINKY MY STUFF MY ACCOUNT SETTINGS CREATE A NEW BOARD! LOGOUT

Ask students to contribute an illustrated summary?

What is the prompt for the illustrated summary?

Deactivate this board? Save Board

Don't forget to include a **SUMMARY QUESTION**, check the radiobutton then enter your prompt or question in the space below.