

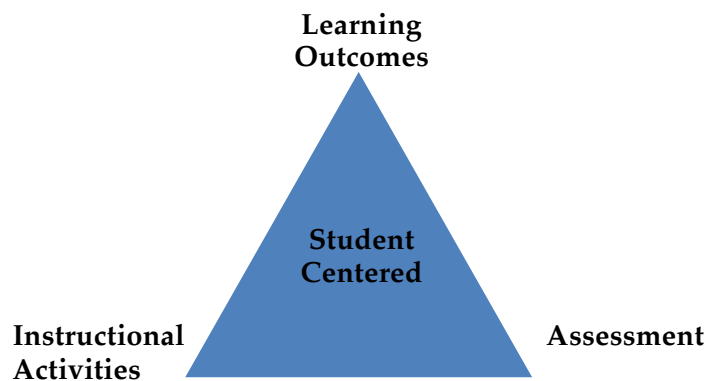
Online Course Development: A Guide for Instructors

The Design Process: Preplanning Your Course

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The Design Process

Instructional Design is a process by which we create a rich learning environment that considers the needs of our learners in order to achieve specific learning outcomes (Manning & Balzer, 2007). This process involves engaging learners in meaningful and relevant tasks that enable them to construct new knowledge with real-world application. Instructional Design is a systematic approach which includes identifying specific learning objectives, developing and implementing instructional material that delivers those objectives and evaluating the process. This framework ensures alignment among learning outcomes, instructional activities and course assessment(s).



Preplanning Your Course

One of the preliminary steps to the course design is articulating the critical factors that influence the way you design your learning outcomes, activities and assessment for your course.

Consider the following questions:

Description. What is this course about? How would you describe your course to a new student?

Learners. Who are the learners? How many students are in the class?

Identify components that are working well in your course. Describe how you currently teach. How do students respond to your teaching? What is your favourite activity or piece of technology? What do you like about teaching this course?

Identify changes you would like to make to your course. For example, technology, disinterested students, lack of discussion, etc. Any challenges in relating content to students?

Department and external group expectations. What curricular goals does your department have that affect this course or program? Does the province or related professional societies have professional accreditation requirements that affect the goals of this learning experience?

Identifying Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcomes define specific skills, knowledge and attitudes that a learner should be able to demonstrate upon completion of the course. Ideally learning outcomes should align with department, program and university competencies.

The goal is to ensure the course is based upon measurable outcomes; therefore, we should use verbs such as *identify, describe, discuss and apply* which help us measure (quantify / qualify) progress. At the end of the course, students can rate or self-assess themselves as to whether or not they believe the outcomes were met, based on the choice of words for the objectives.

Steps to writing learning outcomes:

1. Choose a verb that describes the level of learning you intend (see Bloom's Taxonomy below).
2. State the content the student will be considering.
3. State what the student will be able to do as a result.

****Be sure to describe the outcome not the activity; focus on students' learning, not instruction; avoid jargon****

Do What, With What, For What

Do What	With What	For What
Identify features	Data set	To determine how to best summarize and display

Discipline-specific examples:

Statistics: Students will identify features of a data set to determine how best to summarize and display it.

Sociology: Students will apply key foundational principles from the various classical and contemporary theoretical perspectives to analyze the contemporary world.

Checklist for Writing Learning Outcomes :

- ✓ Are my learning outcomes measureable and observable?
- ✓ Do my outcomes reflect what the learner will learn?
- ✓ Do my learning outcomes align with assessment and activities throughout the course?
- ✓ Does each outcome begin with an action verb (see Bloom's Taxonomy below)?
- ✓ Do my outcomes reflect the level of learning required?
- ✓ Do my course outcomes align with program, department and university goals?

Measuring Learning Outcomes

There are different levels of assessment and different words/verbs associated with each level. Your verb choice should align with assessment. For example, if you select the verb create or identify, you will probably assess your students with a multiple choice quiz. If you select the verb evaluate, you may ask your students to write a critical essay.

Bloom's Taxonomy and Action Verbs

Level 1: Knowledge Level

The successful student recognizes or recalls learned information.

List	Record	Underline	State	Define
Arrange	Name	Relate	Describe	Tell
Recall	Memorize	Repeat	Recognize	Label
Select	Reproduce			

Level 2: Comprehension Level

The successful student restates or interprets information in his/her own words.

Explain	Describe	Report	Translate	Express
Summarize	Identify	Classify	Discuss	Restate
Locate	Compare	Discuss	Review	Illustrate
Tell	Critique	Estimate	Reference	Interpret
Reiterate				

Level 3: Application Level

The successful student uses or applies the learned information.

Apply	Sketch	Perform	Use	Solve
Respond	Practice	Construct	Role-play	Demonstrate
Conduct	Execute	Complete	Dramatize	employ

Level 4: Analysis Level

The successful student examines the learned information critically.

Analyze	Inspect	Test	Distinguish	Categorize
Differentiate	Catalogue	Diagnose	Appraise	Quantify
Extrapolate	Calculate	Measure	Theorize	Experiment
Relate	Debate			

Level 5: Synthesis Level

The successful student creates new models using the learned information.

Develop	Revise	Compose	Plan	Develop
Compose	Formulate	Collect	Build	Propose
Construct	Create	Establish	Prepare	Design
Integrate	Devise	Organize	Modify	Manage

Level 6: Evaluation Level

The successful student assesses or judges the value of learned information.

Review	Appraise	Choose	Justify	Argue
Conclude	Assess	Rate	Compare	Defend
Score	Evaluate	Report on	Select	Interpret
Investigate	Measure	Support		

Writing an Online Course Syllabus

Key components of the course syllabus include:

- course description (*expanded calendar description including a brief overview of topics and/or synopsis of content covered in course*)
- prerequisites
- learning outcomes
- learning activities (*discussion forums/group work/active learning*)
- communication & feedback (*role of TA, course feedback, etc*)
- how to submit assignments online evaluation (*includes grading policy*)
- learning hours
- required text
- academic integrity
- grading methods
- late policy
- course navigation
- how to submit assignments online

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