Course Design:

*What I hear, I forget; what I see, I remember; what I do, I understand.*

-Chinese proverb

**First question to ask before you do anything else:**

* What do you want the student to be able to do at the end of the course?
* What information and skills do you want to students to take away and be able to use in their lives?
* In what ways do you want them to deepen their learning about this topic after the course ends?
* .

**Are there any situational factors that need to be considered when designing this course?**

* Are there any unique challenges related to the learning of the content; use of specific software?
* If this course is part of a certificate program how does it fit within the context of the program?
* If this course is a prereq what information is critical for the student to take away?
* What skills and knowledge do employers expect of someone who has completed this course?
* What are the learning goals **of the students** who will enroll in this course?

**What do you want the students to do every week?**

* What content will you include to engage the students and keep them coming back to your course?
* What evidence do you need to feel that students have learned the information and skills associated with the learning outcomes?
* What assessments will you use to enable students to demonstrate this evidence?
* Once you know what evidence is needed think about what learning activities will get students there
* What activities will you use for teaching and learning? Try to incorporate activities that include reflection, “hands on”, and interaction with the content and each other
* Always go back and make sure the learning activities support the learning outcomes and the assessments with the activities and learning outcomes

**Lay out the course:**

* What is the start date and end date?
* How will you break up the content? Think about 4-7 topics or modules
* What will be the sequence of the course?

A Self-Directed Guide to Designing Courses for Significant Learning

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Author of: Creating Significant Learning Experiences:

An Integrated Approach to Designing College Courses (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003)

**Tip Sheet**

Have you ever been to a website and been frustrated because you couldn’t find what you were looking for or it was difficult to navigate? Think about your expectations when you go to a website to research something or when you read a student’s paper. What makes for a “good” website or research paper?

Terms such as clear, well organized, introduction, purpose, and flow might come to mind. The steps to creating an online course are really quite similar to those you might ask your students to take when writing a research paper. Think of the syllabus as the outline. Keep in mind that you aren’t there to answer questions.

An online is your chance to have students interact with your content and engage in discussions and debate without being limited by the walls of your classroom. You can provide learning in multiple formats such as video, textual, and simulations. It is your chance to present your content in new and engaging ways with a range of tools that aren’t available in a traditional classroom. Did you know that you can create the following learning activities?

* Interactive maps, web scavenger hunts
* Word Cloud (graphic of words)
* Open response assessments
* Annotations: students or the instructor can create annotations within a text document or video. This can be used as an assessment or discussion
* You can hold live chats or include live Twitter feeds

Did you know you can have fun while making videos? A video can be a recording of you doing a lecture but there are many things you can add to your video requiring students to interact, explore ideas, and focus on the topics and key terms that are connected to your learning outcomes. See the following examples:

Make videos engaging by augmenting with text, hyperlinks or animation <http://popcorn.webmadecontent.org/11_> and <http://popcorn.webmadecontent.org/het>

Show your personality: use a caricature that pops up and asks “did you understand this?” “If you want to learn more click here” <http://www.youtube.com/user/facultydevelopment?feature=watch> (go to 2:30)

Think beyond the discussion forum. Incorporating social media such as Twitter and Google+ increases the level of discussion, allows students to easily share links to articles of interest, creates a sense of community and keeps them engaged in your course (Swan, Garrison & Richardson 2009).

“almost three quarters (72%) of online U.S. adults use social networking sites, up from 67% in late 2012.” It is also “a major activity for internet users from a wide range of demographic groups”, with recently rising adoption among seniors. (pewinternet)

Do you frequently wonder what you need to do to get your students to read the text? In an online course you can use texts that have interactive content, video, photos, links to interactive maps, or research data (Erbaggio, Gopalakrishnan, Hobbs & Liu n.d.). A great example is Al Gore’s interactive book <http://pushpoppress.com/ourchoice/>

**Sample Learning Activities**

A live Twitter feed students can post comments to questions you pose during your lecture. For example after a 3-5 minute video pose a question such as

* Something that surprised me was…..
* Something I disagree with is…..

You can also use this alongside readings.

* Something new I learned is….
* I could apply the following to my job
* Something I still don’t understand is…
* Something I’d like to learn more about is…
* Ask students to annotate text

For discussions you can use Google + and have a student post a quote they found interesting and state why they found it interesting, why they agree or disagree or any of the prompts above. Then another participate in the class needs to respond

Use a blog as a learning journal. Ask students to write a one minute paper or a “muddiest” point:

* What was the most useful or meaningful thing you learned?
* What question(s) do you still have?
* What still remains unclear?
* Write three new things you learned and reflect upon how you can use this information in your life
* Keep a running log of terms or concepts you don’t understand and look up their meaning.

Ask students to respond to weekly questions that encourage then to reflect upon their learning for the week or so that you can assess how the class is going and what information students seem to be struggling with:

Ask students to write about the activities/times in class they felt most engaged and why, and when they felt the least engaged.

What did they find the most confusing?

What did someone else in the class (peer or teacher) do that helped deepen their learning?

Instead of multiple choice after a lecture ask the student to summarize three things they learned.

Take a pre-topic anonymous poll to find out where students stand on a topic:

For example:

Jig Saw:

Students are divided into groups where each researches a topic and the has to “teach” the rest of the class about it.

What makes a good post to a forum:

•Ask a question/make a comment that shows you are interested in what another person says

•Ask question/make comment that encourages another person to elaborate

•Bring in a resource that adds new knowledge or perspectives

•Make a comment that links two people’s contributions

•Post a comment on-line that summarizes our discussions so far and suggests new directions or questions

•Indicate a specific comment by another that you found useful or provocative

•Build on what someone else says

•Summarize/synthesize several people’s contributions  and suggest a theme or new direction

Annotation exercise:

What you think the author’s main purpose for the article was

What is the main idea the author is addressing

What are three important points made

What are the implications of the author’s position or point of view

Keep in mind why people take online courses and the unique needs:

* flexibility
* online only students need student support that is available online
* typically may be balancing work, family and school so time management is critical
* may have been out of school for an extended period or new to online learning so clear instructions and expectations are critical

Examples from T. Angelo and K. P. Cross, *Classroom Assessment Techniques,* and

Angelo, T. & Cross, K. P. Classroom Assessment Techniques

Erbaggio, P. Gopalakrishnan, S. Hobbs , S. & Liu, H. n.d.). Enhancing student engagement through online authentic materials. International Association for Language Learning Technology. 42(2). Retrieved from <http://www.iallt.org/iallt_journal/enhancing_student_engagement_through_online_authentic_materials>

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Quality Scorecard for the Administration of Online Programs. Sloan C

Swan, K., Garrison, D. R. & Richardson, J. C. (2009). A constructivist approach to online learning: the

Community of Inquiry framework. In Payne, C. R. (Ed.) Information Technology and Constructivism in Higher Education: Progressive Learning Frameworks. Hershey, PA: IGI Global, 43-57.

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| Learning Outcomes for each topic | What evidence is needed (Assessment) | Learning Activities needed (how will you engage the students?) |  |
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1. Fill in out the learning goals for the course
2. How would you know that the student reached the learning goal?
3. What will the student need to do

Sequence

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Week | Learning Goals | Assessment (peer, self and by instructor) | Content Delivery | Written Assignment | Forums |  |
| 1 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 6 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 7 |  |  |  |  |  |  |


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