Planning the Content

A critical aspect of teaching is designing the learning experience. Great courses don't just happen – they are designed! The content is what is being taught. It includes all the ideas, concepts, information, knowledge, processes, and procedures to be conveyed and presented to students. When designing a learning experience, it is important to take time to explicitly identify what will be taught as well as search for appropriate source materials.

Planning the Content

Guiding Questions

- What key concepts or ideas are important to designing an effective course?
- What tools are available to me to use as I plan my course?
- Where can I go to learn more?

What's in this Handbook?

- Outcomes & Objectives
- Essential & Guiding Questions
- Bloom's Taxonomy
- Finding Additional Materials
- Determine Appropriate Use
- Planning Your Assessments
- Learning Experience Designer
- Course Outcome Mapping
- Credit Hour Analysis
- Syllabus Design
- Additional Resources

Outcomes & Objectives

Learning outcomes or goals are defined at many levels. When designing a course, learning activities should be incorporated that address the desired outcomes from each of these levels as illustrated in the examples below.

- *University*
    - Learning goals to achieve university mission and vision.
    - Institutional requirements for higher education accreditation.
    - General education requirements.
- *Department/School*
    - Learning objectives to achieve department or school goals.
    - Requirements for industry accreditation.
- *Program*
    - Degree requirements.
    - Licensing requirements.
- *Course*
    - Requirements as established based on course's role in program.
    - Instructor's instructional goals and objectives.
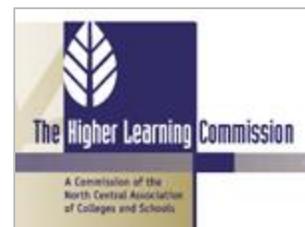
Some organizations phrase what will be taught as learning objectives, others have adopted the outcomes approach. Learning objectives state what students are expected to learn. Outcomes are stated in terms of what students are able to demonstrate. Visit the sites below to learn more.

- **Writing learning objectives**
  http://www.csus.edu/indiv/j/jelinekd/EDTE%20116/116%2009-10/Writing%20learning%20objectives.pdf

- **Writing measurable learning outcomes**
  http://www.gavilan.edu/research/spd/Writing-Measurable-Learning-Outcomes.pdf

REFLECTION

Go back and examine the objectives or outcomes you've used for courses in the past.
1. Do they use verbs that are measurable?
2. Are they stated in terms that make them easy for students to understand?
3. Do the objectives or outcomes actually reflect what's being covered in the course?

Essential & Guiding Questions

What Is an Essential Question?
by Grant Wiggins
Nov 15, 2007

Essential questions are way to focus students' attention on the big ideas, the enduring understandings, the essence of what's really important to learn in the course. Guiding questions are used to focus students' efforts as they explore learning materials in more detail.

Visit these sites to learn more:
What is an Essential Question?
http://www.authenticeducation.org/ae_bigideas/article.lasso?artId=53

PRESENTATION

In this presentation, Jackie Leotta, Staff Development Specialist, discusses both essential and guiding questions.

https://web.archive.org/web/20070808183158/http://www.hannibal.cnyric.org/Acrobat%20docs/ESSENTIAL%20QUESTIONS%20For%20high%20School.pdf

QUESTIONING TOOLKIT

A great resource on learning more about essential questions as well as several other types of questions you can use in the classroom.
http://www.fno.org/nov97/toolkit.html

Bloom's Taxonomy

From an educational perspective, Bloom's taxonomy is a great way to conceptualize exactly what you would like your students to learn and at what level.

Visit this site to learn more or to refresh your understanding:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bloom's_Taxonomy

When someone refers to Higher-Order Thinking Skills, they are referring to the last three levels of Blooms' Taxonomy:

- *Analyzing*
- *Evaluating*
- *Creating/Synthesis*

When instructors begin teaching, they tend to teach the way they were taught: read the textbook, listen to a lecture, and take a test. Adopting this model puts the emphasis on the lower levels of the taxonomy. The purpose of the model is to prompt instructors to consider activities and strategies to engage students in the higher levels of the taxonomy.
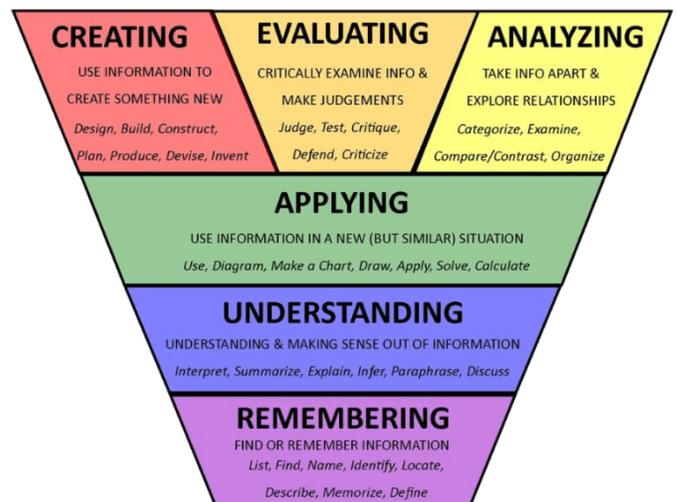
CREATING
USE INFORMATION TO CREATE SOMETHING NEW
Design, Build, Construct, Plan, Produce, Devise, Invent

EVALUATING
CRITICALLY EXAMINE INFO & MAKE JUDGEMENTS
Judge, Test, Critique, Defend, Criticize

ANALYZING
TAKE INFO APART & EXPLORE RELATIONSHIPS
Categorize, Examine, Compare/Contrast, Organize

APPLYING
USE INFORMATION IN A NEW (BUT SIMILAR) SITUATION
Use, Diagram, Make a Chart, Draw, Apply, Solve, Calculate

UNDERSTANDING
UNDERSTANDING & MAKING SENSE OUT OF INFORMATION
Interpret, Summarize, Explain, Infer, Paraphrase, Discuss

REMEMBERING
FIND OR REMEMBER INFORMATION
List, Find, Name, Identify, Locate, Describe, Memorize, Define

Figure 1 - Bloom's Taxonomy (Image from: http://blog.curriculet.com/wp-content/uploads/Blooms-Taxonomy.png)

REFLECTION
In the activities that you plan for students, what are you asking them to do? Is it simply memorization, or are you challenging them to do more? How would students benefit from activities that require higher-order thinking skills?

ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE
Several educators have adapted and revised Bloom's taxonomy. This resource provides another perspective.
https://www.utica.edu/academic/Assessment/new/Bloom%20tx%20revised%20combined.pdf

Planning the Content

Finding Additional Materials

Traditional

Education is very resistant to change, and some sources for learning have been around for centuries.

- Textbooks
- Lectures
- Library materials

Online

Technology is expanding the repertoire of materials that are available to students.

- Course Packs and other supplemental materials provided by textbook publishers
- Learning Objects
- eBooks
- Databases and Repositories
- Online journals
- Videos
- Simulations or other interactions
- Web Sites

Instructor Developed

Custom developed materials allow an instructor to illustrate and expand on ideas not covered in other materials.

- Recorded lectures or mini-presentations
- Handouts
- Interactive illustrations

Student Generated

The traditional approach to teaching has been teacher-centered with information flowing from the instructor to a group of passive students. More modern approaches adopt strategies where students are actively involved and are given opportunities to first develop their own instructional materials and to then share their results with others

FINDING MATERIALS WORKSHEET
Use this worksheet to help you find supplemental materials for your course.

http://www.facultysupport.com/resources/Finding_Materials_Worksheet.doc

Planning the Content

Determine Appropriate Use

Copyright: TEACH Act and Fair Use Guidelines

Whenever materials are presented in a class, it is appropriate to determine how they can be used legally under the applicable copyright laws. In the United States, the TEACH Act and Fair Use Guidelines provide guidance on how instructors may use copyrighted materials for educational use within a classroom. The policies are based on the media format and different conventions apply for materials that are presented in a face-to-face classroom versus in an online setting. The laws and their interpretation are always changing, so it is advisable to stay current with your institution's published policy.

COPYRIGHT RESOURCES

- You can use this tool to determine if your intended use of item conforms to U.S. copyright laws:
  http://www.librarycopyright.net/resources/exemptions/

- TEACH Act Checklist (developed by University of Texas Libraries)
  http://copyright.lib.utexas.edu/teachact.html#checklist

- Fair Use Checklist (developed by Columbia University Libraries)
  https://copyright.columbia.edu/content/dam/copyright/Precedent%20Docs/fairusechecklist.pdf

Preventing Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a common concern at a many campuses. Adopting a pro-active strategy that addresses it and manages it throughout the course can be an effective means to minimize its occurrence.

Providing an explicit statement in your syllabus is important.

> **Example Statement to include in Syllabus**
> Students must cite all sources of information in discussion posts and written work and provide references. Using ideas or words written or spoken by another person without providing a citation and reference for the source of information is considered plagiarism and will not be tolerated. All citations and references must be in APA 6th edition format. Please refer to Student Code of Conduct for specific policy related to plagiarism.

At some institutions, a plagiarism detection tool may be available in the Learning Management System. Two of the most popular are SafeAssign (Blackboard) and TurnItIn.

PLAGIARISM RESOURCES

- There are several free online tools you can use as an instructor to check for plagiarism: **Top 10 FREE Plagiarism Detection Tools**.
  http://elearningindustry.com/top-10-free-plagiarism-detection-tools-for-teachers

Planning Your Assessments

One approach to designing your course is to think about the end result first. By adopting Backward Design, instructors follow these steps:

- Identify the results desired
- Determine acceptable levels of evidence that support that desired result
- Design activities that will make desired results happen

At this point, ask yourself, how will I know the students have learned what I plan to teach them?

In general, most instructors equate assessment of student learning with quizzes or tests. This is just one approach to assessing student learning. Visit the Authentic Assessment Toolbox to gain an understanding of how to broaden your approach to student assessment.

http://jfmueller.faculty.noctrl.edu/toolbox/index.htm

BACKWARD DESIGN
Learn more about backward design.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Backward_design

Planning the Content

Learning Experience Designer

The Learning Experience Designer is a tool you can use to plan out each lesson, unit, or module. The online tool prompts you to consider a variety of options when you design a lesson. The Learning Experience Designer Outline allows you to map out each lesson, unit, or module across the entire course.

The range of components you can consider as you design a lesson, unit, or module are listed below. When selected in the Learning Experience Designer online tool, each component gives you several ideas to use for that component. The components are not completely mutually exclusive. For example, a small group activity could fall under several different components depending on the task assigned to the group.
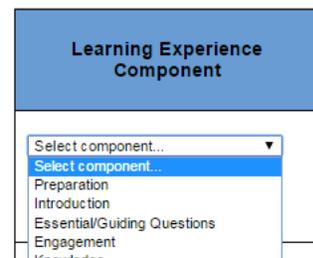
- **Preparation**
  This might include tasks that need to be completed by the instructor or students before instruction begins. For example, you may want students to complete a pre-assessment before class begins.

- **Introduction**
  You may want to introduce a topic. It might be a paragraph, a 3-5 minute lecture or video, or a short podcast.

- **Outcomes/Objectives/Essential/Guiding Questions**
  Document your formal outcomes, objectives, essential questions, and guiding questions.

- **Engagement**
  Public speakers know that engaging your audience is a great way to start a presentation. The same is true with instructors. Displaying an image is an easy way to accomplish this goal.

- **Knowledge**
  A fundamental task of all students is acquiring knowledge. Students are used to accomplishing this through reading textbooks and listening to lectures. This is the first level of Bloom's taxonomy.

- **Understand**
  This is the next level is Bloom's taxonomy. You want to encourage students to connect and relate to the instructional material.

- **Apply**
  At this level of Bloom's taxonomy, you want students to practice what they've learned in an active way.

- **Show**
  In some courses, it's important for students to demonstrate they've mastered specific skills.

- **Analyze**
  Considered one of the higher level thinking skills of Bloom's taxonomy, students manipulate instructional materials to gain a deeper understanding.

- **Evaluate Content**
  At this level of Bloom's taxonomy, students take on the role of evaluator.

- **Create/Synthesis**
  The top level of Bloom's taxonomy, students integrate what they've learned to create artifacts based on what they've learned.

- **Perform**
  In some courses, students are asked to perform in different ways. It may be an artistic performance, it may be a student presentation.

- **Interact**
  Interaction among students, with the instructor, or with the community is an essential element of any student learning experience.

- **Summarize**
  In a face-to-face class, instructors will often take the last few minutes of class to provide a recap of the class session. In an online course, a summary may be more structured.

- **Follow-up/Prompt/Remind**
  As you plan out the flow of your course, you may want to document key points in the course where you might need to prompt or remind students of upcoming activities or due dates.

- **Self-Reflection**
  As instructors, we want to empower students to take responsibility for their learning. One technique to encourage meta-cognition in students is to encourage them to reflect on their own learning.

- **Assessment for Student Learning**
  Another essential element of all lessons, units, or modules are activities that can be used to determine whether or not students have reached the planned learning outcomes.

- **Instructor Evaluation**
  When evaluating the effectiveness of a course, your own performance must be considered.

When you select a component in the Learning Experience Designer online tool, it gives you several option to consider. The tool is designed for you to consider a wider range of ideas and possibilities. It's also designed to help consider ideas and activities that can have a greater impact on students.

Learning Experience Component	Low Impact	Medium Impact	High Impact	Higher Impact
	Select one or more supporting activities			
Knowledge ▼ Activity or interaction to convey key information and facts to students. [word cloud: repeat, match, indicate, report, state, name, list, select, memorize, remember, tell, label, know, outline, observe, relate, record, underline, identify, cite, recognize, reproduce, choose, describe, locate, recall, define] Your Notes	☑ Read e-book ☐ Read instructor prepared materials ☐ Read journal article ☐ Read textbook ☐ Study alone ☐ View illustration	☐ Access iTunes university ☐ Complete one-minute paper ☐ Complete tutorial ☐ Drill and practice ☐ Interact with simulation ☐ Listen to F2F lecture ☐ Listen to podcast ☐ Locate appropriate web sites ☐ Read online journal article ☐ Review library materials ☐ Review study guide ☐ Use publisher course pack ☐ Use textbook publisher site ☐ View animation ☐ View posted PowerPoint ☐ View recorded lecture ☑ View/Listen narrated PowerPoint ☐ Visit assigned web site ☐ Watch video	☐ Complete WebQuest ☐ Lab exercise ☐ Listen to guest speaker ☐ Participate in tutoring ☐ Participate in virtual classroom ☐ Read instructor blog ☑ Review advanced organizer ☐ Search database repository ☐ Use learning object ☐ View demonstration ☐ View object using document reader	☐ Attend field trip ☐ Attend virtual field trip
	Or add your own activity			

Recommended procedure for using the Learning Experience Designer Tools:

1. Download the Learning Experience Designer Outline.
2. Enter the Course Outcomes in the first column.
3. Identify topics for each lesson, unit, or module. Each column represents one lesson, unit, or module. You may need to add or delete columns to match the term of your course.
4. Prompt your thinking by using the Learning Experience Designer online tool.
5. Identify readings and other materials.
6. Identify articles, videos, and other resources (see Finding Additional Materials).
7. Map out major project(s).
8. Map out assignments and learning activities.
9. Map out opportunities for interaction (discussion, pair & share, virtual session).
10. Map out your assessment strategy.
11. Map out other components for the course.

LEARNING EXPERIENCE DESIGNER RESOURCES

- **Learning Experience Designer Outline**
  http://www.facultysupport.com/resources/Sample_Learning_Experience_Designer_Outline.xlsx
- Sample Learning Experience Designer Outline – Masters in Education course
  (in this course, the students pick and choose activities – they don't do all the activities outlined for each module.)
- Sample Learning Experience Designer Outline – MBA course

Course Outcome Mapping

A fundamental concept of Quality Matters is that course outcomes map directly to:

- Lesson, unit, or module objectives or outcomes
- Instructional materials
- Learning activities
- Assessment of student learning
- Use of technology

Quality Matters is a nationally recognized organization for encouraging the quality development of online courses. Although intended for online classes, adopting this alignment concept will strengthen your course.

You can document your mapping in a spreadsheet format:

Course Outcomes

C1	• Use computer technology to accomplish course activities.
C2	• Use computer technology to access information relevant to nursing practice.
C3	• Evaluate technology, information, and its sources critically.
C4	• Describe issues related to privacy, security, client rights, and ethics, as they pertain to compu
C5	• Describe how technology can facilitate quality patient care outcomes.
C6	• Discuss the future impact of information technology on nursing practice.
C7	• Discuss the role of the informatics nurse specialist.
C8	• Apply Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) principles to develop a proposed informatics project.

Module	Topic	C1	C2	C3	C4
M1	Introduction, Background, and Foundation of Informatics	X	X		
M2	Information Systems in Healthcare Delivery	X	X		
M3	Healthcare Applications	X	X	X	
M4	Transitioning from Data to Information	X	X	X	
M5	Data Use & Protection	X	X		X
M6	Quality, Usability, & Standards	X	X		
M7	Participatory Healthcare	X	X	X	
M8	The Future of Informatics	X	X		

Module Outcomes

M8.1	Discuss the future impact of information technology on nursing practice.
M8.2	Discuss the role of the informatics nurse specialist.
M8.3	Present your informatics project to your classmates.
M8.4	Reflect on your experience and possible application to facilitating quality patient care outcon

Component	Activity	M8.1	M8.2	M8.3	M8.4
Knowledge	Read Chapters	X	X		
Analyze	Complete Future of Nursing Review	X	X		
Show	Present your infomatics project			X	
Reflect	Reflect on your experience				X
Assessment	Future of Nursing Review Rubric		X		
Assessment	Student Presentation Rubric			X	
Assessment	Self-Reflection Rubric				X

COURSE OUTCOME MAPPING RESOURCES
- Course Outcome Mapping Template
- Sample Course Outcome Mapping – Nursing Course (2 credits)

Credit Hour Analysis

When you design a new course, make major changes to a course, or move a face-to-face course online, you may ask whether or not the new or updated course meets the rigors of what is required for a course at specific level and number of credit hours.

One way to assess an appropriate level of work for students in a course is the Carnegie unit. In this system, roughly one credit hour equates to 45 hours of work or effort for a student. This is based on students attending a 50-minute lecture and spending 2 hours in preparation per week per credit hour. If available, you can also compare your credit hour analysis score against the average values for your group.

For this analysis, use the Credit Hour Analysis spreadsheet. For each type of activity, enter the number that are used in the course.

Credit Hour Category	Credit Hour Item	Time Required	Number in Course	Expectation for Student Work (hrs)
Readings & Materials	Textbook Readings (Number of pages)	0.04		0
Readings & Materials	Article Readings (Number of articles)	0.75		0
Readings & Materials	Supplemental Resources (Number of additional resources)	0.75		0
Readings & Materials	F2F Lecture Hours (Number of hours)	1		0
Readings & Materials	Online Lecture or PowerPoint (# of items)	0.5		0
Student Interaction	Class Participation (% of total)	1		0
Student Interaction	Social Media Participation (% of total)	1		0
Student Interaction	Discussion Board (# of graded discussions)	0.5		0
Student Interaction	Small Group Discussion (# of discussions)	0.5		0
Student Interaction	Pair & Share (# of discussions)	0.3		0
Student Interaction	Virtual Classroom Session (# of sessions)	1		0
Written Assignments	Written Assignment < 2 pages (# to complete)	1		0
Written Assignments	Written Assignment 2 -5 pages (# to complete)	3		0
Written Assignments	Written Assignment 5-20 pages (# to complete)	15		0
Written Assignments	Written Assignment > 20 pages (# to complete)	30		0
Written Assignments	Written Draft (# to complete)	3		0
Written Assignments	Written Assignment/Submit for Publication (# to completed)	30		0
Written Assignments	Reflection (<5 pages) (# to complete)	2		0
Written Assignments	Journal Article Review (# to complete)	2.5		0
Other Activities	Individual Presentation (# to complete)	4		0
Other Activities	Case Study (# to complete)	3		0
Other Activities	Individual Project (# to complete)	6		0
Other Activities	Poster Presentation (# to complete)	5		0
Other Activities	Video of Performance (# to complete)	6		0
Other Activities	Workshop Participation (# to complete)	4		0
Other Activities	Simulation (# of hours)	1		0
Other Activities	Learning Activity (# to complete)	0.5		0
Group Work	Group Presentation (# to complete)	10		0
Group Work	Group Project (# to complete)	10		0
Group Work	Group Case Study or other activity (# to complete)	4		0
Clinical Activities	Clinical/Practicum Hours (number of hours)	1		0

CREDIT HOUR ANALYSIS RESOURCES
- Credit Hour Analysis
- Sample Credit Hour Analysis

Syllabus Design

The syllabus is a critical tool for the instructor that is essential to the success of any course. It establishes the relationship between the student and instructor. It's important to review and update your syllabus each time you teach the course. Sometimes, it may be a challenge to get your students to read your syllabus. One option is to administer a short quiz on the syllabus to your students.

Whether or not you are teaching an online course, it is always a good idea to post your syllabus in your school's learning management system. If your syllabus is only posted online and not printed, use color!

In many institutions, a standard syllabus may be available. Check with your institution or department to see if one is available.

Your syllabus should cover:

- **Course Details**
  Include general information about the course: course name, course description, prerequisites, learning objectives/outcomes, meeting location, meeting time.
- **Contact Information**
  Include instructor name, instructor e-mail, instructor phone, instructor web site (if available), information on when and how to contact instructor.
- **Expectations**
  Include required materials, supplemental course site (if required), expectations for student participation, expectations for student behavior, and expectations for timely communication from the instructor.
- **Grading**
  Include what will be graded, breakdown of grading, and grading scale.
- **Schedule**
  Include what will be covered and when.
- **Policies**
  Include or reference academic policies: grading policy (late work, returned work, etc.), academic honesty, accommodation for disability, and any other departmental, school, or accreditation notices.

SYLLABUS DESIGN RESOURCES
- Syllabus Checklist
- Quality Matters Syllabus Template

Additional Resources

- **Planning Your Content Toolbox**
  Download this handbook and the tools provided in one file:
    o Planning the Content Handbook
    o Course Grading Worksheet
    o Course Outcome Mapping Template
    o Credit Hour Analysis
    o Finding Materials Worksheet
    o Learning Experience Designer Outline
    o Quality Matters Online Syllabus Template
    o Syllabus Checklist
      http://www.facultysupport.com/resources/Planning_Your_Content_Toolbox.zip

- **A Self-Directed Guide to Designing Courses for Significant Learning**
  From Dr. L. Dee Fink, Director, Instructional Development Program, University of Oklahoma, a full course-design worksheet.
  http://www.deefinkandassociates.com/GuidetoCourseDesignAug05.pdf

- **A Faculty and Staff Guide to Creating Learning Outcomes**
  An excellent resource for creating learning outcomes. Available for ordering from National Resource Center ($3.00).
  http://www.nrcpubs.com/p/65/a-faculty-and-staff-guide-to-creating-learning-outcomes

- **Objectives Builder**
  Online tool for building objectives from Arizona State University.
  http://teachonline.asu.edu/objectives-builder/

- **Online Course Development Process**
  Overview, suggested activities, and templates for implementing the instructional design process based on the ADDIE model.
  http://www.tzanis.org/Courses/ADDIE/