Course Design for Blended Learning

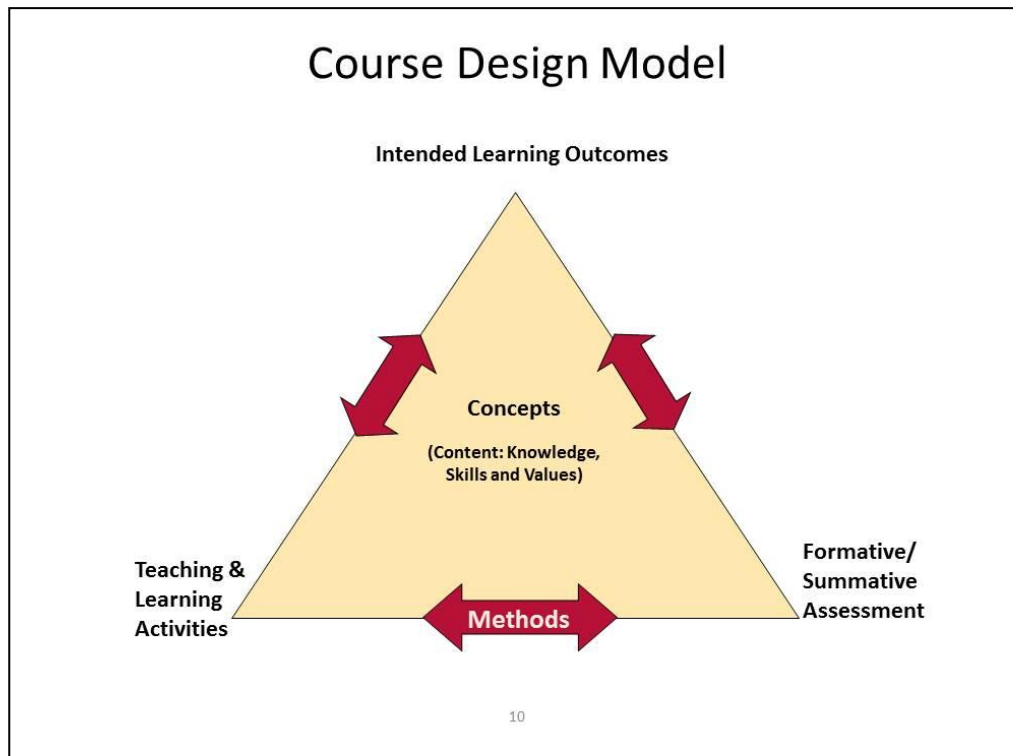Training Program in Instructional Technologies
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Ten Questions to consider when redesigning a course for blended teaching and learning

A blended course often reduces face-to-face "seat time" so that students can pursue additional teaching and learning activities online. To be successful, a blended course requires careful pedagogical redesign. These ten questions offer you a way to start thinking about some of these design issues.

1. What do you want students to know when they have finished taking your blended course? What are the intended learning outcomes?

2. As you think about these outcomes, which would be better achieved online and which would be better achieved face-to-face (f2f)?

3. Blended teaching is not just a matter of transferring a portion of your traditional course to the Web. Instead it involves developing challenging and engaging online teaching and learning components and activities that complement your f2f activities. What types of teaching and learning activities do you think you will be using for the online portion of your course? For the f2f part of the course?

4. Online asynchronous discussion can be an important part of blended courses. What new learning opportunities will arise as a result of using asynchronous discussion? What challenges do you anticipate in using online discussions? How would you address these?

5. How will the f2f and time out of class components be integrated into a single course? In other words, how will the work done in each component feed back into and support the other?

6. When working online, students frequently have problems scheduling their work, managing their time, and understanding the implications of the hybrid course module as related to learning. What do you plan to do to help your students address these issues?

7. How will you divide the percent of time between the f2f portion and the online portion of your course? How will you schedule the percent of time between the f2f and online portion of your course, e.g. one two-hour f2f class followed by one two-hour online session each week?

8. How will you divide the course-grading scheme between f2f and online activities? What means will you use to assess student work in each of these two components?

9. Students sometimes have difficulty acclimating to the course website and to other instructional technologies you may be using for f2f and online activities. What specific technologies will you use for the online and f2f portions of your course? What proactive steps can you take to assist students to become familiar with your website and those instructional technologies? If students need help with technology later in the course, how will you provide support?

10. There is a tendency for faculty to require students to do more work in a hybrid course than they normally would complete in a purely traditional course. What are you going to do to ensure that you have not created a course and one-half? How will you evaluate the student workload as compared to a traditional class?

Adapted from http://www4.uwm.edu/ltc/hybrid/faculty_resources/questions.cfm

Developing your implementation plan

Planning your students time

1. What will your students do? Create a list – What are the activities that your students are going to engage in during your course individually and in groups (e.g., attend lectures, watch/listen to multimedia presentations, read the text book, engage in group activities, participate in discussions, complete self-assessments, complete assignments, solve problems, write essays, use external web resources, etc). How much time will they spend on these activities?

2. Indicate which learning outcomes these activities address. Since you know what your learning outcomes are you can make sure that the activities are addressing these learning outcomes. A teaching and/or learning activity may address several or only one outcome.

3. How are these activities being assessed? Which student activities would be more valuable if the students received feedback from you, your TAs or from each other? Are there learning activities where you could provide informal or formative feedback, rather than the formal, summative feedback that is provided to graded high stakes assessments? Are the students receiving feedback in time to help them improve on their next activity or assessment?

4. Deciding on the environment. Based on the time available, feedback opportunities and specific challenges of your course, decide which activities would be best carried out f2f in a classroom, online or offline outside of the classroom by you and your students. The activity and the assessment may occur in different environments.

Table 1. What will your students to do?

Activity	Which outcome does this address?	Formative Assessment? (yes/no)	Summative Assessment? (% overall grade)	Where? F2F/ Online/ Offline

5. Alignment? Do the course activities and assessments line up with the intended learning outcomes of the course? Look back at you course learning outcomes and crosscheck to make sure that the learning activities and assessments are helping your students achieve the course learning outcomes. If your outcomes/objectives are numbered, use the numbers to identify which activity is linked to which outcome.

Course Design Model

Intended Learning Outcomes

Concepts

(Content: Knowledge, Skills and Values)

Teaching & Learning Activities

Methods

Formative/ Summative Assessment

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Adapted from: Ellis, D. & Light, T. (2006) *Teaching Excellence Academy*. University of Waterloo.

6. Final Thoughts. Does your plan address any of the challenges that you might have identified with your course before this workshop? For example, my students come to class unprepared, my students can't manage the pace of their learning, my students don't seem engaged by the material, my students seem reluctant to participate in class discussions, my students lack prerequisite knowledge and skills for the course, etc. Are you proposing a reasonable workload for your students?

Planning your time

1. What will you do during the course? Create another list – What will you be doing before and during the course to support your students' learning (e.g., create lectures, facilitate discussions, mark essays, hold office hours)? How much time will you spend on these activities? What environment will they take place in?

2. Is it a reasonable workload for you? Will some of your proposed activities be reusable; some might be partially reusable each year? (E.g., creating online multimedia presentations or online activities.)

Table 2. What will you do?

Activity (prof)	Time Required (#hours/week or #hours during course)	F2F/ Online/ Offline	Reusability (% or high/med/low)

If you are designing a new course for blended teaching and learning, be sure to define your intended learning outcomes and consider your context prior to developing your activities.

Start by defining the context of your course (situational factors):

1. Course name and number:

2. Where does the course fit in the program's curriculum? (e.g., required or elective course, service course for another program, professional accreditation requirements)

3. Who are your potential students? (e.g., background knowledge, experience, interests, expectations about course and how it is taught, etc.

4. How many students will you have? Do you consider this to be a large class?

5. What kind of learning space might you have? (e.g., classroom, lab, fixed or movable furniture, available media equipment)

6. What support and resources are available to you? (e.g., TA support, teaching with other instructors)

Next, define your intended learning outcomes (ILOs):

When developing your ILOs, remember to consider the question "What do I want my students to be able to do, know, &/or feel by the end of my course?" Review your outcomes statements to make sure they are specific, attainable and measurable (SAM). The Centre for Teaching Excellence has tips for writing intended learning outcomes at https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/planning-courses/course-design/writing-learning-outcomes

You are now ready to start using the **Blended Learning – Triple Alignment** chart to start developing you course assessments and teaching and learning activities.

References

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Bloom, B. S. & Krathwohl, D.R., 1956*. Taxonomy of educational objectives: The classification of educational goals, by a committee of college and university examiners*. New York, NY: Longmans.

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Wiggins, G. & McTighe, G., 2005. *Understanding by Design*. Alexandrai, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Useful Websites:

Centre for Teaching Excellence – Teaching with Technology
http://cte.uwaterloo.ca/teaching_with_technology/index.html?tab=1

University of Wisconsin Hybrid Course Website - http://www4.uwm.edu/ltc/hybrid/index.cfm

Centre for Teaching Excellence – Online activities and assessment for the flipped classroom
https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/lecturing-and-presenting/delivery/online-activities-and-assessment-flipped-classroom

Centre for Teaching Excellence – In-class activities and assessment for the flipped classroom

https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/lecturing-and-presenting/delivery/class-activities-and-assessment-flipped-classroom

Centre for Teaching Excellence – Nine alternatives to lecturing
https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/alternatives-lecturing/active-learning/varying-your-teaching-activities

Centre for Teaching Excellence – Developing online learning activities for blended courses
https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/developing-assignments/blended-learning/developing-online-learning-activities