

Course Design for Engaged Learning / Course Mapping

In this video, we will walk you through the process of structuring the content and activities in your online course and outline the key elements you should consider.

Start with the Outcomes

As you begin to think about the major concepts the course will cover, first, develop a clear idea of the course goals; what students will need to do or know to demonstrate mastery of this course. Then, think about how you will assess these outcomes and how you will make sure students are on track to meeting those goals over the 15 weeks of the semester. Once you have this in mind, it will be easier to create good-quality content and activities to support those goals.

An effective learning outcome is specific and measurable, detailing exactly what students will be able to do or know after the course, in a way that can be clearly assessed and achieved. Before you do anything else, start with the outcomes at each level of planning- at the course, module, and topic levels. Consider your outcomes in the context of Bloom's Taxonomy, a framework for sequencing learning from simple recall of information to complex analysis and synthesis. This structured approach helps in designing courses that not only impart knowledge but also cultivate critical and creative thinking abilities in students.

Outline your course

Now that you know what you want students to achieve, you can decide on a sequence of content and activities to get students to that place. Start with breaking your course into modules, self-contained units or sections focused on a specific topic or theme. Map your modules onto the weeks of the semester.

Chunk your topics

After outlining your modules, break each module into subtopics. Instead of one long lecture, chunk or segment your module content into smaller topics to offer easily digestible stand-alone videos for each subtopic (A rule of thumb is to limit video length to no longer than 6-12 minutes).

Student Engagement

Once you have your topics chunked it is important to include practice activities that align with each outcome. Ideally, each subtopic should be accompanied by an opportunity to practice or a check for understanding question. These do not necessarily need to be graded activities but should provide the student a chance to actively engage with the content and assess their own learning.

Additionally, your course should have a structure of activities that repeat each week to provide routine and organization to the learning experience. This routine should include opportunities for students to practice skills and receive feedback, interact with peers and instructors, as well as graded assessments.

Design your course to move students beyond passively receiving information, encouraging them to interact, apply, and actively participate in constructing their own understanding so that they develop a strong and lasting mastery of the subject matter.

Conclusion

By following these guidelines, you will create an engaging and effective online learning environment that goes beyond mere information delivery to fostering an environment where students actively engage and apply what they learn.