**Course design template**

The course design template is to be used in conjunction with the steps of the [course design](https://buffalo.edu/catt/develop/design/course-design.html) process. On each webpage you will find resources and directions to fill out this template. Each step builds off the previous step and should be completed in the recommended order.

**Step 1: Identify situational factors.**

The first step in course design is to identify how [situational factors](https://buffalo.edu/catt/develop/design/situational-factors.html) influence your course. Complete the table below. Think about the context of your course. This will help you design a course where the content and activities are aligned with the needs and interests of your students.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Category** | **Questions** | **Your Situation + Implications** | **Design Location + Action Plan** |
| **Specific Context of the Teaching and Learning Situation** | | | |
| * # students | How many students are in the class? |  |  |
| * course level | Is the course lower division, upper division or graduate level? |  |  |
| * frequency | How long and frequent are the class meetings? |  |  |
| * delivery mode | How will the course be delivered: via live classroom instruction, interactive TV, as an online course, or some combination? |  |  |
| **Expectations of External Groups** | | | |
| * societal expectations | What does society at large need and expect in terms of the education of these students, in general or regarding this subject? |  |  |
| * accreditations * institutional goals | What curricular goals does the institution or department have that affect this course or program? |  |  |
| **Nature of Subject** | | | |
| * sequence | Is this subject matter convergent (working toward a single right answer) or divergent (working toward multiple, equally valid interpretations)? |  |  |
| * skills | Is this subject primarily cognitive or does it include the learning of significant physical skills as well? |  |  |
| * current state of field | Is this field of study relatively stable, in a period of rapid change, or in a situation in which competing paradigms are challenging each other? |  |  |
| **Characteristics of the Learners** | | | |
| * life situation | What is the life situation of the students: full-time student, part-time working student, family responsibilities, work responsibilities, and the like? |  |  |
| * student goals * investment | What life or professional goals do students have that relate to this learning experience? What are the reasons for enrolling? |  |  |
| * prior experiences | What prior experiences, knowledge, skills, and attitudes do the students have regarding the subject? |  |  |
| * learner differences | What are the students' learning styles? |  |  |
| **Characteristic of the Teacher** | | | |
| * prior experiences | What prior experiences, knowledge, skills, and attitudes does the teacher have in terms of the subject of this course? |  |  |
| * subject experience | Has the teacher taught this subject before or is this the first time? |  |  |
| * competence and confidence | Does the teacher have a high level of competence and confidence in this subject or is this on the margins of the teacher's zone of competence? |  |  |
| * understanding of effective teaching | What prior experiences, knowledge, skills, and attitudes does the teacher have in terms of the process of teaching? (That is, how much does this teacher know about effective teaching?) |  |  |
| **Characteristic of the Teacher** | | | |
| * course challenge(s) | What is the special situation in this course that challenges the students and the teacher in the desire to make this a meaningful and important learning experience? |  |  |

The following steps and examples are to be completed on the template at the end of the page.

**Step 2: Write or rewrite course** [**learning outcomes**](https://buffalo.edu/catt/develop/design/learning-outcomes.html)**.**

Ideally there should be 5-7 learning outcomes per course. It is best practice to include a variety of categories. The following frameworks and structure can help you categorize your learning outcomes, determine what might be missing, and understand what it is you are asking students to do.

Frameworks

* [Bloom’s Taxonomy](https://buffalo.edu/catt/develop/design/learning-outcomes/blooms.html)
* [Fink’s Significant Learning Outcomes](https://www.buffalo.edu/catt/develop/design/learning-outcomes/finks.html)

Structure

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Student-Centered** | **Verb** | **Learning Statement** |
| Students will be able to | synthesize | multiple articles to share information with others. |

Example

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Learning Outcome** | **Cognitive Complexity** |
| Students will **analyze** and **interpret** statistical data as they support decision-making processes throughout an organization. | Analyze, Interpret and Evaluate |

**Step 3: Identify a variety of** [**assessments**](https://www.buffalo.edu/catt/develop/design/designing-assessments.html) **to measure achievement of learning outcomes.**

Example

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Learning Outcome** | **Complexity** | **Assessment** | **Methods** | **Activity** |
| Students will **analyze** and **interpret** statistical data as they support decision-making processes throughout an organization. | Analyze, Interpret and Evaluate | Exam or Presentation |  |  |

**Step 4: Identify** [**methods**](https://www.buffalo.edu/catt/develop/design/teaching-methods.html) **and aligned** [**activities**](https://buffalo.edu/catt/develop/design/designing-activities.html) **that will help students successfully reach each learning outcome.**

Example

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Learning Outcome** | **Complexity** | **Assessment** | **Methods** | **Activity** |
| Students will **analyze** and **interpret** statistical data as they support decision-making processes throughout an organization. | Analyze, Interpret and Evaluate | Exam or Presentation | Case-based learning | Identify credibility analyzing 2-3 case studies |

**Step 4: Identify equity, inclusion, and accessibility of course design.**

When drafting your course design remember to consider factors of [equity and inclusion](https://buffalo.edu/catt/develop/design/equitable-inclusive.html), as well as [accessibility](https://buffalo.edu/catt/develop/design/content-accessibility.html).

**Step 5: Use the Course Design Template Rubric to evaluate your course design.**

When you have completed your design use the following rubric to evaluate your work.

**Course Design Template Rubric**

| **Category** | **Exceeds Expectations** | **Meets Expectations** | **Does not Meet Expectations** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Learning Outcomes** | Learning outcomes are clear, specific, measurable, achievable and student-centered. | Learning outcomes include most components (e.g., clear, specific, measurable, achievable, student-centered). | Learning outcomes are missing most components (e.g., clear, specific, measurable, achievable, student-centered). |
| **Taxonomy Level** | Identifies learning outcomes using Fink’s and/or Bloom’s Taxonomy. Levels align to task complexity. Includes at least two higher cognitively complex outcomes (e.g., apply, analyze, evaluate, create). | Identifies learning outcomes using Fink’s and/or Bloom’s Taxonomy. Levels mostly align to task complexity. Includes at least one higher cognitively complex outcome (e.g., apply, analyze, evaluate, create). | May or may not identify learning outcomes using Fink’s and/or Bloom’s Taxonomy. Levels are not aligned and/or no higher cognitively complex outcomes are evident (e.g., apply, analyze, evaluate, create). |
| **Assessments** | Aligns to the level of taxonomy. A variety in assessments is evident. Includes both formative and summative assessment. | Mostly aligns to the level of taxonomy. Includes some variety in assessments. May or may not include both formative and summative assessment. | Lack of alignment between taxonomy level and the assessment. Limited variety in assessments. Focuses only on one assessment type (e.g., formative or summative). |
| **Activities** | Activities align to the cognitive complexity of the learning outcomes. They will prepare students for assignments and assessments. Active and social learning is evident. | Activities align to the cognitive complexity of learning outcomes. Some active or social learning is evident. | Activities may or may not align with the cognitive complexity of learning outcomes. Limited active and social learning is evident. |

**Course Design Template**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Learning Outcome** | **Complexity** | **Assessment** | **Methods** | **Activity** |
| 1 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 6 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 7 |  |  |  |  |  |