Analysis and Design Considerations
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Before beginning to develop your online course in the learning management system, begin with an analysis and then plan the design of the online course.

Analysis

Answer the following questions

1. What is your learner audience? Is the course for beginners or advanced learners? For majors or primarily non-majors?
2. What types of materials should be made available to learners online? Will any on-campus activities or labs be available, or must all class activities be delivered online?
3. What kind of Internet access will your learners have? Will learners access this online course from high speed campus networks or from their homes?
4. What do the learners already know about the topic? What are their current skills? Constraints? Learner preferences?
5. How much time do you have to devote to putting up materials before and during the semester?
6. Do you have time to facilitate weekly discussions?
7. Can you encourage learner interaction as a way of making learners more responsible for the class as a whole?

Design

Answer the following questions

1. Is collaborative work among learners or peer review appropriate or desirable?
2. What activities do you think could be redesigned for the online environment?
3. What (prerequisites) skills, knowledge should the learner have prior to instruction?
4. What is the best way to assess your learners? How will the learner demonstrate what they have learned? What are the skills and knowledge that a learner must learn?
   a. Portfolios
   b. Multiple-choice quizzes? Self-assessment exams or graded exams
   c. Essays
   d. Fieldwork reports
   e. Individual projects
5. What activities work well in your on-ground classroom?
6. What will be the balance of learner-centered versus facilitator-led activities? Will you mainly facilitate discussion and research, or does the course have a strong component of lecturing as well?

7. How central is discussion or learner presentation to achieving the objectives of the course?

8. What content should be taught, in what order?

9. What are your preferred methods of presenting content?
   a. Do you have graphics or slides that you want to utilize in some way?
   b. Do you use lecture notes?
   c. Do you use overheads?
   d. Is it important for you to accommodate as many different learning styles as possible?

Next, select among the various options for presenting content, facilitating discussions, group work and learner presentations, online research, and assessment.

**Options for Presenting Content**

1. **Text on a web page.** You don’t want to create documents that are tediously formal or that appear as overly long blocks of text when viewed on a web page.

2. **PDF and Word documents.** Provide accessible PDF and Word documents to students with lecture notes, lesson plans, or reading guides.

3. **PowerPoint slide shows.** Divide up your slides and test them so that each segment takes no more than ten minutes. Don’t try to replicate PowerPoint presentations that are mainly bulleted text since the slides themselves must carry the entire presentation. Consider converting them into short text paragraphs with bulleted items in a web page format.
   a. A narrated slide presentation is particularly good for taking learners through a series of steps.

4. **Streaming video.** Videos can be recorded using a video camera and tripod, web camera, or using screen recording software such as Screencast-o-matic, Camtasia, Blackboard Collaborate, or Zoom. Effective uses of streaming video might include a demonstration of an experiment, demonstration within a software program, a presentation of vignettes for a language course, or a narrated slide presentation.
   a. When offering audio and video, you should consider learners’ disabilities. Prepare a text transcript or summary of audio or video presentations for the benefit of those who have sight or hearing disabilities. This will also serve to give all learners other options for accessing the material - including those who have technical problems and those for whom the text option is a learning preference. Prepare your transcript before making your video or slide narration. Preparing the transcript ahead of time can serve as your script or story board for your audio or video.
5. **Case studies.** Case studies can be employed using the assignment tool, discussion board, chat, or live classroom.

6. **Guest speakers.** Guest speakers can be employed using web meeting software, video, or live classroom.

7. **Publisher content and digital resources.** Many of the popular textbook publishers offer digital content that can be integrated with Blackboard, such as case studies, videos, simulations, and e-textbooks.

8. **Library eReserves.** Utilize the Dacus Library eReserves service to post copyright protected course materials in Blackboard.

**Options for Facilitating Discussions**

1. Discussion can be asynchronous (not-in-real-time) or synchronous (real-time).
   a. Small group
   b. Guided discussions
   c. Question and answer sessions after a lesson, lab, or exam
   d. Seminar model in which the facilitator presentation and discussion are combined

2. Blackboard tools for facilitating discussions online are:
   a. Discussion Board (asynchronous)
   b. Blog (asynchronous)
   c. Chat (synchronous)
   d. Blackboard Collaborate Web Conferencing System (synchronous)
   e. Zoom (synchronous)

3. Decide how you want to use discussion in relation to your presentation and assignment elements in the course. Decide whether discussion topics will closely follow the questions you raise in your lectures and other presentations, or whether the topics will provide opportunities to introduce additional materials and further applications of ideas you've presented.

4. Discussions that are coordinated with assignments must be scheduled to allow enough time for reflection and response. Guidelines and procedures must be set up in advance to make sure that the discussion is structured and focused.

5. The discussion area may be used to post assignments for peer and facilitator feedback.

6. Synchronous discussion is text-based chat. Everyone participating must log on at the same time. The entire conversation then takes place in real time. If your learners are in different time zones or you need to accommodate work schedules, you'll need to make multiple times available for the same discussion topic. You might survey them to find the most convenient times for all. Or you may set up two or more chat times and require that each learner sign up for a particular time so that you can control the number of participants in each session.

7. To get the most out of chat, learners should be given adequate preparation by announcing the topic ahead of time and publicizing the rules of conduct for the chat.

8. Blackboard Collaborate and Zoom provide a whiteboard function that allows a facilitator or learner to draw or write on the whiteboard screen in real time and in some cases,
use math and science symbols as well. Blackboard Collaborate also provides application sharing, web tour, and polling features.

9. Set up a student café – a discussion area set aside for casual talk among learners.

Options for Group Work and Learner Presentation

1. **Blackboard Groups Tool.** You can manually enroll students in groups or allow them to self-enroll in groups. Group tools are available within Blackboard that allow them to communicate, share files, interact, and collaborate.

2. **Blackboard Wiki Tool.** The wiki is a collaborative tool that resembles a web page and allows multiple contributors to add and edit content. It is ideal for group projects because it tracks contributions and participation.

3. **Blackboard Collaborate or Zoom.** Blackboard Collaborate and Zoom are web conferencing systems. You can use them to host live lectures, guest speakers, or for students to give presentations. Blackboard Collaborate provides a whiteboard function that allows a facilitator or learner to draw or write on the whiteboard screen in real time and in some cases, use math and science symbols as well. Blackboard Collaborate also provides application sharing, web tour, and polling features.

4. In planning group activities, consider how many group activities will be included in your course. If you decide to have learners change groups throughout the course, make sure you allow enough time for learners to get to know each other and develop working relationships. Consider how, when, and where groups will work online. Groups will need guidelines for working together. Specify a method for group organization or particular roles to be filled, such as a rotating chair plus a recorder and a spokesperson.

5. Consider how you will monitor and evaluate individual contributions. You may require groups to participate in an asynchronous area visible to you or that the transcripts from chats are saved and sent to you.

6. Will you issue the same grade for the entire group or grade individually?

7. What will you require learner presentations to look like? Will it involve a simple presentation of text, such as posting a paper or a group summary of the week’s lessons? Will the presentation involve the display of multimedia projects?

Options for Online Research

1. **Web Research.** Web research can include web searches to find information on a particular topic. Give your learners training in web search and evaluation to find reputable sources.

2. **Library Research.** Library research can be conducted via electronic library databases.

3. **Fieldwork.** Although fieldwork may be accomplished outside the online classroom, its results may be presented online and a discussion and evaluation may also be accomplished online. Any forms or information regarding preparing for or completing the fieldwork experience can be placed online.
Options for Assessment

1. Assessment can be made by:
   a. Facilitator
   b. Self
   c. Peer
   d. External person or group

2. Some options for assessment include:
   a. Written assignments
   b. Participation in online discussions
   c. Essays
   d. Publication of learner work/presentations
   e. Online quizzes and questions
   f. Experiential activities, such as role-play
   g. Collaborative assignment work
   h. Debates
   i. Portfolios
      1. Plan an adequate variety of activities from which learners can assemble portfolios of their work.
   j. Reviews
   k. Online Exams
      1. Self-assessment; review; or for a grade
   l. Journals and reflection
   m. Practicals