



Course Design Tips

Designing meaningful experiences that are active, student centered, and build on prior knowledge is a skill developed and strengthened over time. This guide adopted from University of California Berkley Center for Teaching and Learning (<https://teaching.berkeley.edu/resources/course-design-guide>) is designed to help faculty take a goal-oriented approach to course planning with opportunities to collect evidence of student learning throughout their course.

A Goal-Oriented Approach to Course Design

How can faculty plan what student will be doing without first knowing what they want them to learn? By focusing course planning around clear learning objectives, instructors can have a better sense of how students should demonstrate their learning, and then consider what day-to-day experiences may best support students' learning.

University of California Berkley Center for Teaching and Learning outline three key stages of course design.

Stage 1: Establish Learning Objectives

What should students know, understand, and be able to do? Establish learning objectives to narrow and prioritize topics, concepts, or skills that student should know or be able to do by the end of your lesson, course unit, or full-semester course.

Design Effective Learning Objectives

<https://teaching.berkeley.edu/resources/course-design-guide/establish-course-level-learning-objectives>

Stage 2. Determine Acceptable Evidence

What will you accept as evidence that students are making progress toward their learning? Determining how students can best demonstrate their learning will help differentiate introductory versus advanced knowledge and skills, build in opportunities to check in with students' learning, and surface inequities in learning opportunities.

Design Effective Assessments

<https://teaching.berkeley.edu/resources/course-design-guide/design-effective-assessments>

Stage 3. Design Experiences to Support Student Learning

What activities, assignments, or discussions will help prepare students to demonstrate their learning?

Explore active learning strategies that meaningfully engage students in their learning, build on prior knowledge, and foster collaboration.

Design Active Learning Opportunities

<https://teaching.berkeley.edu/resources/course-design-guide/active-learning>

Next Steps in Course Design

After you have designed your course, how do you ensure that the learning process is transparent to students? Consider common instructional tools available to you, including your course description and syllabus. To stay in touch with students are experiencing your course, leverage low-stakes activities, surveys, and other resources to collect evidence of student learning and gauge the effectiveness of your teaching practices.