Fall 2020 Align Your Course for Any Format

Purpose: After working through this checklist, instructors will have a thought through the design for their mixed delivery fall course(s).

Start here:

Ask: five years from now, what do I want my students to remember and use that they learned in my course? This is your overall goal.

Objectives:

- Establish measurable objectives for your course.
- Try to group your objectives to narrow them down to 3-5 objectives.
- Be sure the objectives are worded from the student’s perspective and contain measurable verbs.

Example as follows:

Starter objective: By the end of this course, students will understand the importance of primary research in written work.

Polished objective: By the end of this course, students will be able to conduct primary research and use it appropriately in their written work.

**TIP:** If you need suggestions for phrasing look up a taxonomy such as Bloom’s Taxonomy of Educational Objectives; SOLO; 6 Facets of Understanding; or Fink’s Taxonomy of Significant Learning.

**TIP:** Students may need to reach certain levels of your objectives as well. So a student may need to show differing levels of achieving outcomes such as beginning, developing, or mastering.

Assessments:

- Using your objectives as a checklist, match each objective with an assessment to be sure that your course includes at least one assessment for each objective.

  **TIP:** Assessments don’t have to be high-stakes large exams for students to practice retrieving the information that they need to have learned and be able to use. Even low-stakes objectives can tell you what your students know and have learned.

- As you are matching your objectives to assessments, write that information down for your students. Plan to share it, even if for only one or two assessments. This practice lets students know how they will progress through the course and shows them why your assessments—and their academic integrity—matter.

- Space assessments throughout the course in small increments so that students have more opportunities to demonstrate their learning.

  Review Alternatives to Traditional Exams for ideas to mix up the ways that students demonstrate what they have learned.

Examples as follows:

Prompt (many more instructions included, but eliminated here for brevity):

Summary of “Sleep deprivation and the development of leadership and need for cognition during the college years.”

Skills assessed (course objectives 1 & 2): Identifying the 11 article parts; summarizing in your own words.

- Identify criteria with assignment Rubrics/Metrics that show success and areas for improvement.
- Clearly identify the criteria for success on each assessment.

Assignments:

For each assignment, ask yourself the following questions:

- Do I want to review all of these assignments?
- Are these assignments items that I look forward to receiving from my students? If not, what product could I ask for that would be interesting or exciting for my students to use to practice as they progress toward objectives? Assign that product instead.
- Can my students submit these assignments online?
- Is this essential to student progress in the course?
- Toward which objective does this assignment move my students? (Be sure to tell students which objective the assignment will help them to meet.)
- Can I provide opportunities for students to check their own work against a standard?
- Will I allow multiple attempts on the assignment? How many?
- Do my students have to achieve a certain mark on the assignment before they can progress to the next section of the module? If so, have I set the next section up with adaptive release?
At this point, the course objectives, assessments, and assignments should align through rubrics, much like peas align in a pod.

**Designing Class Sessions/Modules/Weeks:**

As you design each course session/module/week, focus on four activities for each session/module/week. Some you will conduct in mixed delivery mode. Some you’ll have students do outside of class and away from you.

**AWAY:** Readings. Make these short if possible. Ensure that they are accessible. Use Open Educational Resources or materials that students can retrieve virtually from the SU Libraries. If you need support, contact your library liaison. Practices: problems, written assignments or reflections, diagrams, drawings, etc.

**WITH OR AWAY:** Something to view/hear. Make these short if possible also. Online attention span is about 10-15 minutes, even if students are in class using Zoom or Collaborate.

- If you show a film, check for accessibility features like captioning or a transcript. Provide viewing instructions. What should students look for? What should students listen for?

  **TIP:** If you need to show a film clip in class, be sure that you provide your away students with the timing marks so that they can watch the video on their own devices and “return” to the class when appropriate.

- If you plan to lecture, keep it at 10-15 minutes. Lecture in chunks. Provide notes or slides. After each “chunk,” provide some ways for students to check in to see if they have gathered the most important information.

  **TIP:** Use Classroom Assessment Techniques or CATs. Sample techniques are available on Answers under the Summer Online Course Checklist.

**WITH OR AWAY:** Something to discuss. When students use new information or skills, they are more likely to encode that new information in their minds and to remember it. Discussion can help them to do exactly that. As you set up discussions, keep in mind the following best practices:

- Use a prompt. What should students discuss each time? Why?

  **TIP:** If you allow students to use the chat, set thresholds for the kinds of writing you will accept. Will you allow text abbreviations, for example? Gifs? Emojis?

- Set parameters. How long will students have to discuss? Will each group have assigned roles? How will these roles be decided? Will students discuss across modes (in-class to online) or within modes (in-class to in-class; online to online)? How will this work? Can students use chat to discuss?

  **TIP:** Don’t let discussions go on too long. If you see that students need re-direction, be sure to provide it.

  **Prohibit** *ad hominem* attacks.

**WITH OR AWAY:** Something to do. Help students know how to use the information that you’re giving them along the way. Consider some of these ideas as a way to see how students are processing the information:

- Poll (Kahoot, Collaborate, Poll Everywhere)
- Concept map
- Reflection journal entry
- 3-2-1 exercise
- Memory matrix
- One sentence summary
- Directed paraphrasing
- Chain notes among group members or the entire class
- Student-developed test questions
- Short article
- Tweet the point
- Create a review slide

Suggestions and directions for some techniques can be found [here](#).

**Running Class Sessions:**

These class sessions will be demanding on your mental bandwidth, so try to have a plan for each class session.

**The beginning of the semester will be your golden moment. You get it once.**

- Spend time establishing community in your classroom. Help your students to get to know each other and to get to know you.
Establish together the kind of classroom that you want to have. Allow your students to participate in this discussion and incorporate their suggestions.

You don’t have to reveal a lot about yourself, but do get personal. Have everyone answer a question like “Toothpaste: what do you use? Tube? Tablet? Baking soda? Etc. If you use a tube, squeeze from the bottom or the middle?” or “Pets? What kind? Why?”

Show your students your Blackboard class site and walk them through where to find the parts of your class that they will need to know how to find. Reduce the “I can’t find…..” frustrations (them) and emails (you).

**TIP:** Once you establish how your course works, do **NOT** change it unless you have total student revolt for where to find the materials and activities.

Give each session an objective. At the end of each session what should students know, be able to do, or be able to articulate.

**TIP:** Have students make suggestions regarding what they believe you need to cover in the class session. If possible, incorporate these suggestions in your agenda.

Give yourself a note to remind yourself to look at the online students and to review their chat questions.

Provide an “agenda” at the beginning of the class session.

**TIP:** If possible, select a TA to “proxy” for the online students. If you don’t have a TA, select three “note-taking” students and one “online representative.” These jobs should rotate through the students who are physically in the classroom. These “proxies” are responsible to keep an eye on the online students and their chat. When the online students have questions or contributions, the proxy indicates that and speaks for them.

Check in with students periodically to see how much progress they are making to the goal for that class session.

Provide a “muddiest point” forum for students as well so that they have a place to indicate their learning challenge when they get stumped. Encourage students to answer their peers’ questions. Monitor the forum so that misinformation does not circulate.

Consider using an “exit ticket” for each class to check on how well you and your students are achieving the objective for that session.