

## Basics of Course Development

The Major Steps That Are A Part Of The Course Development Process from a Learning Perspective. When these steps are focused on a part of a course such as a unit or an instructional module, this process is sometimes referred to as "chunking" the course.

Step 1: Ask and answer: "What do I want my students to learn?"

This step helps set the parameters for the development of the course because it specifies what students should specifically be able to do as the result of their taking this course. It is often best to use "action verbs" because they are based on observable actions or products.

Step 2: Identify the best teaching approaches for the type of learning you want.

This step involves a survey of alternative teaching strategies for helping students meet the goals of the course through the activities that you provide. A starting point for getting some ideas of teaching approaches can be found in Brief Summary of the Best Practices in College Teaching, that can be found on FCTeL website <http://www.uncc.edu/fctel>, or go to the UNCTLT Collaborative Professional Development Portal at <http://www.unctl.org/pdp/> for ideas.

Step 3. Plan major assignments and exams that will teach and test the learning that you want.

Formative assessment tools (like Classroom Assessment Techniques) are used to help students identify what they know and don't know throughout the semester to guide their learning. They can be graded or ungraded, they can be done in class, for homework, or on-line. Summative tools like exams, tests, projects are used to determine mastery of the material.

Step 4. Consider times and spaces for learning.

Teaching and especially learning can take place in many different places and at different times of the day/week, and it is useful to try to vary where and when students experience learning and to build that idea into course development. Learning can occur within the classroom, in the community, in a science lab or clinical setting, in the library, in front of a computer at home or at school, alone or in an actual or virtual group. One important consideration is to determine when face-to face sessions must occur for specific types of learning, and when other forms of engagement are more appropriate.

Step 5. What technology and other tools should I consider using to help students learn?

There are many tools available out there to assist in the enhancement of teaching and learning and the list grows longer each week. A challenge is in finding ways to refine the use of the ones available to us as well as to take advantage of newer ones as they come available. Fairly standard ones

include the chalkboard, overheads, bulletin boards, slides, films and videotapes. The expansion of the Internet and the availability of computer hardware and software have added many tools to the "teaching and learning toolbox". Web quests, virtual fieldtrips, self-help tutorials, collaborative on-line writing or project workspaces are becoming more common now.

#### Step 6. Sequence the learning

Students often need to know a set of content before they can learn other types of content, or they have to master certain tasks or skills before they can move onto more complicated learning experiences. This developmental approach to teaching and learning suggests that a key task is to make certain that students encounter learning activities in a logical progression from simple to more complex. The material on Bloom's Taxonomy included in this section of the website is one way to examine developmental processes.

#### Step 7. Reflect on and assess what you have done

A course is a continuous process (rather than a product) that leads to an enhancement of teaching and learning experiences, if time and effort is given to reflecting on and assessing the results of that process. The goal is to examine information that indicates the extent to which the teaching and learning practices led to the learning outcomes desired by the teacher (and perhaps the student) and why they "worked" or "did not work". This last step involves consideration of a whole range of issues, including assumptions about teaching and learning, as well as issues related to the results of the decisions made at each of the previous steps.