# Online Course Design Guide

Welcome! Designing a robust online learning experience requires a lot of up-front planning. This guide is contains two resources: a **course readiness self-check** and a **module design template**. The **quick resources** section includes links to the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) website, which has quick articles on topics that might help you plan to meet those standards.

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## Module Design Guide

*Please use this guide to organize the content for each week by filling in the highlighted areas. The guide may look long, but much it is notes and other helpful information meant as references to use when creating materials. In addition, you are welcome to include additional assignments, discussion forums, quizzes, etc., if that makes sense for your course.*

***Note:*** *Headers and sections align with the format in your Moodle master template, shown below.*Graphical user interface, text, application, email

Description automatically generated

### Module #: Title

### Instructor Notes

*Please leave notes here if there are items that need to be hidden from students, but visible to course facilitators. This can be helpful for portal integration notes, instructions for facilitating group work activities if applicable, notes on how you use a course blog, or suggesting extra credit opportunities, etc.* *You might also* *consider where students will struggle in this lesson and suggest supplemental resources (which might already be available in the supplemental resources section) that may help students gain deeper understanding.*

#### Module Announcements

Draft key points which might be used in a message and/or announcement by the instructor during the live term concerning this module:

* [Insert items with explanations provided as needed.]

#### Areas of Focus

Historically, these areas are the ones that appear most often in later courses or are where students have struggled the most:

* [Insert items with explanations provided as needed.]

#### Additional/Alternative Resources

The following resources can be used as additional materials and/or alternatives to the ones already present in the module in situations where your live-term section would benefit from their use (such as a section composed largely of students with a particular area of concentration in common):

* [Insert items with explanations provided as needed.]

### Other Notes

[Insert any additional notes for the live-term instructor with explanations provided as needed.]

### Introduction and Objectives

*Please include an introduction to the lesson topic(s) here. The introduction should be one to two written paragraphs briefly discussing the importance/relevance of the topic. This should be written as if speaking to the student. (Video or audio are acceptable alternatives, but please provide a transcript or closed captioning as well.)*

*As you draft your introduction, consider how the module’s topics connect to the previous week, overall course and program objectives, and potential application beyond the learners’ academic career, including their future professional and personal development. This enhances the relevancy and frames the content.*

**Introduction**

Write your engaging module introduction.

**Objectives**

*Objectives should be stated clearly in measurable terms based on Bloom’s Taxonomy, which presents measurable objectives across various combinations of the cognitive process and knowledge dimensions. For a list of measurable verbs, we suggest* [*Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy Action Verbs*](https://www.apu.edu/live_data/files/333/blooms_taxonomy_action_verbs.pdf) *from Azusa Pacific University.*

*Refer to your Course Map for your objectives. For examples, refer to the Course Map Examples document.*

By the end of this module, students will be able to:

List measurable objectives

### Learning Essentials

**Required Reading and Viewing Resources**

*List and describe any textbook or other reading assignments, Internet links, library articles, videos, interactives, tutorials, etc. that you require students to read or interact with in this module. Ideally, course materials are presented within a narrative explanation with an introduction, relevance, and how students can use the materials to accomplish objectives.*

**Read**

Insert required reading assignments and briefly explain the purpose of each/how it relates to the module objectives

**View**

Insert required multimedia and briefly explain the purpose of each/how it relates to the module objectives

**Tips/ Study Suggestions**

*Provide helpful hints and/or additional narrative to help students focus on the most important resources or concepts in the lesson. For example, give students guidance for how to move through the required materials or ask questions for them to consider while they work through the resources. This information is typically discipline specific, such as offering learners some acronyms to memorize parts of the body in nursing.*

Insert

### Further Exploration and Practice

*Online courses should include study tools or suggestions (e.g., self-assessments, study guides, helpful hints). Consider any areas where your students will struggle and identify important or complicated topics and create and/or curate supportive materials to aid student success. List and describe any optional self-checks, Internet links, articles, readings, etc. that could be helpful for the struggling student or for the ambitious student who wants to know more.*

**Recommended Resources**

Insert

**Interactive Practice and Study Resources**

Insert

### Graded Assessments & Activities

**Discussion Board**

The course includes intentional opportunities for peer interaction and collaboration. It is recommended that at least one discussion activity be included each week. Regular interaction with peers in the course is required. Discussion **forums should not be recall activities**, but drive students towards **application of skills or analysis**, in addition to evidence-based justification. Consider going beyond that to have a discussion where students tie the content to their own lives and engage in reflection or transfer of learning outside of the parameters of the course.

*Notes: AU Online requires student-to-student interactions in every module of the course. Also, the deadlines of Thursday/Sunday are standardized across all AU Online courses and all AU Online forums use the Q&A setting which requires learners to make their initial post before they can see their classmates’ posts.*

**General Discussion Instructions**

Please review the current discussion topic/question and post your initial response by 11:55pm Central time on Thursday and remember to respond to at least two (2) other classmates’ posts (respond to at least one peer who has the fewest responses) no later than 11:55pm Central time on Sunday.

Your response should be insightful, thoughtful, and analytical. Please note that you will not see your classmates’ messages until you create your initial post.

**Background/Context**

*Introduce the discussion topic by providing any needed background information and context. Connect it to the module’s objective(s), content, and generate a broader sense of relevance.*

*Insert discussion Background/Context here.*

**Initial Post**

*Consider drafting a sample response for learners, particularly for the first discussion board. This will “show” rather than “tell” them what is expected and they are more likely to move towards that level of achievement.*

Insert the discussion board prompt/question

**Response Posts**

Your response to your classmate’s posting must be be thoughtful, substantial, and polite – not just a “well done” phrase or “I agree.”

Insert additional expectations/examples for appropriate replies to peers.

*(Note: A rubric is required for the discussion forums and will be linked to each discussion activity. Please add your rubric to the Rubrics Shared folder, where you can review some example rubrics from other AU Online courses.)*

***(Note****: Remember your course needs to add up to 1000points. So keep this in mind as you decide on the total amount of your assignments/assessments.)*

*Upload your rubric for discussions in the Rubrics folder.*

**Graded Assignment**

*Please provide instructions if you have an assignment you would like submitted for this lesson. When writing the activity, consider how the assignment drives higher order thinking (analysis, evaluation, synthesis, reflection, etc.). One model for building effective assignment prompts is the* [*TILT method*](https://tilthighered.com/tiltexamplesandresources)*, from TILT Higher Ed.*

**Instructions**

Insert instructions

Due: by 11:55pm Central time on Sunday

Total possible points: \_\_\_\_\_

**Purpose**

Provide a statement which guides learners to how the activity will benefit their learning and is connected to the learning objective.

**Skills** State specific skills which the learner will practice. Articulate how these skills can be used in the future in the course, the field, and professional lives, if possible.

**Knowledge** Insert the knowledge that the learner will exhibit/reinforce through the activity.

**Task**

Insert a sequenced list of activities learners should perform.

**Evaluation Criteria**

Insert criteria for success, including characteristics of the final product. Reference the grading rubric.

*(****Note:*** *Rubrics are required for each open-ended assignment and will be linked to the activity. Please add your rubric to the Rubrics Shared folder, where you can review some example rubrics from other AU Online courses.)*

***(Note****: Remember your course needs to add up to 1000 points. So keep this in mind as you decide on the total amount of your assignments/assessments.)*

*Upload your rubric for discussions in the Rubrics folder.*

**Project Milestone/Group Assignment/Etc.**

*Please provide instructions if you have an assignment you would like submitted for this lesson. Examples might include partner work, peer reviews, group projects, draft submissions of individual projects or papers, etc. This could also be a reminder for learners to begin working on a larger assignment that is due in a future module.*

**Instructions**

Insert instructions

Due: by 11:55pm Central time on Sunday

Total possible points: \_\_\_\_\_

**Purpose**

Provide a statement which guides learners to how the activity will benefit their learning and is connected to the learning objective.

**Skills** State specific skills which the learner will practice. Articulate how these skills can be used in the future in the course, the field, and professional lives, if possible.

**Knowledge** Insert the knowledge that the learner will exhibit/reinforce through the activity.

**Task**

Insert a sequenced list of activities learners should perform.

Consider including how each learner will be organized into groups, how interim and peer assessments will be conducted, and how learners will be individually and collectively evaluated and monitored.

**Evaluation Criteria**

Insert criteria for success, including characteristics of the final product. Reference the grading rubric.

*(****Note:*** *Rubrics are required for each open-ended assignment and will be linked to the activity. Please add your rubric to the Rubrics Shared folder, where you can review some example rubrics from other AU Online courses.)*

***(Note****: Remember your course needs to add up to 1000points. So keep this in mind as you decide on the total amount of your assignments/assessments.)*

*Upload your rubric for discussions in the Rubrics folder.*

**Quiz/Test/Exam**

*An automatically scoring quiz/test/exam can be included where appropriate. These can be low-stakes formative activities or high-stakes summative assessments. A quiz/test can assess objective questions whereas the discussion forum will assess subjective. Quizzes can incorporate multiple choice, true/false, as well as short essay. A minimum of 10 questions is generally recommended.*

***Instructions***

Insert instructions for students. Attach quiz or test file with answer key separately. Answer keys should be provided for all quiz formats, including a grading guide for short answers or essay responses.

Please note any settings that should be applied to the quiz below:

Quiz Name:

Quiz Description (for students):

Time limit (Yes/NO, if yes, duration):

Grade (total points):

Grade to pass (if applicable):

Attempts allowed:

Number of questions per page (default is 5):

Shuffle withing questions (Yes/No):

Review Options: Note any changes to the below default settings.

Graphical user interface, text, application

Description automatically generated

Due: by 11:55 p.m. Central time on Sunday

### Summary and Look Ahead

**Summary**

*Insert a brief summary of the topics and activities for this module, and how they prepare students for the upcoming module. Prompt learners to reflect on their learning, including breakthroughs or challenges, and connect that learning to the course goals.*

**Module Checklist (optional)**

*Provide a list of actions learners should have completed for this module. For instance, a checklist might say something like:*

*Before moving on, be sure that you have (all required except those noted):*

* *-Read Chapter 1*
* *-Viewed the TedTalk*
* *-Read the scholarly article on XYZ*
* *-Reviewed the supplemental resources (optional)*
* *-Taken the Self-Assessment (optional)*
* *-Participated in the discussion board*
* *-Submitted your assignment 1*
* *-Posted a learning reflection (optional)*

*Insert module checklist here.*

**Looking Ahead**

*Insert a brief preview of the topics and activities for the next module. Include reminders about projects or upcoming activities.*

## Quick Resources

**Content Structure**

* [Modular Course Design](https://ctl.wiley.com/modular-course-design/?hilite=%27content%27)
* [Organizing Instructional Materials to Maximize Student Engagement](https://ctl.wiley.com/organizing-instructional-materials-to-maximize-student-engagement/?hilite=%27content%27)

**Finding and Writing Good Content**

* [Copyright Infringement and Plagiarism: Yes, Instructors Can Do It Too](https://ctl.wiley.com/copyright-infringement-and-plagiarism-yes-instructors-can-do-it-too/?hilite=%27content%27)
* [Instructional Materials](https://ctl.wiley.com/instructional-materials/?hilite=%27content%27)
* [Five Great uses of Video in Online Courses](https://ctl.wiley.com/five-great-uses-of-video-in-online-courses/?hilite=%27content%27)
* [Considerations When Using Publisher materials in Online Courses](https://ctl.wiley.com/using-publisher-materials-effectively-online-courses/?hilite=%27content%27)
* [Using Supplemental Resources in the Online Classroom](https://ctl.wiley.com/using-supplemental-resources-online-classroom/?hilite=%27content%27)
* [How to Find Quality Open Educational Resources (OERs)](https://ctl.wiley.com/how-to-find-quality-open-educational-resources-oers/?hilite=%27content%27)
* [Providing Context: Review, Preview, Motivate](https://ctl.wiley.com/providing-context-review-preview-motivate/?hilite=%27content%27)
* [Kinesthetic Learning in an Online Learning Environment](https://ctl.wiley.com/kinesthetic-learning-online-learning-environment/?hilite=%27content%27)

**Accessibility**

* [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines at a Glance](https://ctl.wiley.com/web-content-accessibility-guidelines-at-a-glance/?hilite=%27content%27)
* [How to Ensure Accessibility for Educational Videos](https://ctl.wiley.com/how-to-ensure-accessibility-for-educational-videos/?hilite=%27content%27)
* [Improving Accessibility for All Users](https://ctl.wiley.com/improving-accessibility-for-all-users/?hilite=%27content%27)

**Assessment**

* [Basics of Online Assessment](https://ctl.wiley.com/basics-on-online-assessment/?hilite=%27content%27)
* [Creative Methods of Assessment in Online Learning](https://ctl.wiley.com/creative-methods-of-assessment-in-online-learning/?hilite=%27assessment%27)
* [Scaffolding Learning in the Online Classroom](https://ctl.wiley.com/scaffolding-learning-in-the-online-classroom/?hilite=%27assessment%27)
* [Addressing Student Choice in Assignment Submissions](https://ctl.wiley.com/addressing-student-choice-in-assignment-submissions/?hilite=%27assessment%27)
* [Tools for Online Asynchronous Learning](https://ctl.wiley.com/tools-online-asynchronous-learning/?hilite=%27content%27)
* [Expanding the Virtual Classroom: Making Science Labs Available to Online Students](https://ctl.wiley.com/expanding-virtual-classroom-making-science-labs-available-online-students/?hilite=%27content%27)
* [Three Tips for Writing Measurable Objectives](https://ctl.wiley.com/3-tips-writing-measurable-objectives/?hilite=%27content%27)
* [The Benefits of Rubrics in Online Classes](https://ctl.wiley.com/the-benefits-of-rubrics/?hilite=%27content%27)
* [Authentic Assessment in the Online Classroom](https://ctl.wiley.com/authentic-assessment-in-the-online-classroom/?hilite=%27assessment%27)
* [Teaching with Instant Feedback in Automated Assessments](https://ctl.wiley.com/teaching-with-instant-feedback-in-automated-assessments/?hilite=%27assessment%27)

**Group Work**

* [Group Projects in Online Courses](https://ctl.wiley.com/group-projects-in-online-courses/?hilite=%27group%27%2C%27Project%27)

**Community**

* [Creating Module Introduction Videos](https://ctl.wiley.com/creating-module-introduction-videos/?hilite=%27content%27)
* [Establishing Presence: Quick Tips](https://ctl.wiley.com/establishing-presence-quick-tips/?hilite=%27group%27%2C%27Project%27)
* [When Should you Email Students in Your Online Class?](https://ctl.wiley.com/when-should-you-e-mail-students-in-your-online-class/?hilite=%27technology%27)
* [Tips for Designing Live Sessions](https://ctl.wiley.com/tips-designing-live-sessions/?hilite=%27technology%27)

**Discussion Boards**

* [Developing Deep Reflection in Discussion Boards](https://ctl.wiley.com/developing-deep-reflection-in-discussion-boards/?hilite=%27assessment%27)
* [Three ways to Encourage Conversation in Online Discussion Forums](https://ctl.wiley.com/three-ways-to-encourage-conversation-in-online-discussion-forums/?hilite=%27assessment%27)
* [Creating Engagement Through Discussion Forums](https://ctl.wiley.com/creating-engagement-discussion-forums/?hilite=%27group%27%2C%27Project%27)
* [Ensuring Students Are Thinking and Understanding in the Online Classroom](https://ctl.wiley.com/ensuring-students-thinking-understanding-online-classroom/?hilite=%27assessment%27)