

Oxford Centre for Staff and Learning Development
Open educational resources (OERs)

Week 4: Designing your own course

In this, the final week of the course, we will be putting together all that we have introduced so far about: learning, designing for learning, evaluating designs and creating designs that are shareable.

The aims of this week therefore are to:

- present and gain feedback on your own learning activity design
- consider how to extend your course

Revisiting activity design frameworks

Over the past three weeks, we have explored how we design, represent and evaluate learning activities using a number of approaches. The design frameworks we looked at in week 2 are just three of many. See the Healthy Eating Case Study for alternative ways of representing the same activity using different methods, specifically for a collaborative inquiry task:

<http://www.ld-grid.org/resources/learning-designs/pi-project-healthy-eating-activity>.

What becomes evident when browsing these various representations and descriptions of the learning, and in your own learning design groupwork, is the complexity of the learning interactions that we are attempting to represent.

The decisions you make during the design of each activity within a larger course need to mesh with the overall course design. Some elements of an activity may be built upon through a longer course, such as a learning portfolio, other elements will have shorter duration, a skills lab, a tutorial on a concept, or an individual or group assignment, for example. The value of setting out a detailed learning design is that it helps us to make our intentions explicit (even to ourselves) and enables us to make more informed decisions about our online courses, about how learners might achieve the intended outcomes, processes/strategies, tools/technologies, roles, and timing.

The way in which these learning activity designs fit into a larger course can be

represented in a storyboard, which is another useful technique you may like to explore after this course. Practical storyboard guidelines and templates are available from the University of Leicester's Carpe Diem learning design resources at <http://www2.le.ac.uk/projects/oer/oers/beyond-distance-research-alliance/7cs-workshop-resources>.

Extending your learning activities

In Appendix 5 of the course text is a Course Design Checklist. This is a handy series of prompts to consider the broader scope of a learning design, particularly useful when thinking about course level decisions. In Chapter 12 of the course text, Ellaway introduces other considerations that impact on your learning design, such as the assessment of practice-based knowledge, professional requirements and more complex curricula.

One of the prompts in Appendix 5 asks you to state your resources to support the course and this is where we would like to focus some attention in our final week. Adopting and adapting the materials of others is not a new concept in teaching. However, there has been massive investment recently in enabling this in online learning, under the banner of open educational resources (OERs), which has been facilitated through open licensing solutions such as Creative Commons.

OERs offer many opportunities for extending the resources you provide for learners, but these need to be integrated effectively into the overall learning design. For more on OERs and their impact in higher education in the UK, see White's recent study (2011), which identifies the high value that learners place in collating trusted lists of resources that relate to the learning content. For tutors, OERs provide value not only directly for mediating content, but also more conceptually for prompting teaching ideas. Whilst Google tends to be the first port of call for many of us when we are searching for resources or ideas in our teaching, it is often more fruitful to search some of the repositories, starting with the JISC-funded service Jorum <http://www.jorum.ac.uk>, which provides access to many of the valuable outputs of nationally-funded projects as well as acting as a window onto institutional repositories.

Task 1: Learning activity design for your course (2 hours)

Step 1: Complete the Course design checklist (Appendix 5) in relation to the course you are thinking of designing (or continue working up the security systems example, if you would prefer).

Step 2: Use one of the learning activity frameworks from week 2, or another method of

your choice, to represent a unit of learning within your course.

Step 3: Post your learning activity design and outline information about the course (derived from the checklist) onto your personal wiki page in the Week 4 Our Learning Designs wiki. Note that this is open to all participants to view.

Task 2: Feeding back on learning activity designs (2 hours)

Using one of the evaluation methods we discussed in the previous week, give feedback on 2 other designs using the Comments tool on their wiki page. In your feedback to others, consider improvements and where possible propose OERs that might supplement the designed activity. As a courtesy, identify yourself by using a text colour and close your feedback with [your name].

Think carefully about the feedback and suggestions you receive on your own design and the implications of making any changes. Note: You are not expected to offer an improved design before the end of this course.

Task 3: Final reflections

Well we've reached the final week of the course. Congratulations for getting to this stage. In the Week 4 Reflections discussion topic, we'll prompt you to reflect on your learning experience over the past week. Here are some questions to consider:

- Have you taken any ideas about learning design from this course that you may implement?
- What use are you planning to make of OERs in the courses that you teach?
- Can you see yourself making any other changes to your practice after this course is over?

In addition, we are inviting your feedback on the full course in our open discussion Final Course Feedback, and in our anonymous feedback survey.

By sharing your thoughts on this you should have plenty of information and ideas to take away with you at the end of the course.

Key readings this week (1 hour)

- **Course text:** Appendix 5: Course Design Checklist, p.233-234
- **Course text:** Chapter 12 'Discipline-based designs for learning' by Rachel Ellaway

- White (2011) Open Educational Resources: The value of re-use in higher education, available at <http://www.tall.ox.ac.uk/research/past/OERImpact.php>

Background resources and references

- Beetham, H., Falconer, I., McGill, L. and Littlejohn, A. (2012) Open practices: briefing paper. JISC, 2012 <https://oersynth.pbworks.com/w/page/51668352/OpenPracticesBriefing>
- Academy/JISC Open Educational Resources Programme Phase 3 <http://www.jisc.ac.uk/oer>
- University of Leicester's Carpe Diem learning design resources (2012) <http://www2.le.ac.uk/projects/oer/oers/beyond-distance-research-alliance/7cs-workshop-resources>.
- Jorum repository service <http://www.jorum.ac.uk/>

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