

## Week 2: Designing for learning

We spent the previous week discussing the contexts in which our courses take place (our learners and available tools) as well as engaging with the notions of quality and readiness. This week we turn to our purposes and intentions for our courses - that is, our learning outcomes. How can we design tasks that will enable our learners to achieve the intended learning outcomes?

As educators we design activities based on methods we commonly use and which we derive from personal experience and rules of thumb. Often these are in line with the plethora of literature which provides us with a number of tips and tricks of how we should interact with our learners. However, the student experience is largely determined by the way in which we structure these activities and how we choose to use resources and technology. This in turn is determined by the theories and conceptions of learning and teaching that we hold (for example, whether we believe that 'learning' is more a process or a product?).

The concept of 'learning design' provides us with a systematic approach to developing learning experiences and it encompasses a number of deliberately planned tasks which aim to assist learners in achieving the intended learning outcomes. A useful analogy for learning design would be to consider the act of learning as being similar to a dance which we ask learners to perform individually or collectively. The concept of learning design is akin to the choreography of that dance as it outlines the steps, the sequence, and the props that are needed. As such a learning design will include a description of the learners, the space in the environment in which they learn and the tools they use to interact with others.

There have been two main developments in the provision of practical guidance for teachers in producing learning designs: frameworks and toolkits.

First, have been frameworks for describing the learning designs. Such frameworks encourage teachers to consider all the variables that might influence their design (Beetham's Figure 2.1 might be a simple example of such a framework). Such explicit and detailed structuring could have benefits in clearly specifying what the learners will actually do, what problems might arise at which points, and the resources that will be required. They also provide a focus for discussion and debate within course teams. This week we

would like you to explore two such frameworks:

- the AUTC model of Resources, Tasks and Supports developed by Ron Oliver and colleagues at Edith Cowan University, Australia
- the Hybrid Learning Model (HLM) developed by Alan Masson and his team at the University of Ulster CETL as an application of the 8LEM Model developed by Dominique Verpoorten and colleagues at the University of Liege.

Second have been learning design toolkits that guide teachers through a series of decisions related to the variables that might influence their design, and make suggestions for tools and activities. We will not cover these toolkits on this course, although we have provided some links in the Background Resources if you want to explore them later.

Our focus then this week is the decisions we need to make in preparing for an online course which will influence what the student does. It is about designing for learning activities which are achievable, motivating and enjoyable for students and which use technologies in ways that support rather than restrict their learning. Next week, we will go on to look at evaluating learning activity designs.

## Tutorial to start groupwork (1 hour)

At the beginning of this week, we will split into two subgroups: the Red Group and the Blue Group. Each group has been allocated a tutor and a time for an initial tutorial in Wimba Classroom.

The purpose of the tutorial is to:

- Share and clarify understanding of the group task
- Identify roles for each group member
- Decide what technology you will use for group communication (e.g. discussion forums, Wimba, etc) and construction of our output (e.g. powerpoint, google docs, course wiki).
- Make a plan for completing the groupwork by the end of week 2.

## Groupwork (3 hours, split over the week)

In your group you will design a learning activity which will enable learners to achieve some defined learning outcomes. In order to do this you will need to

- **Consider the following topic, format and resources.** We will use this hypothetical scenario as the basis of our groupwork.
  - **Topic:** At the end of this unit students will have knowledge of a range of security systems used by stores to protect their merchandise, staff and/or

premises.

- **Format:** This is part of a 12 week module which is being offered to 20 students. The above component represents 1 week of study time. All students have internet access.
- **Resources:** Textbook with examples, case studies, URLs, OERs, various communication and collaboration tools (i.e. email, discussion forums, wikis, social networking sites), physical site visits, Moodle, etc.
- **Choose a technology or technologies to mediate the learning activity.** We expect that you will draw on the tools you used in Week 1 as well as tools which we have specifically set up for this task. We have created a discussion forum, a google doc and a wiki space for each subgroup. We will discuss this aspect of group working in the synchronous tutorial. In deciding on which tools your learners will be using for the task, you may find it helpful to look at Laurillard's typology of tools (Appendix 3 in the course textbook) to extend your current range.
- **Specify the task.** Write a short brief for the learners, drawing on what you know/assume about your learners (drawing on readings and discussions in Week 1). In your groups you may wish to give your learners particular characteristics (i.e. mature learners, geographically dispersed, in full/part-time employment, etc). Furthermore, in your planning you should:
  - Consider what specifically you want the students to learn
  - Identify each of the component steps of the learning experience
  - Define how students will be assessed.

Appendix 4 of the core text provides a helpful checklist for summarising your design considerations.

- **Represent your task design.** This will be the main output of your groupwork, which will be shared with other participants from this and possibly future cohorts of 'Designing Your Online Course'. Use either the AUTC or HLM frameworks to present a free-standing, self-explanatory, visual representation of your design. (If you are familiar with other models, you may use those, although you should include a rationale for your choice).

You can present the output of your groupwork in a format of your choice e.g. as a powerpoint show or diagrams and supporting text on the wiki. You should make available the representation of your design no later than 4 pm (GMT) on Sunday 11 November 2012 and email your tutor the link.

## Week 2 reflections (1 hour)

As usual, we suggest that you spend some time at the end of the week reflecting on and recording your learning from the week's activities. In addition to noting what you have discovered about learning design, this week, you might also want to share your reflections

on your experiences of working collaboratively online.

## Key readings this week (1 hour)

- **Course text:** Chapter 5 'Describing ICT based learning designs that promote quality learning outcomes' by Ron Oliver and colleagues.
- **Course text:** Verpoorten, D., Poumay, M. & Dieudonné, L. (2007) The 8 Learning Events Model: a Pedagogic Conceptual Tool Supporting Diversification of Learning Methods Experienced by the Online Student. *Interactive Learning Environments*, 15 (2), 151-160. Available to download from <http://orbi.ulg.ac.be/handle/2268/10129> (scroll down to bottom of page to click on the open access PDF file).
- **Course text:** Chapter 6 'Describing Learning Activities' by Grainne Conole. Note: this is a sneak preview of Conole's updated Chapter 6 from the forthcoming 2nd edition of *Rethinking Pedagogy* (uncorrected proof, publication pending).

## Background resources

- The Learning Designs website houses exemplars, resources and tools produced from the AUTC funded project Information and Communication Technologies and Their Role in Flexible Learning project at <http://www.learningdesigns.uow.edu.au/>. Go to the 'exemplars' section, select one or two of interest and follow links through designers voice > context > more until you find the visual representations of the design sequence similar to that in Fig 5.2 of the set text (p.72).
- The Hybrid Learning Model from the Institutional E-learning Services CETL at the University of Ulster at <http://cetl.ulster.ac.uk/elearning/hlm.php>. The site includes resources you can download and use to take you through the model. The HLM is based on the 8LEM Model from the University of Liege.
- The Learning Design Support Environment, developed by Diana Laurillard at the Institute of Education in London, which aims to scaffold and support teacher's decision making during designing for learning, at <https://sites.google.com/a/kl.ac.uk/ldse/>. You can download a beta version of the tool.
- The Pedagogical Pattern collector (<http://thor.dcs.bbk.ac.uk/projects/LDSE/Dejan/ODC/ODC.html>) is an online data collection tool has been developed for the purposes of the LDSE project (mentioned above). Three sets of tasks enable you to explore the pedagogical pattern approach to systematising teaching practice.
- Phoebe is a web based application developed at the University of Oxford which encourages the documenting and sharing of learning designs at <http://phoebe-app.conted.ox.ac.uk/>. It is easy and free to register.

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