D2L Course Design Guidelines

The *D2L Course Design Guidelines* outline 10 key elements of course design and delivery to:

- Help instructors create high-quality learning experiences
- Support diverse learners
- Statically approach to course setup, facilitation, and engagement

View additional details, examples, and resources in the D2L Course Design Training.

The guidelines are organized into the following sections:

1. Course Learning Outcomes
2. Assessment Evidence/Learning Experiences
3. Universal Design for Learning and Accessibility
4. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging
5. D2L Course Shell Setup and Layout
6. Course Overview and Introduction
7. Facilitation and Instruction
8. Interaction, Communication, Engagement
9. Course Technology and Tools
10. Course Summary and Wrap-Up

1. Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) identify the desired results (knowledge, skills, abilities or attitudes) that students are expected to attain by the end of the course. CLOs guide the development of all course elements, including assessments, learning activities, pedagogies, and other course materials. **Note: Course Learning Outcomes are set by Departments and should not be altered in any way.**

Item	Description
	Before the Course Starts
1.1	Review the Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) for relevancy and alignment to course assessments and materials. Official Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) can be viewed via LCC's Concourse Syllabus System.
1.2	Ensure the CLOs are observable and measurable, that students have opportunities to demonstrate learning, and that student achievement of the CLOs can be assessed.
1.3	Create enabling objectives to support and enable achievement of the CLOs. These may be known as module or weekly objectives.
1.4	Verify all course materials and resources align with and support one or more CLO. All course content promotes the achievement of the CLOs.
1.5	Confirm all CLOs are being assessed, and at an appropriate cognitive level for the course (Bloom's Taxonomy).
1.6	Incorporate diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging (DEIB) into CLOs and enabling objectives to ensure a welcoming and affirming learning environment for all students.

2. Assessment Evidence/Learning Experiences

Assessment evidence looks at the evaluation methods used to measure student learning. Learning experiences provide students opportunities to practice learning and comprehension.

Item	Description
	Before the Course Starts

Item	Description
2.1	Include a variety of formative and summative assessments and learning experiences.
2.2	Apply Universal Design for Learning (UDL) guidelines to assessment and learning experience design. UDL focuses on creating flexibility (when possible), and scaffolding learning into smaller chunks.
2.3	Use a combination of synchronous and asynchronous assignments and activities, where appropriate.
	Throughout the Course
2.4	Incorporate a variety of assessment methods.
2.5	Provide clear, detailed instructions for course assignments and learning experiences.
2.6	Provide grading rubrics/checklists for assignments and activities.
2.7	Provide opportunities for students to reflect on their learning throughout the course (Blogs, Journals, Surveys etc.).

3. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Accessibility

Review all course elements for potential barriers that may hinder student success. Incorporate Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Guidelines and LCC's Accessibility Guidelines *during* the course design process, rather than an afterthought.

Item	Description
	Before Course Starts
3.1	Incorporate UDL principles into course design, assessments, and teaching methods to proactively support diverse learners by building in flexibility and removing barriers.
3.2	Support diverse learners by providing multiple ways for students to engage with course content, understand it, and demonstrate their learning.

Item	Description
3.3	Use LCC's Accessibility Guidelines to review and update course materials and resources with accessibility issues. This includes instructor-created materials, third-party content, and external links (such as websites and YouTube videos).
3.4	Keep course files in their original formats whenever possible. For example, upload a Word document as a Word file instead of converting it to a PDF.
3.5	Review the D2L Course Accessibility Report to check the accessibility scores for all course files. Aim for a score of 67% or higher, as shown by the light or dark green accessibility indicator.
3.6	Break long video files (20 minutes or longer) into smaller chunks by creating chapters, or by separating into parts, when possible.
	Throughout the Course
3.7	Review and update low(er) scoring course files identified on the D2L Course Accessibility Report to ensure materials are fully accessible.

4. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB)

Design the course with diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging in mind from the start. Create a welcoming learning environment by considering the different needs and life experiences students bring to the course.

Item	Description
	Before Course Starts
4.1	Review and update course policies and expectations to support equity and inclusivity, including policies on late submissions, due dates, and quiz or test parameters.
4.2	Review course resources and materials for DEIB support. Consider whether materials represent diverse populations, reduce barriers and bias, create a welcoming and respectful learning environment, and help students feel included, accepted, and valued.
4.3	Reimagine course content by diversifying readings and materials to reflect a range of perspectives and identities, including gender, race, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, political viewpoint, and nationality.

5. D2L Course Shell Setup and Layout

Build and structure the course in D2L with a focus on organization, consistency, and clarity from a student perspective. It is strongly recommended to build the entire course in D2L prior to the first day to allow time to reflect and review the course as a whole.

Item	Description
	Before Course Starts
5.1	Provide a Start Here/Getting Started module.
5.2	Organize the course by **week** to support a logical, consistent, and easy-to-follow layout.
5.3	Place all materials for each week in one location. For example, the Week 1 folder should include everything needed to complete Week 1.
5.4	Set up the D2L Gradebook with all graded course components, and make sure gradebook item titles and point values match the corresponding items in other areas of the course.
5.5	Release Final Calculated grade in the D2L Gradebook so students can view the current cumulative course grade.
5.6	Drop ungraded items in the D2L Gradebook so students can view the current grade based only on already completed/graded assignments.
5.7	Ensure all information in the D2L course shell is accurate for the current semester, including instructor information, dates, course materials, etc.
5.8	Review the D2L course for duplicated content, broken links, and outdated materials.
5.9	Label optional/supplemental course content and materials.
5.10	View the course from a student role to confirm course materials are set to Visible, or Hidden (if intended).
5.11	Verify the course does not exceed the 700MB Course Size Limit Procedure.

6. Course Overview and Introduction

Create a welcoming, respectful learning environment by connecting with students and sharing your commitment to support diverse learning needs. Communicate important course information on the official first day of the course.

Item	Description
	Before the Course Starts
6.1	Update the Concourse Syllabus to reflect the current semester.
6.2	Personalize the Course Information Template located within D2L Content.
	On the First Official Day (Course Start)
6.3	Post a *Welcome to the Course* announcement on the first day of class.
6.4	Send a *Welcome to the Course* email to students on the first day of class.
6.5	Provide a Course Schedule that outlines all required course assignments, activities, and reading. View the Course Schedule example to download and create a version specific to your course.
	During the First Week
6.6	Create a welcoming learning environment by building connections, maintaining open communication, and considering the individual needs of each student.
6.7	Get to know students by providing an activity to learn more about their expectations, unique needs, and life experiences. • Develop an activity, such as a survey, discussion, email, etc. • View a sample Getting to Know You Survey, or create your own.

7. Facilitation and Instruction

Incorporate a variety of teaching strategies and styles to support students with diverse learning needs. Facilitation and instruction should aim to foster student-centered learning by encouraging students to be active participants in learning.

Item	Description
	Before Course Starts
7.1	Select a variety of teaching strategies to use throughout the course to reach and support diverse learners.
7.2	Select teaching strategies and styles that support the course assessments, learning experiences, and the Course Learning Outcomes.
	Throughout the Course
7.3	Deliver course content using a variety of methods including lectures, weekly readings, labs, worksheets, discussions, multimedia, demonstrations.
7.4	Incorporate Universal Design for Learning (UDL) into course facilitation and instruction to account for learner variability.

8. Interaction, Communication, and Engagement

Provide students with multiple opportunities to engage throughout the course. Plan regular interaction using a variety of methods to help reach and support all students.

Item	Description
	Before Course Starts
8.1	Provide opportunities throughout the course that support Instructor-Student engagement, Student-Student engagement, and Student-Content engagement.
8.2	Create a communication plan by determining when, what, and how you will communicate with students.
	Throughout the Course
8.3	Use a variety of communication methods to reach students, such as: ● Sending individual or whole class emails. ● Posting course announcements. ● Responding to students on *each* discussion topic. ● Providing assignment feedback.
8.4	Model respectful interactions and communication.
8.5	Monitor and actively participate in online discussions, both in-person or online in D2L.
8.6	Provide useful, timely feedback on course assignments and activities.
8.7	Provide multiple opportunities for students to ***receive*** feedback throughout the course.
8.8	Provide multiple opportunities for students to ***provide*** feedback about the course.
8.9	Use a variety of engagement techniques (methods, technologies, and formats) to support learner variability and students' unique needs.
8.10	Provide opportunities for group work/collaboration.

Item	Description
8.11	Create a community of engaged students by: ● Making connections with students. ● Being enthusiastic and passionate about the course. ● Building trust. ● Modeling empathy, kindness, and compassion. ● Empowering students through strengths. ● Considering how students best learn. ● Welcoming mistakes as part of the learning process. (Sochacki, 2020)

9. Course Technology and Tools

Use a variety of technology tools to present course content, engage students, and support how students demonstrate learning. Make sure each tool aligns with and supports the Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs).

Item	Description
	Before Course Starts
9.1	Select appropriate technologies, tools, and media to deliver course content that supports the CLOs.
9.2	Verify required software has been vetted by LCC's ITS Department, and is on the approved software list.
	Throughout the Course
9.3	Use selected technologies, tools and media to engage and support student learning throughout the course.
9.4	Use LCC's media platform, Kaltura, to record and embed video files into D2L courses.

10. Course Summary and Wrap-Up

Provide opportunities for students to reflect on learning, strengths and weaknesses, and the overall course. At the end of the course, reflect on the course design and delivery; aiming for continuous improvement.

Item	Description
	Near the End of the Course
10.1	Include opportunities for students to reflect on the semester. Some ideas include: ● Written, video, or audio reflections. ● Suggested readings and resources for the future. ● Student surveys for specific course feedback. ● Creative closure activities. ● Online review sessions.
	Before the Last Day of the Course
10.2	Provide students with feedback about overall learning and progress in the course.
10.3	Encourage students to complete the course evaluation.
10.4	Ensure grades and feedback for all course assignments (including earned zeros), as well as the overall course grade is viewable in the D2L gradebook.
	After the Course has Ended
10.5	Reflect on the course design. ● What worked/didn't work? ● Are there areas or items that can be improved? ● What would you like to try next time? ● How can you improve the overall course accessibility?
10.6	Utilize Data and Reporting Tools in D2L to view and analyze course data to make data-driven decisions for future course enhancements.

References

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