Instructor Resource

The Importance of a Course Map

A course map is an effective way to organize and clarify any content that you need to move from a face-to-face setting into a digital environment. In an online space, because learners will often access the course on their own, the design of the content matters. Using a course map will help you plan methodically and bring clarity to how you deliver your course or activity.

A course map is a visual tool used for designing a course or activity, and it shows how you will construct and assess each learning outcome you have identified. A map is one of the first activities in building a course, and it should outline the units and topics that you plan to cover. Using the map will give you an opportunity to align your course outcomes with these topics and plan the activities in accordance with the map.

For language learners, alignment between course outcomes and activities is essential because learners will need to know and feel that the outcome statements are directly related to their activity. They will then rely less on their own background understanding of any implications or any culturally embedded messages involved in a learning activity. Language learners should be able to refer back to stated learning outcomes and see direct connections with their assignments and how they are assessed.

The alignment between outcomes, activities, and assessments provides the opportunity to clearly communicate to your learners the intentions of a course or activity. Course maps help you to organize content in a way that ensures objectives and outcomes are connected directly to content, activities, and assessments.

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It is important to plan and design in advance so that all of the elements of your course are aligned. When planning your course, there are a number of elements to consider. These are detailed on the next page.

Components of a course map

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Learning outcomes guide what you include in your course. They state what learners are supposed to know, what they will be able to do, or what learners will value at the end of a course.

COURSE CONTENT

Course content includes the readings, assignments, and learning activities of a course.

ASSESSMENTS

Assessments are measurements of what learners are expected to know, do, and value as a result of the course.

More information about course maps

Creating a course map is a component of the greater field of Instructional Design, and there are many valid approaches. View the resources below to learn more.

- Two online websites to start creating a course map: Popplet and Mindmeister
- Teaching and Learning with Technology – Brock University
- An Overview of Course Maps – Brock University
- Deeper Information on Learning Outcomes – Brock University
- How a Course Map Puts You on Track for Better Learning Outcomes – Faculty Focus
- Designing an Online Course – Mesa Community College
- Course Mapping – George Mason University