



Effective Course Design or Revision

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I. Things to Remember in Preparing Courses

- a. See **Departmental, College or professional goals and learning outcomes**
 - i. UTCVM Curriculum Guiding Principles
 - ii. SACS Accreditation Learning Outcomes
 - iii. AVMA Accreditation Guidelines
 - iv. NAVLE Job Analysis for veterinarians

- b. **Best Practices in Curriculum and Course Design**
 - i. Conveys high expectations and clear attainable goals
 - ii. Uses diverse teaching methods to address diverse learning styles
 - iii. Ensures coherence throughout course and program
 - iv. Ensures integration with program, curriculum
 - v. Provides opportunities to apply or practice new knowledge and skills
 - vi. Provides opportunities for active and collaborative learning
 - vii. Ensures prompt feedback

II. Steps in Course Design

- a. **Establish Goals and Objectives**
 - i. What are the intended outcomes (knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes)?
 - ii. What are the primary goals of the course?
 - iii. What are the specific objectives?
 - iv. Consider:
 - 1. The field of knowledge
 - 2. Students' previous knowledge base
 - 3. Societal and professional needs
 - 4. Institutional goals and priorities
- b. Determine the **Ideal Sequence and Structure**
- c. Determine the **Ideal Instructional Methods**
- d. Determine the **Materials/Resources Needed**
 - i. Consider time available (also space, funds, etc)
 - ii. Consider faculty available
- e. Determine appropriate student evaluation (assignments/testing/grading)
- f. Plan Assessment and Feedback Strategies

III. Using Feedback for Course Improvement

a. Student Feedback

i. Course evaluations

1. Remember the programmatic and course goals – assess results in light of the course goals
2. Review the numeric results in relation to the course goals
 - a. Compare to previous 3 years results for trends
 - b. Compare to other goals
3. Review comments for themes and validity
 - a. Organize comments as:
 - i. Logistics
 - ii. Organization or Sequencing
 - iii. Content
 - iv. Instructional Methods
 - v. Assessment (exams, objectives, expectations)
 - vi. Other
 - b. Refer back to numeric scores to assess validity
- ii. Develop special evaluation instruments for specific problems or issues

b. Instructor Feedback

- i. Consider a short survey for initial feedback
 1. What worked well?
 2. What didn't work well?
 3. In what areas were students underprepared/overprepared?
 4. What concepts seemed most difficult? What concepts currently have less relevance or importance?
 5. What key content is missing?
 6. What key goals are not being met?
- ii. Discuss at a face-to-face meeting, compare problems, content, areas where consistency needed
- iii. Make plans to assess changes

c. Other Sources of Feedback for Course Design/Revision

- i. Grade distribution
- ii. Feedback from other instructors in program
- iii. Semester evaluations
- iv. Exit or alumni surveys
- v. NAVLE outcomes

IV. Triggers for Course Refinement or Revision

- a. Ongoing course improvement
- b. Need to resolve identified problems
- c. Changes in the discipline
- d. New faculty members with different strengths or perspectives

V. Common Course Problems

- a. Organization, use of time
- b. Perceived relevance
- c. Examinations
- d. Faculty interactions, availability
- e. Logistics

VI. Tips for Major Course Initiatives or Revisions

- a. Consider using student or alumni/practitioner focus groups
- b. Consult instructors teaching in the program in prerequisites, concurrent and subsequent courses
- c. Consider doing student pre-assessment to determine level of preparation
- d. Use an external educational consultant

VII. The Course Report

- a. Copy of Previous Syllabus (additional pages)
- b. Major Objectives for Course
- c. Interpretation of feedback from previous semester
- d. Outcomes (grades, projects, etc.)
- e. Course evaluations (major positives, major negatives, trends)
- f. Instructor input
- g. Peer input (if applicable)
- h. Special projects or assessment activities (if applicable)
- i. Major issues, needs, goals, new objectives
- j. Plans or requests for revision
- k. Proposed lecture/laboratory outline (additional pages, please use course request form)
- l. Revised syllabus if available (additional pages)

References and Resources

Diamond RM. *Designing and Assessing Courses and Curricula: A Practical Guide*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998.

Gross BG. *Tools for Teaching*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001.

University of Queensland Teaching and Educational Development Institute
<http://www.tedi.uq.edu.au/teaching/GradAttributes/index.html>