Office of Assessment, Accreditation, and Institutional Effectiveness

Learning Collaborative Toolkit:

Developing a Course Blueprint

Updated by the Office of Assessment, Accreditation, and Institutional Effectiveness on July 15, 2020

Contents

How to use this tool

Guidance: This Course Blueprint tool allows faculty as well as administrators who deliver programs with student learning objectives to **facilitate student learning** by gaining clarity on the different elements of teaching and learning involved in their course curriculum.

Source:

This Course Blueprints tool is based on Laurie Richlin's book, Blueprint for Learning. The book provides a rich array of tools which faculty can use as part of their course design portfolio. The complete citation is

Richlin, L. Blueprint for learning: Constructing college course to facilitate, access, and document learning. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, LLC and the publisher's website link to the book is here:

https://styluspub.presswarehouse.com/browse/book/9781579221430/Blueprint-for-Learning

Additional sources cited on this Course Blueprint tool are listed at the end of the document, under "References."

What is a course blueprint?

A course blueprint is part of a larger course design portfolio. It is a way for an instructor to map out the different aspects of teaching and learning which go into a given course, thus providing an opportunity to articulate and "draw," so to speak, a holistic picture of the course. This can be helpful for the instructor's own course design and course revision efforts, as well as for discussions with colleagues regarding the course and how it fits into the program curriculum as a whole. It can certainly inform the way that an instructor crafts the syllabus which they share with students.

1) Teaching Goals – Instructor's goals for what to teach, rooted in the theories, content, and big questions of the academic discipline.

2) Learning Objectives – Specified abilities that students will be able to achieve; the behaviors that students will be able to perform after completing the course. These must be observable and measurable, and criteria for their measurement should be described in a rubric.

3) Learning Experience – Activities designed to assist students in achieving the learning objectives. These activities may be passive or active.

4) Evaluation Plan – Assignments, tests, and grading system developed by the instructor used to assess how students reach the course learning objectives.

Learning objectives and Bloom's Taxonomy

A group of cognitive psychologists, curriculum theorists and instructional researchers, and testing and assessment specialists published in 2001 a revision of Bloom's Taxonomy with the title A Taxonomy for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment. Information about this Revised Bloom's Taxonomy is found here: https://www.celt.iastate.edu/teaching/effective-teaching-practices/revised-blooms-taxonomy/

As this resource from the Iowa State University Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning explains,

> A statement of a learning objective contains a verb (an action) and an object (usually a noun). The verb generally refers to [actions associated with] the intended cognitive process. The object generally describes the knowledge students are expected to acquire or construct. The cognitive process dimension represents a continuum of increasing cognitive complexity—from remember to create. . . . The knowledge dimension represents a range from concrete (factual) to abstract (metacognitive).

Please access the above-referenced Iowa State University web page for full-color details and explanations about the revised taxonomy, and how it can be used to write clear learning objectives.

Course blueprint sample

Below is a sample, based on page 69 of Richlin's book.

Sample Framework for Integrating Information Literacy into a Course

Knowledge Dimension: Information Literacy
Cognitive Process: Apply

TG = Teaching Goal	Students will understand how to construct and implement effective research strategies
LO = Learning Objective	Students completing this course will be able to 1. design a general process for searching for information; 2. gather and evaluate information, and 3. appropriately modify the search plan as new insights are gained
LE = Learning Experience	1. Class discussions 2. Library workshop on using library resources for research 3. Lectures
EP = Evaluation Plan	Assignments: 1. Students develop a research plan, articulating the process from start to finish 2. Students keep a research journal documenting how they located the information

References

Iowa State University Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching. Revised Bloom's taxonomy http://www.celt.iastate.edu/teaching/effective-teaching-practices/revised-blooms-taxonomy/

Richlin, L. Blueprint for learning: Constructing college course to facilitate, access, and document learning. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, LLC.

Course blueprint template

Course number and name:	
Instructor name:	
1) **Teaching Goals** – Instructor's goals for what to teach, rooted in the theories, content, and big questions of the academic discipline.	
2) **Learning Objectives** – Specified abilities that students will be able to achieve; the behaviors that students will be able to perform after completing the course. These must be observable and measurable, and criteria for their measurement should be described in a rubric.	
3) **Learning Experience** – Activities designed to assist students in achieving the learning objectives. These activities may be passive or active.	
4) **Evaluation Plan** – Assignments, tests, and grading system developed by the instructor used to assess how students reach the course learning objectives.	