PLANNING YOUR COURSES

The first academic priority in the Brandon University 2015-2020 Academic Plan is:

To distinguish Brandon University as a leading student-centred institution of choice for students.

To reach this goal, BU is striving towards more student-centred teaching and learning. Student-centered teaching and learning encourages instructors to use methods that shift the focus of their instruction towards their students. Students become more active in their learning and are given more responsibility for learning activities.

Learning Outcomes

Start with the end in mind. As a part of becoming more student-centred, instructors are encouraged to identify the knowledge, skills, attitudes and judgments that students will need to demonstrate by the end of the course. These will be the Learning Outcomes. Learning Outcomes can help you determine how and what to assess, which will help you to develop the learning activities.

Learning Outcomes are made up of three components:
1. **One action verb that defines the level of learning (identify, explain, analyze, create).** What do you want your students to know or be able to know, be able to do, or have changed by the end of the lesson or course?
2. **Content description specifies learning to be demonstrated**. What discipline-specific behaviour will you measure?
3. **Context within which discipline-specific criteria will be applied to learning demonstrated.** What quality measurement will indicate degree of success?

Focus on the observable student demonstration needed to show learning. Some instructors use the SMART method to help shape their outcomes. Are your Learning Outcomes Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-limited?

The Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario has assembled a good collection of resources. http://www.heqco.ca/en-ca/OurPriorities/LearningOutcomes/Pages/Learning-Outcomes-Assessment-Resource-Room.aspx

Here is a useful link to a downloadable list of verbs: http://www.fresnostate.edu/academics/oie/documents/assesments/Blooms%20Level.pdf

If you would like more information on the importance of learning outcomes, how to write them, and how to use them to organize your course and plan your course assessments and evaluations, contact the CTLT.

Course Outline or Syllabus

An essential element for course design is the course outline or syllabus. The outline/syllabus is provided to students on the first day of instruction and utilized throughout the course. Brandon University encourages faculty to adopt the provided course outline/syllabus template as a guideline for all courses.

You may **download a generic course outline template** here.
https://www.brandonu.ca/ctlt/centre-for-teaching-learning-and-technology/resources/
Your Faculty or Department may also have a template to use to create your course outline.
Check with your Dean's office or Administrative Assistant.

REQUIRED IN SYLLABUS/COURSE OUTLINE

*The following is **required** to be on the course outline; however, any supplementary material (attendance, electronic usage, late assignments etc.) can be included at the instructor's discretion*

Statement on Accessibility and Accommodation

Brandon University values diversity and inclusion, recognizing disability as an aspect of diversity. Our shared goal is to create learning environments that are accessible, equitable, and inclusive for all students. Student Accessibility Services (SAS) works with students who have permanent, chronic, or temporary disabilities. SAS supports students by developing an individualized plan of accommodation, helping students understand their learning needs, and assisting faculty with provision of accommodations for students registered with SAS.

If you have, or think you may have, a disability (e.g. mental health, attentional, learning, vision, hearing, physical, medical, or temporary), you are invited to contact Student Accessibility Services to arrange a confidential discussion at (204) 727-9759 or magnussonm@brandonu.ca.

Additional information is available on the Student Accessibility Services website
https://www.brandonu.ca/student-services/student-accessibility-services/

If you are registered with SAS and have a letter requesting accommodations, you are encouraged to contact the instructor early in the term to discuss the accommodations outlined in your letter.

Academic Integrity

See section 3.14 (Academic Dishonesty and Misconduct) of the Undergraduate Calendar or section 3.9 (Academic Dishonesty and Misconduct) of the Graduate Calendar. Violations of this policy will not be tolerated. Plagiarism, cheating, falsification of records or research misconduct will result in disciplinary action. A student who is determined to be responsible for academic dishonesty or misconduct may be subject to the imposition of one or more of the following:
a. Requirement to repeat the assignment or examination, with or without grade reduction
b. Assignment of a grade of zero in the assignment, test or exam
c. Assignment of "F-AD" in the course in which the offence is committed
d. Suspension from some or all courses in which a final grade has not been entered and the assignment of "F-AD" in all such courses
e. Suspension from all Brandon University teams, clubs or like organizations for a period of 1 to 5 years
f. Suspension from the faculty for a period of 1 to 5 years
g. Expulsion from the faculty
h. Suspension from the University for a period of 1 to 5 years
i. Expulsion from the University
j. Cancellation or revocation of degree.

Instructional Message Design

The latest neuroscience research aligns with the experience of veteran teachers. **We learn best by relating to what we already know**. In addition, you may find the following principles of instructional message design useful as you organize your teaching.[1]

- When learning is **more meaningful,** it is acquired more readily and is retained longer. Use familiar examples, images, photos, or diagrams to hook into to previous learning.
- Presenting an **advance organizer** gives students a place to put new information; gives information a structure and helps learning become more meaningful. The organizer may also describe relationships and underlying principles that help learning.
- Learning is highly **dependent on its consequences**. Pleasant, interesting, tension-reducing, useful, instrumental, rewarding, and informative consequences produce more efficient and lasting learning.
- I**nform learners of errors** to match the structure of the advance organizer. Focus on **the correct responses** to support learning.
- **Spaced or distributed practice** results in greater learning than mass practice. Consider adding practice at the end of each "chunk" (7±2 pieces) of new information.
- The **primacy-recency effect** says that cues encountered at first and at end within an instructional unit tend to be better remembered than cues in the middle. Place the information that is most important for your learners at the beginning or the end of a lesson.

Lesson Plans

There are hundreds of templates, guidelines, and checklists for planning lessons. As you gain experience with teaching, you will find one that meets your needs. The following table shows an **example of a lessons plan** that you may find helpful.[2]

Stage	Brief Description
1. Engage Capture their attention	Lead into the lesson in a way that sets the tone for the class, For example: ▪ tell a story ▪ ask a provocative question ▪ present a challenge ▪ share a current news item ▪ show a short video ▪ review a concept from last class and explain how it relates to this lesson.
2. Set the stage – the "Big Picture"	Share the day's learning outcome(s) or guiding question(s) with the students to give them the big picture for the day.
3. Establish base	Find out what (some) students may already know about the topic. You can use this as a base to gauge a shared starting point. It is a way to involve students and lead them from the familiar to the unfamiliar.
4. Activate new content	Present a manageable amount of information at a time (on concept/idea). Make sure materials are logically organized, clarify links to previous or upcoming material, identify transitions, and use questions to get students speaking.

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[1] Fleming, M. & Levie, H. (Eds.) (1993) *Instructional Message Design: Principles from the Behavioral Sciences*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Educational Technology Publications.
[2] Adapted from *Lesson Planning Class by CLAASS* from Carleton University

5. Summarize	Summarize the key points of the lesson in an engaging way. Connect the lesson with what comes next and leave them with a question for the next class.
6. Get feedback	Motivate students through engaging activities. In this portion of the class, give students the chance to apply what you have just explained. There are many ways to evaluate whether the learning outcome and content have been understood. You can use individual or group activities. It can be written work or accomplished through a discussion. Making sure they have learned this material will help prepare them for the next lesson.

Learning Activities

An important part of student-centred teaching and learning is the activities you choose to meet your learning outcomes. Following is a list of activities to consider:

- writing
  - journals, blogging for reflection
  - one-minute papers to summarize what they learned
  - write advertisements or pamphlets to inform the public.
- concept or mind mapping for students to show the relationships of what they learned
- case studies to apply what they learned related to a situation
- debates
- group problem solving
- experiential learning (applying knowledge in real-life settings)
- simulations and/or games
- other options for reporting besides writing a paper
  - design a website
  - produce a video
  - compile a portfolio.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a set of principles and practices for developing curricula and classrooms to enable all individuals to access equal opportunities to learn. UDL provides a framework for creating curricula that meets learner's needs from the start. The framework reduces barriers and optimizes levels of challenge and support to meet the needs of all students.

The CTLT Resources page has many links to important and current information on Universal Design for Learning. https://www.brandonu.ca/ctlt/centre-for-teaching-learning-and-technology/resources/universal-design/