

“IDEAL” ONLINE COURSE DESIGN PROCESS

Course design is not a linear process; many steps overlap and/or are repeated. Some steps are omitted in certain projects, while others are added. While all courses do not follow the same model, the steps below outline an “ideal” online (web-based) course design and development process.

Initial meeting(s) with instructional designer: Course analysis phase

The first meetings with the ID are focused on discussing the current version of the course, reasons for designing the course for online delivery and expectations for the new course delivery mode. The ID learns about the profile of the learners, the instructor’s teaching philosophy and attitudes towards using educational technology. They discuss possible course design formats at a very high level. The ID highlights examples of successful cuLearn hosted online courses.

In subsequent meetings, the instructor expresses her/his decisions about general instructional, assessment, engagement and communication strategies, which become a starting point for course design.

Educational technology decisions and testing

The ID organizes a meeting between the instructor and an educational technology specialist, who will highlight the available options for instructional video recording. If cuPortfolio will be used, the ID organizes a meeting between the instructor and a cuPortfolio specialist. After a demonstration of the tools and training sessions, the instructor will test the tools and decide which to utilize in course design and delivery.

Rough course outline and project plan design

The instructor and ID discuss and make decisions about the rough course outline, structure, and possible assessment and communication strategies. The ID designs a project plan including tasks, responsibilities, deliverables and a timeline.

Typical module/week prototype design

Based on the previous instructional design and educational technology decisions, the ID and instructor decide on a typical module/week design.

Rough course setup in cuLearn: Establishing content repository

The ID creates a rough course setup in cuLearn and establishes a content repository that enables seamless communication between the instructor, ID and CUOL's Media Production Centre (Dropbox folder structure, Google Docs, etc.)

Test video recording (if done by instructor) and feedback

The instructor creates their first test recordings. The ID, in collaboration with the educational technology and media specialist, provides feedback. If the videos will be recorded in the Media Production Centre, the recording sessions are scheduled.

Prototype module design in cuLearn

The ID creates a prototype module in cuLearn, including all elements (lesson activity, practice

questions, assessment, communication and group activities, etc.). The instructor provides feedback.

Detailed course structure design

At this point, the instructional video recording process has been established, and the prototype module design has been accepted as a template. All remaining course design details are decided between the instructor and ID, including the assessment blueprint and grade distribution.

Assessment design in cuLearn (quiz questions database, etc.)

If the course includes quizzes, the quiz questions database needs to be created and imported into cuLearn. All quizzes and additional assessment activities (database activities, uploading files, discussion forums, etc.) are designed.

Collecting suitable copyright cleared media and content

All necessary media and content (images, videos, audio files, documents, etc.) need to be collected and copyright cleared. This might involve a collaboration with the Library on ARES, copyright, digitizing documents, etc.

Preparing material for recording video segments

The instructor prepares all material necessary for recording instructional video segments (images, PowerPoint slides, audio files, videos, etc.). If possible, he/she will also prepare video transcripts.

Recording instructional (and other) videos

The instructor records instructional videos using screen-capture tools (such as Camtasia Relay), or records videos in the Media Production Centre studio.

Recorded video quality assurance (QA)

The ID provides feedback on all recorded videos (comments related to pace, length, e-pedagogy, etc.), and consults with media specialists (EDC, CUOL) on the technical quality of the videos. If needed, the instructor re-records some videos segments.

Closed-captioning of the videos

If videos are to be closed-captioned, the instructor provides transcripts for each video (if applicable) and the ID initiates the closed-captioning process with media services (CUOL).

Final video production, QA and storing on media server

Final version of the videos (including closed-captions, if applicable) are produced by media services (CUOL) and stored on the media server. Alternatively, the instructor uploads videos directly to media server using the cuLearn media plugin.

Design of all course elements in cuLearn

The ID designs and sets up all outstanding course elements in cuLearn. Final design decisions are made between the instructor and ID.

Gradebook setup

The ID organizes a meeting between the instructor and an educational technology specialist for gradebook setup.

Embedding of all course content and media (ARES, external videos, etc.)

The ID embeds all media (instructional and external videos, documents, etc.) in cuLearn.

Set up of all course parameters and permissions

The instructor and ID set up all course parameters (opening and closing dates for instructional and assessment activities, timing of quizzes, content and activity dependencies, permissions, etc.).

Quality assurance of the course functionality and content

Every technical element of the cuLearn course needs to be inspected (cuLearn functionality, all links working, all videos playing, etc.). This is done by the EDC and, if applicable, course testers hired by the instructor.

Quality assurance, apart from being continuously conducted by the instructor, is often conducted with the help of student testers (learners from the target audience) after a portion of the course (the first few modules) has been designed in cuLearn. The feedback (on structure, clarity of instructions, pace) is considered early in the course design, and possible redesign decisions are made.

Course Evaluation

After the first run of the course, the instructor and ID reconvene to analyze:

- Objective student data: quality of achieved learning outcomes, student engagement (course analytics), final grades, course completion rate, etc.
- Subjective data: feedback received from students (midterm evaluation, anonymous voluntary survey, informal feedback) and the instructor’s impressions on the success of the course design and delivery

They will then make decisions on course redesign strategies for the next iteration of the course.

Summary

The graphic below summarizes the “ideal” online courses design steps.

