Ten Strategies to Improve Blended Course Design
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1. Reconceptualize

2. Design

3. Organize

4. Integrate

5. Collaborate

6. Justify

7. Motivate

8. Engage

9. Interrogate

10. Challenge

Ideas About Learning

All three lists from excellent pedagogical scholars were written to improve learning without focusing on technology. As you carefully read each list consider how technology used in a blended course can help with each suggestion.

How Learning Works (Ambrose, Bridges, DiPietro, Lovett, and Norman)

1. Students' Prior Knowledge Affects Learning
2. Organization of Knowledge is Critical
3. Motivation Should be Attended To
4. Pedagogy Requires Developing Mastery in Students
5. Deliberate Practice Improves Learning
6. Course Climate Matters to Learning
7. Students Learn When They Become Self-Directed

Learner-Centered Teaching (Weimer)

1. The Balance of Power
2. The Function of Content
3. The Role of the Teacher
4. The Responsibility for Learning
5. The Purpose and Processes of Evaluation

Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education (Chickering & Gamson)

1. Encourages Contacts Between Students and Faculty
2. Develops Reciprocity and Cooperation Among Students
3. Uses Active Learning Techniques
4. Gives Prompt Feedback
5. Emphasizes Time on Task
6. Communicates High Expectations
7. Respects Diverse Talents and Ways of Learning

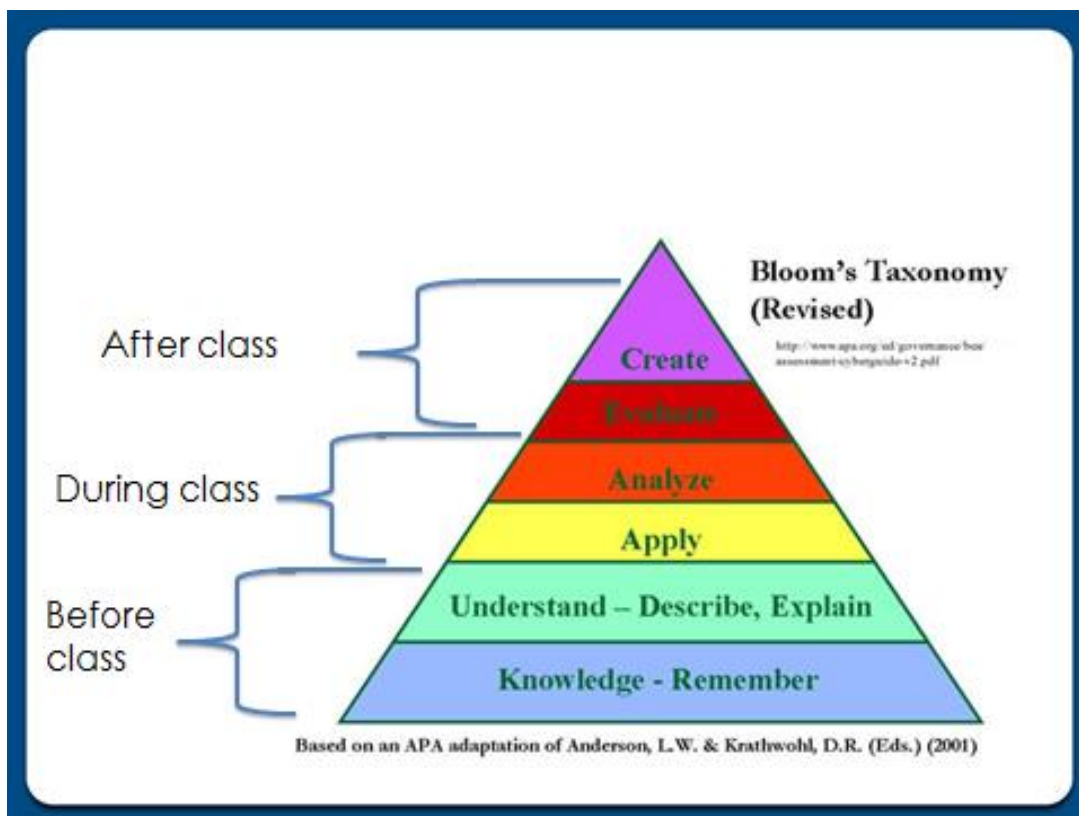*Course Design: Learning Management Software as a Way to Organize*

1. Choose a Format

   a. Daily: most detailed, most restrictive

   b. Weekly: still detailed but a bit less restrictive

   c. Topical: provides some flexibility but risks confusing students

2. Create Learning Goals

   - Use active verbs
   - The LG should be able to help you asses learning (#3 below)
   - The more specific the language the more effective the goal

3. Divide the Content

   a. Create Opportunities for Students to Learn *Before* Class Starts

      - Utilize on-line resources for lower-level learning
      - If you grade use low-stakes grading

   b. Create Opportunities for Students to Learn *During* Class

      - Utilize face-to-face time for higher-order thinking
      - Face-to-face is effective for high stakes grading
      - Think about creating collaborative activities

   c. Create Opportunities for Students to Learn *After* Class Ends

      - Utilize on-line resources for rehearsal and higher-order thinking
      - Consider on-line collaborative activities
      - Grading can be midway between low- and high-stakes

4. Assess Student Learning

   - Consider the activities designed for #2 and decide how best to allocate points
   - remember that not everything needs to be graded

Technology: Before, During, and After

Technology *before* class can be at the lowest levels of Bloom's Taxonomy. The goal is often to ensure that students interact with knowledge prior to F2F time. Focus on multiple-choice quizzes, straightforward homework, and reflections about reading.

Technology *during* class should be aimed at the middle of Bloom's Taxonomy. Choose engaging technology such as clickers. F2F time should be utilized to help students apply information rather than learning it for the first time.

Technology *after* class should be focused on critical thinking at the highest levels of Bloom's Taxonomy. Web assignments can be created such as critical evaluations of information on the web, creation of new information such as a Wiki, and blogging. Writing should be emphasized reminding students about plagiarism. Drop boxes allow writing to be submitted electronically.

Bloom's Taxonomy (Revised)

After class — Create, Evaluate

During class — Analyze, Apply

Before class — Understand – Describe, Explain; Knowledge - Remember

Based on an APA adaptation of Anderson, L.W. & Krathwohl, D.R. (Eds.) (2001)

Questions for Further Discussion

Personal

- How effective is your teaching currently?

- How do you know that your students are learning?

- How much responsibility do *you* take for making class time engaging?

- How much do you involve students in making decisions about their learning?

- What can you do to work more closely with colleagues in the design of courses?

Course

- How have you structured class to be appropriately supportive and challenging?

- What type of assignments in your course might best be completed online vs. in class?

- How does the outside of class work synergize with the face-to-face work?

- How does technology add value to your course?

Institution

- What can your institution do to promote more blended courses?

- What support do you need to include more technology in your course design?

- Who should you make an appointment with to learn more about blended design?

- What impediments do you see that keep your institution from offering more blended courses?

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