

Best Practices for Developing Content Modules and Module Pages

Development of an online course involves creating modules. Whatever you are teaching, you must divide the contents of your course in to digestible pieces, called **modules**. This gives your course contents structure, consistency, and form for online presentation and delivery to your students.

Creating the modules involves the following steps:

1. Identify and make a list your course modules.
This can be done in several ways:
 - by content-specific topics or unit specific
 - by day/week or time frame
 - by steps in a process
2. Sequence your modules appropriately within the content section (Ex. Week 1,2,3..).
3. Name your modules and content module pages appropriately in the D2L content section.
4. Start to create your content module pages! Keep all pages consistent with the same structure, layout and organization of the content.

Tips:

- Keep the number of modules at a minimum. This can be the number of weeks the course is being offered.
- Make sure all videos/images/word docs/PDFs are labeled with a clear title
- Create a module labeled “Course Documents” to store your syllabus, course schedule and any assignment guidelines
- Adopt a clear, logically-organized, and consistent content module page structure, including well-named documents that indicate the type of activity, due date, or time frame, etc.

What to include in modules?

Introduction/Overview

This section serves as an introduction to the module students are beginning. This is a chance for faculty to explain the focus of the course for that particular time period. It is important to be brief, but clear about what material and information will be covered, establish the time period (one week, two weeks, etc.), and possibly a brief description of the type of activities students should be prepared to complete. It is recommended that you also give clear and explicit details of your expectations from students for each module.

Learning Goals & Objectives

Unlike in the syllabus where the overall goals and objectives for the course were set down, these learning goals and objectives are specific for the module. These include what the students should expect to get out of a particular module.

Lecture Notes

This can be an outline of notes or the actual set of notes that students will need to follow along with the activities, presentations, and discussions associated with this time period of the course. It is recommended to also supply handouts that will support your lecture notes. These can be links to documents related to the module. These can be required items or handouts meant to supplement the module content and activities. It is advised that these be links so that students can print them or save them to their computer.

Focus Questions

This section poses questions related to materials and concepts that are important for the module's topics of discussion. These questions will help organize and focus your readings and participation in interactive activities, such as discussion boards or chat rooms.

Exercises and Other Learning Activities

This section should include a thorough description of the learning activities—what the student will be doing as he/she works through this module. It may include presentations of media for the purpose of explaining, discussing, or elaborating on concepts from the module. This would also be the place to link discussion boards, audio files, video conferencing, and chat room discussions that serve as the means of interaction between students and faculty for this module period and help students meet the objectives associated with this period of time in the course. You may also consider offering quizzes that give opportunities for immediate feedback to the students as far as how much of the material they are understanding and retaining. Do not forget to give comprehensive instructions on how to create, participate, submit, or accomplish every learning activity in a module.

Assignments

This is where faculty would list assignments related to this specific course module. This is a good place to use the assignment function which allows faculty to upload all student assignment turned in at one time rather than track individual files.

Assessments/Evaluations

You should also provide clear and explicit details on how you will evaluate/assess student work and participation through each module.

Related Readings

This section lists the readings students should complete by the end of the module. These may be set up with due dates throughout the time period of the module or they can all be due by the end of the module.