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Theory to Practise

What are foundational frameworks for understanding course design? These learning frameworks and theories can deepen your understanding of the basics of course design.

1. TEACH Framework

The TEACH framework is designed by and for the Stanford community to help instructors put university values at the core of their course design.

2. Defining Course Modalities

This page explains differences between a fully online, hybrid, and blended class.

3. Instructional Design Framework

The ADDIE (Analyze, Design, Development, Implement, and Evaluate) design framework can inform your course design efforts.

4. Technology Integration Framework

This framework asserts that content, pedagogy, and technology are essential intertwining areas needed to achieve technologically enhanced learning.

5. Teacher-centred vs. Student-centred course design

A student-centred design process begins with, "What will students be able to do at the end of the course?"

TEACH Framework

When we teach, whether in person or online, it can be easy to think instrumentally about the content we want students to learn and the tools needed to deliver that content. But it's equally important to align *what* and *how* we teach with *why* we teach.

Developed by Lauri Dietz, Associate Director of Introductory Seminars & Faculty Development, the TEACH framework offers a values-based framework to advance our teaching mission.

TEACH Framework
Developed by **Stanford Teaching Commons**.

Timely be **responsive** to students' and instructors' **needs** and **circumstances**

Engaging **tap** into students' **internal motivation** to learn

Accessible create an **inclusive learning environment** for all students by **providing necessary support**

Connected **encourage** students to **integrate** what they learn **across curricular and co-curricular contexts**

Humane **prioritize** **the personal over the perfect**

Please visit tinyurl.com/teachstanford for more information.

What core values should we centre in our teaching?

Timely teaching is responsive to students' and instructors' current social, emotional, and intellectual needs with consideration for the extraordinary circumstances that may influence the teaching and learning context so that everyone is in the best position to succeed.

Engaging teaching invites students to tap into their internal motivation to learn more through doing, creating, and reflecting.

Accessible teaching explicitly welcomes all students to bring their whole selves into the learning community and intentionally creates an inclusive learning environment that respects the dignity of each student by providing the tools and support necessary for as many students as possible to achieve the learning goals.

Connected teaching encourages students to situate their learning within the class community as well as surrounding communities (e.g., familial, social, civic, residential, disciplinary, professional, etc.) and to integrate what they learn across curricular and co-curricular contexts.

Humane teaching is compassionate teaching in that it prioritises the personal over the perfect.

Altogether, the TEACH framework is what allows us to set lofty learning goals that can feel out of students' reach because we have faith in our students to rise to the occasion, knowing that we are providing the guidance, resources, and flexibility they need to succeed.

Teacher-centred vs. Student-centred course design

Student-centered mindsets view the learner as primary and unique agents of learning, engagement, and connection, as opposed to teacher-centered mindsets which tend to view learners as passive and uniform vessels.

You can get started with student-centered course design by answering a series of questions about your course.

1. Figure out your main learning goal with the question: **“What will students be able to do at the end of the course?”** For example, perhaps by the end of a course on Ethical Food Systems, students will be able to:
 - Analyze contemporary debates using a conceptual framework
 - Apply a model to messy, real-world data
 - Present a critical analysis of different ethical options
2. Focus in on specific, actionable learning objectives with the question, **“What will students be able to do at the end of the lesson?”** Perhaps by the end of a class session on the topic, students will be able to:
 - Explain the contrasting models of agroecology and agribusiness
 - Understand the methodology used to create a food desert dataset
 - Use library databases to research debates around ethical food systems
3. Shape assessments by asking, **“How will we know if students are progressing?”** Students could:
 - Summarize a newspaper article based on what views are shaped by an agroecology vs. an agribusiness model
 - Research and create a simple food desert map of their home towns
 - Write a research paper using six scholarly sources
4. Brainstorm activities with the question, **“What do students need to practice in order to progress?”** In class, you might have students:
 - Do a mock debate, taking on positions based on an agroecology vs. an agribusiness model
 - Practice adding datapoints to a simple online map

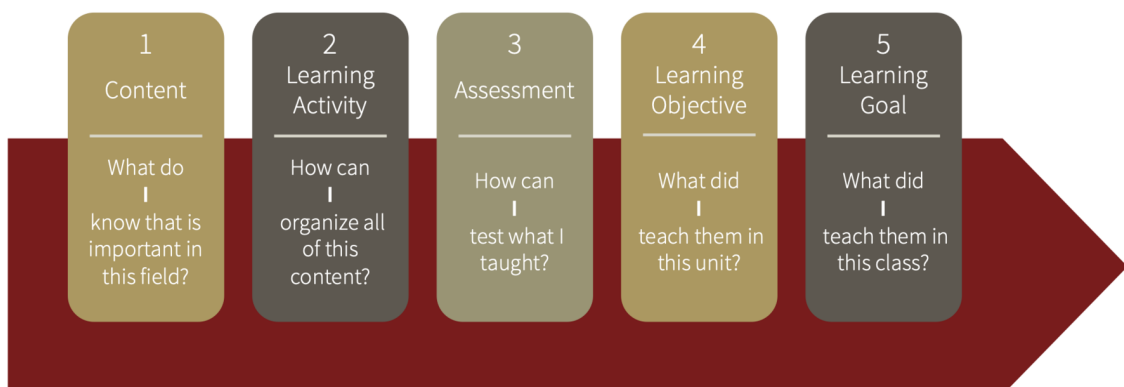
- Peer review an annotated bibliography of their sources
5. Finally, think about your content and determine what is most important for you to be teaching with the question, **“What do students need from the instructor in order to progress?”** This might lead you to make cuts and additions to your content.
- Keep: Article on agricultural models, library research visit, article on food deserts that models scholarly sources
 - Cut: Unit on genetic engineering
 - Add: Review and discussion of the Food Access Research Atlas Documentation page

More on why this works

Traditional course design methods focus on the teacher as the primary agent of learning. Planning a course in this mindset typically starts with questions such as "What do I know about this topic?", "How do I present the content?", and "How will I test students' learning?". It is only at the end of the process that the goal of the instruction is defined.

This process risks resulting in a learning experience that is ill-defined, where students don't know what they are supposed to be learning. Ultimately the course may fail to impart the real skills that students want or are expected to gain. While this kind of approach does have its merit, it runs the risk of treating learners as passive and uniform which can be demotivating.

Teacher-centered course design



Teacher-entered course design. 1.) Content - What do I know that is important in this field? 2.) Learning Activity - How can I organize all of this content? 3.) Assessment - How can I test what I taught? 4.) Learning Objective - What did I teach them in this unit? 5.) Learning Goal - What did I teach them in this class?

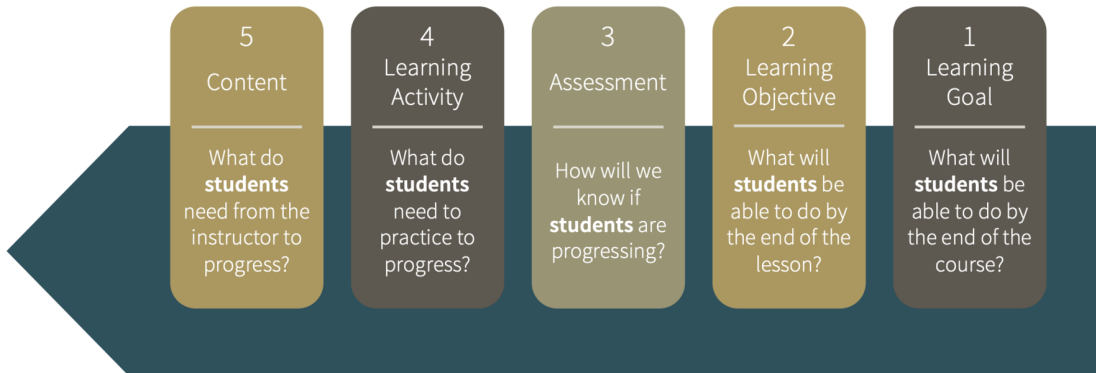
Student learning goals should come first

We advocate for a more student-centered process, where the learning goals come first and design questions are framed from the student's perspective. This method tends to result in learning experiences that are more cohesive, transparent, and intentional. Often called "[Backward Design](#)" this method inverts the sequence of the traditional model.

The process begins defining the course goals by asking the question "What will students be able to do at the end of the course?" The answer to that question, the learning goal, is separated into smaller student learning objectives (SLO). As a whole, the objectives should sum up to the broader course goals and be specific, demonstrable, and measurable. This is a critical step, as clear SLOs will help to inform every aspect of the design.

Next, determine the most appropriate assessment by asking "How will students know if they are meeting the learning objective?" The next two steps are informed by the assessments. Design and select learning activities that answer the question, "What do the students need to practice in order to improve?" Finally, answering the question, "What do students need from the instructor to be able to practice effectively?", will help you determine what content is critical and what may be extraneous.

Student-centered course design



Student-centred course design. 1.) Learning Goal - What will students be able to do by the end of the course? 2.) Learning Objective - What will students be able to do by the end of the lesson? 3.) Assessment - How will we know if students are progressing? 4.) Learning Activity - What do students need to practise to progress? 5.) Content - What do students need from the instructor to progress?

Any course design process is iterative. Expect to adjust your goals and objectives throughout the design process. You'll likely find that they need more definition, or perhaps new objectives will emerge. Course design is also an interdependent and holistic process. Every major course element is interconnected with the others. A significant adjustment to one unit, tool, or objective, may lead to other adjustments in the other parts of the course.