Bronx Community College
Office of Instructional Technology
Hybrid Initiative/Online Teaching Programs

Learning Unit Planning Guide

A well-designed Learning Unit contains certain basic elements, organized around recognized principles of successful technology-mediated learning. While these elements are desirable regardless of how a course is taught, they are increasingly important as instruction "migrates" online or increasingly incorporates technologies. The more online content and activities, the more important it becomes to make each of these elements as clear and precise as possible.

What are principles of successful technology-mediated learning? We know that students are most successful, and learn the most, in technology-mediated courses when they are:

- Active; that is, when they are expected to create or actively engage with course materials;
- Collaborative; that is, when they are expected to work together or respond to each other; and
- Given multiple opportunities to learn and to display their learning.

Therefore, these are key questions to consider as you design your course:

- How active are students in your course? How are you asking students to move beyond passive absorption and repetition of content? What are you asking them to do, build, or create?
- Are students working together and/or responding to each other?
- Are you presenting course materials in more than one format, and providing more than one kind of opportunity for students to demonstrate what they are learning?

Elements of a Learning Unit

- Unit instructions for students, including start and end dates.
- Course content presentation (PowerPoint, audio, video, still images, written text, web pages). Content should include all supplemental materials, or instructions about how to acquire them.
- An assignment based on the content.
- Method for communication and collaboration (student/student; student/instructor).
- Method of assessment of student work.

And remember:

- All online materials or sites should be tested before they are given to students.
- If the Learning Unit includes online resources, information about all necessary software or software plug-ins (e.g., Flash player, Adobe Reader) should be included.