

# Resources: Learning Outcomes for Online Courses

---

## Differences between Face-to-Face and Online Instruction

- **Timing:** Could be synchronous, asynchronous, or both
- **Volume:** Online courses often have more information than F2F courses; instructors have more to consider
- **Participation:** Non-linear
- **Communication:** Can be slower
- **Role of Instructor:** Also need to coach students & help them develop into "autonomous learners"

[Redefining Teaching: The Five Roles of the Online Instructor](#): Colorado State Blog post on shifting our thinking on teacher/student roles

[Learning To Teach Online – Video Collection](#): University of New South Wales award winning video series.

## Alignment: There are 4 Things That Need to Be Aligned:

1. Learning Outcomes
2. Teaching & Learning Activities
3. Assessment
4. Facilitation & Feedback

## Learning Outcomes

When designing learning outcomes, remember:

1. LOs need to be specific & assessable
2. LOs should be from multiple categories: Knowledge, Skills, Mindset
3. Pay careful attention to the verbs that are being used for your LOs, and avoid the "sinister sixteen." These are sixteen verbs that are unobservable and unassessable (resource shared below).
4. Share your learning outcomes with your students, and attach the learning outcomes to each assignment and activity

How to Write Good Learning Outcomes:

[Primer on Learning Outcomes from the University of Windsor](#)

[CTSI Guide on Developing Learning Outcomes](#)

The Sinister Sixteen – Verbs that shouldn't be used ([Source: Primer on Learning Outcomes](#))

**THE SINISTER SIXTEEN: Verbs that are Passive, Internal and/or Otherwise Unobservable**

The most common verbs and phrases we see in learning outcomes are all unacceptable:

- |                       |                    |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| • Understand          | • Be aware of      |
| • Appreciate          | • Be conscious of  |
| • Comprehend          | • Learn            |
| • Grasp               | • Perceive         |
| • Know                | • Value            |
| • See                 | • Get              |
| • Accept              | • Apprehend        |
| • Have a knowledge of | • Be familiar with |

## Teaching & Learning Activities

1. **Timing:** "Chunk" your content & activities (modules)
2. **Timing:** Both synchronous & asynchronous. Mixed modality leads to more student engagement.
3. **Bridge:** Between learning outcomes & assessment. Check alignment. Need both formative & summative.
4. **Active Learning** and **Collaborative Learning**
5. Consider **student engagement**

[Creating the Online Learning Environment/Learning Module:](#) A UBC resource providing a comprehensive overview on topics related to creating online learning environments

### Teaching & Learning Activities - Examples:

1. **Student Engagement:** Immediate response in lecture, polls & surveys, "get-to-know-you" activities
2. **Active Learning:** Participatory questions in lecture, case studies, video conference debates, student-generated test questions, student-curated resources
3. **Collaborative learning:** Quercus Groups, Mid-lecture breakout groups, Debates, Student-Run Online Conference, Blogs & Podcasts
4. **Summative:** e-portfolios, Essays, Critiques, Quizzes, Tests, Case Studies

### [UofT Educational Technology Catalogue](#)

Our catalogue of existing tools to engage students online.

## Assessment

When designing your assessments, consider to include:

1. Multiple **methods** of assessment
2. Both formative & summative
3. Both independent & collaborative

4. Consider **Timing**: Both student time on task and feedback delivery

### CTSI: Formative Assessment Practical Strategies

## Facilitation & Feedback

Create a learning community within the course:

Five Ways to Build Community in Online Courses: *Faculty Focus* article on building community

Professors' Suggestions for Building Community: *Inside Higher Ed* article on building community

Pedagogies and Strategies: Examples of activities and pedagogical underpinning for engaging students online.

### Facilitation considerations:

- Facilitation can be both synchronous and asynchronous
- Create a pathway through your course that is intuitive:
- Remember that this is a way of reflecting your pedagogy

Engage students by being present online: Post by U of T Online Learning

### Feedback considerations:

- Needs to be timely and personalized
- Use feedback as a bridge
- Feedback is for BOTH students & faculty

## Effective Online Course Design – A Brief Checklist

1. Plan for deliberate **instructor-student interaction** and **student-student interaction**. Be present & create a community.
2. Select the right technology for your learning outcomes. (Note - learning outcomes should **drive** technology choice)
3. Include active learning & collaborative learning
4. Have deliberate facilitation & feedback
5. Test your course; prepare your students
6. Don't forget the end.

Advice from instructors that have taught online: From *Inside Higher Ed*

## Learning Outcomes Webinar Q&A Questions

**There were a series of questions posed towards the end of the session last week. Have these been compiled (and answered)?**

All the questions asked are compiled and shared in the Resource sent out after each webinar.

**Is there a recording of last weeks' webinar?**

Webinar recordings are being reviewed and edited and will be shared soon

## Synchronous vs Asynchronous Delivery

**Students must be present online during scheduled class times regardless of their time zones, right?**

Yes, if you have synchronous lectures or activities (such as timed group work) this needs to fall within the scheduled lecture time slot of Eastern Standard/Daylight Savings Time.

## Online vs Offline Courses

**How long is a class online (usually)?**

This really depends on the course schedule. However, we encourage faculty to create and record/deliver "lecturettes" that are ~10 minutes long, rather than one long 1 hour lecture file. Studies have shown this is more effective in terms of student engagement and content comprehension and retention, especially if there is an activity in between the lecturettes.

**How will "contact" be counted, if you are doing asynchronous activities. What do we need to do during the scheduled lecture time?**

Just as in face-to-face course delivery, there are large differences between courses and between instructors for what contact looks like. Some courses have traditional lectures, some courses are delivered in a flipped format. Every course should have students doing work both before and after lecture and this can take different forms. For some online courses, students will be watching videos in preparation for lecture, and lecture is dedicated to group work and active learning. For other online courses, students watch asynchronous lectures and complete other assignments. So this really depends on the course and on the instructor. It is best practice to use a mix of synchronous and asynchronous activities and to also embed active learning.

**What is considered timely for an online course?**

Are you referring to feedback? It really depends on what the feedback is for. Do the students need the feedback in order to complete the next assignment? There is not one specific answer to this question. For large courses, where individual and personalized feedback may be possible, some instructors have recorded a video that responds to all student work - and in that video they talk about the different types of assignments they marked and how students in general can improve.

**Are you saying that there should be recorded videos to address particular assignments?**

You can certainly record small videos (4-5minutes) that help support particular assignments as another way for the students to engage with the content and instructions of an assignment, but this is not mandatory.

### [Activities in Online Courses](#)

**I'm curious how much time to allot for formative assessments, modules, etc. Should students be able to access all materials the whole course? Are weekly due dates for quizzes or modules appropriate or too restrictive?**

It really depends on the course and the discipline. Some courses release everything at the beginning along with a roadmap that guides students through how to interact with the material. Other courses have a timed release where content is slowly released over term. What is really important is to make sure expectations are clear for the students, and that they know what they are supposed to be doing and when. Many courses do have weekly reading quizzes to help students stay on top of material.

**Is it OK to list the final exam for a summer course as face-to-face till it is decided?**

It could be possible to do this, but you must also allow students to still have the option of doing an online exam. One reason for this is that you may have an international student taking your course online, and that student cannot be asked to fly back to Canada for the purpose of the exam.

**Do I need to have a final exam? Or can I do all my assessments through coursework ?**

You will need to discuss this with the Chair of your department.

**Can you explain the difference between formative and summative?**

Here is a good description of formative and summative from [Carnegie Mellon](#)

**Best Practices for zoom office hours?**

There is a document that was created, it is in the UTM Teach Anywhere Discussion board on Zoom and Bb Collaborate called *Advice for Online Classroom Management*

### [Accessibility](#)

**How does the role of Accessibility change for fully online courses?**

You are still responsible for adhering to Accessibility requirements for students and AODA requirements for documentation and content for your online courses. If you have a student with accommodations please feel free to reach out to the student's advisor if you have questions relating to the accommodation or to Ann Gagné if you need support in creating accessible assignments or course content.

### [Tools for Teaching Online](#)

**What kinds of software can students use collaboratively?**

[Office 365 for Faculty and Staff](#)

[Office 365 for Students](#)

Quercus wiki (A page that can be edited by multiple people, need to ensure students know that they need to not overwrite each others work)

Quercus groups - students have their own discussion board, announcements, pages, file sharing, etc.

Quercus ePortfolios tool

### **Any recommendations on developing library research skills?**

Please contact your [UTM Liaison Librarian](#) as they will have resources that you can share with your students in your Quercus shell

### **Academic Integrity**

#### **Are there any recommendations about time-limited Quercus exams?**

There are many recommendations about this, and they are listed on the UTM Teach Anywhere site on Quercus. In particular look for a document entitled “Creating a Pedagogically Comprehensive Exam.” If you don’t have access to this site, then please get in touch with Ann Gagné or Fiona Rawle.

#### **In a non-proctored test environment, what are some practices for ensuring academic integrity for assessment of individual mastery of some skills & knowledge LOs? Aside from creating question banks and shuffling questions, what would you suggest to ensure that individual skill is assessed, and that the test-taker is in fact the one being assessed?**

We will be addressing this in the third webinar on April 23rd. There has been a lot of information on this posted to the UTM Quercus Teach Anywhere site:

- Talk to your students openly about academic integrity and what this means in the context of an online final exam.
- Be very clear on what is and isn’t allowed during the online final exam.
- Consider the types of questions you are asking. Recall and knowledge questions are more easily “google-able” than application and synthesis type questions. Ensure that the questions on the exams are addressing the upper levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy, such as apply, analyze, evaluate, and create.

### **Student Support**

#### **How much time/resources should we be allocating to help students learn to use the tech?**

The UTM library has created a [great resource for students](#) that explores some of the technology they will be using. You can link to this resource in your own Quercus shell.

#### **I’d love virtual ‘lightning talks’ from faculty with online learning experience, showcasing via screen shares how they organize their course.**

We will definitely look into offering something like this in the summer term.

### **[Registration for April 22nd Quercus Quizzes, Assignments Webinar](#)**