

TTU eLearning Method for Alignment

Quality in an online course is measured by high student achievement of the stated course objectives. Alignment occurs when course activities fully support student mastery and assessments measure student mastery of each of the stated objectives. Note that it is okay and common to have various activities and even assessments support and/or measure more than one objective in part or in whole.

The Worldwide eLearning Instructional Design (ID) Team uses the following method to determine alignment:

- Objective: “At the end of the course/module the student will be able to” → **(verb)** → (knowledge and skills)
- Activities: “Activities that support the student to do a” → **(noun version of the verb)** → of the (knowledge and skills).
- Assessment: A → **(noun version of the verb)** → of the (knowledge and skills).

The following demonstrates good alignment:

- Objective “At the end of the course the student will be able to **identify** salsa dance steps.”
- Activities “A video recording will demonstrate **identification** of salsa dance steps.”
- Assessment “Students will make a verbal **identification** of salsa dance steps during a live dance with salsa dance steps among a variety of other steps.”

It’s generally intuitive in a face-to-face course to demonstrate the verb along with the presentation of the knowledge and skills (i.e. demonstrate how to make the identification as well as demonstrate the dance steps.) Demonstration of the verb in addition to the knowledge and skills is not intuitive in an online course because of the transactional distance between the instructor and student. Transactional distance makes it necessary to explicitly instruct everything. The big takeaway of this article and the secret of high student achievement is, “Don’t forget to



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explicitly instruct students how to 'do the verb' as well as presenting the content of the knowledge and skills!" (E.G. How to identify the dance step as well as what the dance step is itself.)

It is important to make sure all objectives are supported by at least one student activity and assessment. It is also important in an online course not to have superfluous or distracting content or assessment not directly related to an objective.



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