# Building Blocks of an Online Week

## Introduction

The aim of this document is to help you plan your week’s activities for each week, find ideas, and consider the possibilities of various activities. Each week of your 7-week online course should include essential instructional building blocks which are well-aligned around measurable weekly outcomes. Often, a week has the following structure as seen below.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Type of Building Block** | | **Description** |
| Weekly Introduction and Outcomes | | * Introduce students to the week’s topic and outcomes * Explain goals and relate the value of the week’s topic to the world of work and indicate real-life application * Establish context for the week, how it links to the previous weeks and the alignment to the broad course outcomes * The three main elements include: the introduction overview, weekly outcomes, and the week’s activity table |
| Learning Activities  (Delivery / Format) | Instructional Materials (input) | * Materials that students are required to interact with for knowledge acquisition and to create outputs * All Resources: including readings, videos from online sources like YouTube, your own recorded videos, examples, stories, cases, demonstrations, presentations, explanations, glossaries, descriptions, graphical organizers and technologies to support students’ learning * SAQA refers to it as *theoretical learning* |
| Student-Created Products (Output) | * The outputs are what students produce as evidence of mastery * Student elicits performance and receives feedback to correct errors * Allows opportunity for practice, reflection, and knowledge checks * Types of outputs include:   + both formative and summative assessment   + both objective and subjective assessment   + both Individual and group assessment   + continuous and graded discussions, analysis and/or debates with others   + non-graded products / digital artefacts * SAQA refers to it as *practical experience* |
| Weekly Summary | | * Conclude the week for students and provide the main takeaway message of this week. * Suggestion: Create an expectation for the next week |

## Ready, Steady, Think: 6 Questions to Keep in Mind during the Development of Learning Activities

### Before you browse through various learning activity ideas, here are six critical elements to consider when developing building blocks and activities. Speak to your instructional designer to learn more about each element:

### What are the learning outcomes for the week? (This is always your starting point.)

### What are the notional hours per week?

### What is the course and week’s academic pitch?

### How can I scaffold the experience for the students during the week by following [Gagne’s 9 steps of instruction](http://citt.ufl.edu/tools/gagnes-9-events-of-instruction/)?

### What types of interaction will connect students this week?

### Have I considered accessibility guidelines?

## Example of a Weekly Activity List

During the planning phase of your course, you will develop an activity list for each week of your online module. We have shared a completed activity list in Appendix A as an example to guide your development decisions. *See Appendix A: Example of an ‘About this Week’ section (Activity List).*

## 100+ Learning Activity Ideas for Weekly Building Blocks

Here we provide learning activity ideas under each of the four main weekly areas (introduction, input, output and summary) of your online module. Discuss the possibilities at your institution with your instructional designer or contact your ASP consultant for support and guidance documents. Highly recommended items are indicated with an (\*) and are elements that are referenced in the Quality Review rubric.

### Weekly Introduction and Outcomes

These are examples of various methods to introduce students to the new week.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Ideas** | **I like it!** 😊 |
| 1. Include a paragraph of introduction text and 3-minute overview video.\* |  |
| 1. If you are using slides (e.g. PowerPoint) for the weekly introduction, it is recommended to let students see your face while you present the overview. This is a humanizing approach and creates a sense of connection |  |
| 1. Provide weekly outcomes in the intro section. Indicate alignment to broader module outcomes\* |  |
| 1. Include the weekly activity list/table and show clear alignment of activities to the weekly outcomes\* |  |
| **Tips**   * Consider including ways to gain attention and spark curiosity for this week’s topic by using an analogy, comic strips, memes, probing questions, controversy in the news or social media, world of work applications, personal stories and scenarios, etc. |  |

### Instructional Materials (Input)

### These are examples of various types of materials that students are required to interact with for knowledge acquisition and to create outputs.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Learning Activity Ideas:** | **I like it!** 😊 |
| 1. **Read:** Prescribed textbooks, articles, current news headlines and topics, real-life examples, Open Educational Resources (OERs), infographics, websites, blogs and forums, online scavenger hunts, slides, case studies, reports, reviews, glossaries, and additional resources (as supplemental material) |  |
| 1. **Watch:** Lecture videos, recorded PowerPoint presentations, live web conferences, commercials, concept videos, animations, YouTube videos, TED talks, guest speaker lectures, demonstrations, worked examples |  |
| 1. **Listen:** Audio recordings, podcasts, pieces of music |  |
| 1. **View:** Graphic organizers to reference or complete as they engage with new content |  |
| **Tips**   * You can use a short ‘*Knowledge Check*’ in the form of an auto-graded online quiz to allow the student to assess their understanding of their studying by receiving immediate feedback, e.g., 3 multiple choice questions on their first reading or video. * Provide a written introduction with each resource as motivation of relevance. * Provide 2 - 3 prompt questions with each resource to improve their focus and reflection, e.g., “While you watch this video, consider the following questions…” |  |

### Student-Created Products (Output)

Examples of various types of outputs students can produce or practice as evidence of mastery or to receive feedback for improvement.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Learning Activity Ideas For:** | **I like it!** 😊 |
| ***Auto-Graded Activity Ideas (Objective Activities)*** | |
| 1. Complete:    1. Quiz which comprises of one or more of the following types of questions: multiple choice, true/false, matching columns, hot spots, fill in the blank, drag and drop    2. Knowledge check to assess your understanding of a reading/video/resource    3. Test which assesses readiness and prior knowledge for the next unit    4. An online form to electronically accept the terms of the plagiarism, netiquette, or code of conduct declarations    5. Student polling questions 2. Solve:    1. Crossword puzzle    2. Word search 3. Play:    1. Online game, an online simulation, or an interactive experience    2. Authentic learning example on your learning management system   **Tips**   * Associate a digital badge with auto-graded activities. Students can then earn a badge if they successfully achieve the criteria for the activity, i.e. received 85% or more for quizzes, solved puzzle, signed plagiarism agreement |  |
| ***Manually Graded Activity Ideas (Subjective Activities)*** | |
| 1. Analyze: Have students…    1. Answer 3 essay-type questions.    2. Formulate a business report, research report, or a research proposal on a certain topic with specific criteria.    3. Conduct a critical analytical review of a case study.    4. Submit a client report for an agency.    5. Develop a job description for your company’s managing director including the following sections.    6. Develop interview questions for an expert in the field.    7. Conduct a community assessment, health assessment, etc.    8. Write an argument, comparison, or contemplative essay.    9. Conduct a literature review.    10. Write a micro-theme essay (a tight, coherent essay typed on a 5x8 note card).    11. Write a letter to the editor or CEO.    12. Develop a taxonomy or set of categories.    13. Formulate a technical or scientific report.    14. Conduct a website review. 2. **Brainstorm and Collaborate**: Have students…    1. Participate in problem-solving challenge.       1. For example, for higher-level math, you could use stock market examples. This could also have group work – maybe in twos – with a hard problem set – again having groups post answers and review another group’s work. Problems could be different for each group.    2. In your group, build knowledge together by developing a wiki on a certain topic or problem.    3. Develop a 1500-word diary of a fictional or historical character.    4. Interview one-another on a subject or career experience and draft a report on their findings.    5. Use the wiki tool to develop a course glossary.    6. Conduct a client need analysis as a group and propose solutions. 3. **Discuss**: Have students…    1. Participate in a real-world application.       1. E.g., for an algebra module – post math questions about painting or decorating a house – where you need to use algebra to solve for how much paint, soil, wallpaper, etc. to purchase. Students pick the problem of most interest, solves it, and then publishes the result with a photo and discusses their thought process.    2. Post your thoughts on the article provided.       1. Consider starting a prompt with a question such as, “While reading the article, think about the following questions…”    3. Post your own recorded video to the forum discussing your frame of reference, past-experience, and recommendations on the topic.    4. Pick and debate the side of a case.       1. Divide the class into two groups for a debate, where one group has to be ‘For’ the case and another group ‘Against’ the case    5. Participate in a roleplaying discussion activity.       1. Provide each student with a role in the discussion using [Edward de Bono’s six thinking caps](http://www.debonogroup.com/six_thinking_hats.php). This will ensure that multiple voices are heard and gives each member a responsibility to contribute to the discussion    6. Interact and engage with classmates in a synchronous discussion.       1. Synchronous discussions could be arranged by group members to interact and engage with content on the online interface in real-time. 4. **Reflect**: Have students…    1. Submit a paragraph summary of the video to your online journal.    2. Submit an analysis of a book review.    3. Upload a diagram of key findings. 5. **Create**: Have students…    1. Develop a public service announcement, video commercial, or brochure.    2. Develop a conference presentation on a topic.       1. The student could choose one person to present their slides live to the rest of the class.    3. Develop an instructional manual.    4. Develop a multi-media presentation.       1. This could be video, audio recording, slide presentation, etc.    5. Develop an infographic as a visual representation to summarize a topic.       1. Some examples of visual representations include: timelines, diagram, chart, graph, table, flow chart, process model, graphical organizer    6. Curate a collection of online articles, images, or videos that represent a topic.       1. E.g., for a law module, students may choose ONE of the rights given to us by the first amendment. To illustrate the different ways people interpret that right, students must curate a collection of online articles, images, or videos that represent a range of beliefs about how far that right extends. For each example included, they must summarize the point of view being presented, include a direct quote where the author biases or beliefs can be inferred, and include a written commentary with each item in the collection. 6. **Practical**: Have students…    1. Complete software development to solve an error.    2. Conduct research and implement a project.    3. Explore a vendor product interaction.    4. Engage in fieldwork or investigate fieldwork opportunities.    5. Answer practice questions specifically for math courses.    6. Participate in an interactive online tour or experience.   **Tips**   * Ensure that your instructions are clear, comprehensive, and practical. The clearer the instructions for the activity, the less student queries you’ll encounter later. * If you are considering an examination, note that it could comprise of both objective and subjective question types. * Be sure to map your assessment summary in your course to estimate your and your student’s workload. Are the activities sustainable and scalable in the long-term? |  |

### Weekly Summary

Examples of various methods to conclude this week

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Ideas** | **I like it!** 😊 |
| 1. Include a conclusion paragraph as written text and a 3-minute summary video.\* |  |
| 1. If you are using a recorded PowerPoint presentation for the weekly summary, we suggest that students can see your face while you present the summary. This is a humanizing approach and creates a sense of connection. |  |
| 1. Incorporate opportunities for student reflection. Some examples include reflective journal, rough notes, minute papers (liked/dislike/interesting), takeaway message, ‘think about’ questions, exit ticket, weekend feedback survey, etc. |  |
| **Tips**   * Include a course survey as one of the activities to complete in the course, which aligns to a broad course outcome. (E.g., Offer constructive feedback to improve the module (MO 5).) The survey could include sections to evaluate the content, the online course design/layout/usability, and the course facilitator’s lecture videos, online presence and support. |  |

## Appendix A: Example of an “About This Week” Section (Activity List)

**Note**: If you would like to see a complete online week, which includes and activity list and the week’s content, ask your ASP consultant to gain access to the full online course exemplar.

**Week 1 Introduction**

Welcome to Week 1 of **Economic Literacy**.

This week, I’ll address the first question for this class: Why are some countries rich and others poor? Here’s a picture of the learning path that you’ll take as I present my answer to this fundamental economic question.

To simplify things, I’ll introduce you to two characters named Eli and Saul. You’ll explore how the concepts of economics are applied to individuals—Eli and Saul—and then extrapolate those ideas to embrace companies and even countries.

**Click the video below to watch the introduction from your facilitator.**



**Weekly outcomes**

1. Infer why there are such large gaps in average incomes between countries. (MO 1)
2. Examine the factors on which productivity depends. (MO 2)
3. Explore ways that productivity is enhanced. (MO 3)
4. Interpret the roles that institutions play in enhancing a country’s economy. (MO 4)
5. Examine GDP and how effective is it in measuring a country’s well-being. (MO 5)

*MO = Module Outcomes | WO: Weekly Outcomes*

 **This Week’s Activities**

Below is an outline of the items for which you will be responsible throughout the week.

 **READ**

**DUE: Early in the week**

Read the following early in the week to help you respond to the discussion questions and to complete your assignment(s).

Required Textbook Readings

Aligns to Weekly Outcomes 1-3

Chapter 1. Introduction, pp 14 - 32

1.1. What Is Economics, and Why Is It Important?

1.2. Microeconomics and Macroeconomics

1.3. How Economists Use Theories and Models to Understand Economic Issues

1.4. How to Organize Economies: An Overview of Economic Systems

*Supplemental* Resources

Simulations - [*https://economics-games.com/games*](https://economics-games.com/games)

 **READ AND WATCH ONLINE**

**DUE: Early in the week**

Online Lecture Material:  Read and listen to the online lecture material on the following topics.

Aligns to Weekly Outcomes 2, 4, 5

1. Income Disparity, Productivity, and Natural Endowments
2. Effort, Specialization, and Comparative Advantage
3. Know-How and Institutions

 **DISCUSS**

Respond to the discussion prompts and questions by the due dates outlined in the assignment.  You should contribute your first post no later than Day 3. Then, follow up on the posts of your classmates and faculty and responses to your own posts.

Aligns to Weekly Outcomes 1-5

Grading: Participation Mark (complete/incomplete)

1. Icebreaker Discussion - **DUE: Early in the week**
2. Current Event Article Review- **DUE: Part 1 | Your Post, Day 3**

- **DUE: Part 2 | Respond to classmates, Day 7**

 **SUBMIT**

Submit your completed written assignments by Day 7 of this week.  For detailed instructions on completing these assignments, see the associated course page.

Aligns to Weekly Outcomes 1-5

Grading: 20 marks

1. Welcome to the Economic Development Team **-** **DUE: Early in the week**
2. The Big Idea - Week 1 Group Project**-** **DUE: Day 7**