Project Plan Document Transcript

In this presentation, we will examine project plans, why they are important and how you can create one for your course before you begin putting your course in Ultra Course View.

Even if you are adding a course to Ultra that you have already taught online before, this is a great time to reflect upon how your course materials are organized and also identify if your course design has good alignment. In a strong course design, all of the components of the course are connected. The objectives form a strong foundation. The assessments directly measure the objectives and the course content, activities and tools selected support the objectives.

A project plan is a document that you can use to organize your course on paper and check its alignment.   In the project plan, your course is organized into weekly modules or units and you identify the types of course information that will go into each one. Each unit should include the objectives for the week, the assessments that will measure the achievement of these objectives, and the content and activities that your students will be doing throughout the week in order to achieve these objectives. Once your project plan is written, you can review it, identify if there are opportunities for improvement, and easily make these changes. When you are satisfied with your project plan, you can reference and even copy and paste information from it as you are building your course in Ultra.

There are many different project plan templates available and there is no perfect one. For this course, we will be using a project plan template that the Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning uses. The first page of the project plan contains overall course information. Some instructors choose to put detailed information here that will also go on a Welcome Page or Start Here page in their Ultra course.

The following pages contain tables. Each table represents a unit of your course. You should first decide the common elements that will be present in each unit and how you want to label them in Ultra. The project plan template gives you some ideas, but these should be modified by you to meet your individual course needs. For example, in each unit of your course, you may want to put all course materials in one place and call it "Course Materials." Simply rename the Readings and Outside Resources to that title. You may also want to add items that are not listed in the project plan template. Simply add additional rows and give them any title you wish. Notice that the last item has the title "Other." Consider keeping this item so that you have a place to put information about special items that occur only once or twice during your course. For example, you might meet online during the first and last week of your course, or perhaps your course has a midterm and final exam.

Once you have decided on a structure, you should modify the other units to match this new structure. Organizing your course into units that have a consistent structure is a good practice that helps your students more quickly get comfortable with your course so they can focus on your course content. After your course organization is set in your project plan, you are ready to add your course content. You can put as much or little detail as you wish into the project plan. Some people put a great amount of detail and copy content directly from their project plan into Blackboard. Some chose not to and instead just list the items each module or unit will contain.

Let's take a quick look at part of a project plan that was written for the Ultra Transition Academy. On the first page, the project plan includes a detailed course description and a list of the course objectives. Both of these items were later copied to the Welcome Page of the Academy Ultra course.

The Academy is divided into three units. Unit 1 has the title "Getting Started with Ultra View." The unit has three objectives. For this project plan, we took things a step further and also identified the course objectives that each unit objective supports. The course objective number is written in parenthesis at the end of each unit objective. The first unit objective, "Order a Blackboard course or shell and convert the course to Ultra" supports course objective number two which states that by the end of the Academy, participants will be able to complete all tasks needed to create a fully developed Ultra Course."

All course materials for each unit were put in a section entitled "Readings and Media Resources." Notice how for this project plan, actual URLs were listed so that they could easily be copied into Ultra when the course was being developed.

All graded assignments were put in a section called "Activities and Assignments." And the decision was made to also include a section containing optional activities that participants can choose to try depending on their situation and course needs.

Finally, for only Unit 1, a synchronous session was scheduled. Details about this session were included under "Other."

This table not only shows how all the course content will be organized for Unit 1 in the Ultra Transition Academy but also clearly outlines the unit objectives, assessments, and course materials so that the course developer can easily confirm if there is strong alignment or if something needs to be revised so that all unit objectives are being assessed and sufficient content is being provided so these objectives can be met.

This concludes this presentation on Project Plan documents.