

Creating an Alignment Chart

The first step in backwards design is creating an alignment chart or course map. You plan with the end in mind. If the student learning outcomes are the important things that students must learn, your assessments are what you will use to determine if your students have learned the outcomes. The learning activities and content help the students prepare for the assessment. Starting with an alignment chart allows you to make your major instructional decisions before you start adding anything to the online classroom.

Using your student learning outcomes, you think about the following steps in this order:

Step One: What assessment(s) will I use to determine if students have learned the outcome?

Step Two: What kinds of learning activities do my students need to experience to prepare them for the assessment?

Step Three: What resources do I need to provide to help students learn to complete both the learning activities and assessments?

A Sample Alignment Chart

Learning Outcome	Assessments	Content/Learning Activities
Create an alignment chart.	Create an alignment chart for a course including all student learning outcomes.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Provide a resource that defines an alignment chart.2. Provide an example of an alignment chart.3. Provide resources to read more about how to approach an alignment chart.4. Work with peers to create a sample alignment chart for one student learning outcome.

The goal of an alignment chart is not to overwhelm you. It's goal is to help you stay focused on the big picture of the course. There are a number of ways to construct an alignment chart.