

Situational factors analysis

How to use the worksheet: review each factor below to identify which will influence your specific course. Write down any information you have about each. Where you do not have such information but feel it's relevant, write down how you might gather this data.

1. Specific context of the teaching/learning situation

- How many students are in the class?
- Is the course lower division, upper division, or graduate level?
- How long and frequent are the class meetings?
- How will the course be delivered: live, online, or in a classroom or lab?
- What physical elements of the learning environment will affect the class?

2. General context of the learning situation

- What learning expectations are placed on this course or curriculum by: the university, college and/or department; profession; or society?
- Are there any professional standards that need to be met?
- Are there any goals of the HEI or department that will affect this course?

3. Nature of the subject

- Is this subject primarily theoretical, practical, or a combination?
- Is the subject primarily convergent (working toward a single right answer) or divergent?
- Are there important changes or controversies occurring within the field?
- Is the subject primarily cognitive or does it include the learning of physical skills as well?

4. Characteristics of the learners

- What is the life situation of the learners (e.g. full-time students, part-time working students, family and work responsibilities, professional goals)?
- What prior knowledge, experiences, and initial feelings do students usually have about this subject?
- What are the students' reasons for joining the course?
- What are the students' prior experiences, knowledge, skills, and attitudes toward the subject?
- What are their goals, expectations, preferred approaches and motivations?



5. Characteristics of the teacher

- What beliefs and values does the teacher have about teaching and learning?
- What is his/her attitude toward their subject? The students?
- What level of knowledge or familiarity does s/he have with this subject?
- What are the instructor's strengths and in which areas does the instructor need to grow?

This worksheet is adapted from the freely downloadable resource 'Self-Directed Guide for Designing Courses for Significant Learning', created by Dee Fink and Associates.

Dee Fink and Associates (2019) Resources: Self-Directed Guide for Designing Courses for Significant Learning [online] available from

<https://www.deefinkandassociates.com/index.php/resources/> [17 May 2019]

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