The Learning Module
5.2 Creating a Learning Module

5.2.0: First, a brief rationale for the Learning Module.

As a pedagogical design, the Learning Module is not a textbook. It is not a syllabus. It is not a lesson plan. And it is all of these things, or it does the job of all of these things, but does all these things differently.

- A textbook summarizes the world, transmitting content to learners in the single voice of the textbook writer. The Learning Module curates the world—web links to textual content, videos and other embedded media. It is multimodal. And it uses a variety of sources, requiring students to think critically, not just to memorize content that has been pre-digested and delivered to them to consume.

- A syllabus outlines content and topics to be covered. A Learning Module prompts dialogue—an update prompts class discussion; a project sets in train a peer reviewed work; a survey elicits a student response. It is a medium to facilitate active and collaborative learning, rather than individualized content acquisition.

- A lesson plan is the teacher’s private activity outline. The Learning Module can be shared with the class, and optionally published to the web, within a school or beyond, for other teachers to use, so building a school-based pedagogical knowledge bank. For professional collaboration and learning, a Learning Module can be jointly written and also peer reviewed before publication.

Learning Modules have a two column format: a ‘for the member’ side where the teacher speaks directly to the student, and a ‘for the admin’ side where the teacher speaks the professional discourse of education, articulating learning aims, curriculum standards and teaching tips.

A Learning Module offers three modes of interaction with and between students:

1. Updates that can be pushed into the student’s activity stream, including a wide range of multimedia formats. Each update prompts comments from students and class discussion.

2. Projects, including instructions to students and a rubric for peer, self and/or teacher review.

3. Surveys, including knowledge surveys that anticipate right and wrong answers, and information surveys that do not have right or wrong answers (such as an opinion survey).

Before you start to create your Learning Module, we recommend you view section 5.1, Using Learning Modules from the Scholar Bookstore—this will give you an idea of how they work.

The Learning Module is a work type within Scholar’s Creator area, so you if you have not used Creator before, we recommend you familiarize yourself with Section 3 of these tutorials. Before you get started, we also suggest you create a title and abstract at About this Work => Info => Work. Mouse over to locate the edit pencil.
5.2.1: There are two ways to start to create a Learning Module:

- You will receive a request from an admin via email and the in-Scholar notifications to create a peer-reviewed Learning Module. Take the link in the request and you will reach a blank Learning Module. If this is the case, jump forward to 5.2.2.
- You can start to create your own Learning Module at Works => New, then find a Publisher who will either publish it directly or arrange a peer-reviewed project for you. Go to About this Work => Publish.

5.2.2: Go to About this Work => Structure. When you go to create a new element, you will find that there are four kinds of element in a Learning Module:

- **Full Width Section**, creates a heading followed by a section that crosses both columns.
- **Two-sided Section**, creates a heading for a two column section.
- **Left (Member) Side of a Two-sided Section**, is for content that a teacher can post to students.
- **Right (Admin) Side of a Two-sided Section**, contains curriculum objectives, standards or advice to other teachers.
• The information in the yellow panel comes from About this Work => Info => Work.
• This is followed by a Full Width Section.
5.2.3: To create a Two-Sided Section, use the pencil tool to rename the “Untitled Element”. The title could reflect the content of this Update such as “Overview” or a heading from a specific curriculum framework. For the element type, select Two-Sided Section. Check Display Heading in View/Output box. Then Save. This element is used as a title for the Update.

5.2.4: In order to create the two sides – one for the student/participant and one for the teacher/instructor:
- Add a New Element, complete the element heading something like “For the Student” or “For the Participant” and save it as Left (Member) Side of a Two-sided Section.
- Repeat this process, but call the element heading something like “For the Teacher” or “For the Instructor” and save it as a Right (Admin) Side of a Two-sided Section.
5.2.6: Repeat this process for as many Updates as you would like to include in the Learning Module. You can add more sections, delete any sections, reorder sections mouseover the section listing and use the “move” symbol. You can also edit titles using the pencil symbol at any time. Always wait for the green check or tick sign before taking the next action—this tells you that your change has saved, and this that it is fine to move on to the next action.

5.2.5: Then nest member/admin sections under the Two-sided Section by selecting the “move” symbol to the left of the edit pencil, and moving them slightly to the right.
5.2.7: Enter your content is in the Creator editor for each element, the Left (Member) Side of a Two-sided Section and under the Right (Admin) Side of a Two-sided Section. To check what the Learning Module looks like when it will be published, just click on the export/print icon at any time and “View in Browser”.
Here is an update posted to a community from a Learning Module. Some recommendations:

- If at all possible include media for students to make your update interesting (such as an image or a video). One measure of potential engagement of an update should be, “how interesting would this update feel in social media?”
- If your students are working in an unrestricted community, you might also suggest here the kind of update that you would like them to make. (Restricted communities only allow admins to make updates. Unrestricted communities allow any community member to make an update.)
- End the update with a prompt or request for students to comment or discuss. Also, suggest that they talk among themselves by starting their comment.