Getting Started with a PathFinder Activity

This document is a guide for anyone developing a CoursePlus PathFinder Activity. Refer to the [accompanying template](#) [.docx] to gather thoughts for your unique activity.

From the [CTL Help CoursePlus Faculty Guide](#):

PathFinder is a tool within CoursePlus that lets the course team build active learning scenarios for students to work through. Once shared with students, PathFinder takes students through a series of decision points, each leading to other unique points, failure points, or success points. PathFinder tracks each choice made by students, collects the information, and creates appropriate reports.

Planning Your Pathfinder

Before starting your activity inside CoursePlus, you should have a plan. Your plan should include:

Goal(s) of the Scenario

This usually will be the instructional strategy that matches why you've selected the PathFinder activity's integration in your course design.

- Some examples:
  - Assess student learning in a simulated authentic activity
  - Build students' knowledge in a simulated authentic activity
  - Allow students to practice applying their knowledge in a low-stakes activity
  - Facilitate students' sustained effort and self-regulation by applying personal decision strategies and potential opportunities for reflection
  - Incorporate critical thinking to the students' cognition of the subject matter.
  - Provide guided decision-making strategies in an authentic activity to reinforce subject matter being studied.

Objectives of the Activity

What will participants be able to demonstrate by successfully completing this PathFinder? These are the learning objectives, which should align with the course objectives. Very often, the learning objectives will use [verbs associated with Bloom's taxonomy](#).

Overall Decision(s) and Desired Outcomes.

These are the high-level, overall choices the student is asked to make. The outcomes are aligned with objectives.

- Some examples:
  - Decide a communication protocol regarding a sensitive incident occurring in a service-learning field placement. *(Desired outcome might align with established protocols, as set forth in the other learning activities.)*

  - Determine the most likely cause of an infectious disease outbreak by deciding characteristics of the presented disease as well as the most applicable applications of epidemiology in the

specified context. *(Desired outcome might align with understanding of the presented disease, epidemiological surveillance and calculations, and acknowledged challenges.)*

– Decide the most appropriate course of action to positively influence organizational behavior in a public service organization. *(Desired outcome might be to choose the actions that demonstrate application of organizational and public administration theories.)*

Outline Your Decisions

For scenario-based learning, "writing the story" is secondary to making sure you know where your participants will go. When you outline your decision points, you can see how important it is to have a controlled and manageable path.

Use and modify the table in the template to outline your PathFinder's logical, sequential decision points. Add as many rows (decision points) as necessary. Alternately, you can use an external flow chart tool, such as Visio, to enter this information. What you enter here can be referred to and expanded upon in your draft.

It is recommended that there be no more than three options in any decision. Try to include points where it is common that an incorrect decision is made so students can learn from and correct the mistake in the simulation.

Learning Objective	Decision Point	Options/Student Choice	Exit (Result of Choice)
EXAMPLE objective: *Students will identify burden of road traffic injuries in Cambodia*	*Decide which data collection methods are appropriate for determining community burden*	*Household surveys*	*Correct! Continue to point 3.*
		Injury surveillance systems	*Incorrect. Typically, these are hospital systems collecting data on individual injuries. Return to point 1 to review method descriptions.*
		Focus group discussions	*Incorrect. This method typically has identified key informants that are filtered by organizations. Try again.*

Context of the Scenario (Also Considered the Situation).

This is your "what might happen in the real world" story. It should be high-level, setting the stage and providing the background information that is essential to the activity.

- Some examples:
  - Students will determine appropriate actions to increase the number and diversity of respondents to a community survey. In deciding their steps, they will use elements of the design thinking (DT) process including an importance/difficulty matrix.

  - e.g. Students are researchers tasked with capturing public understanding of vaccination risks and benefits across two diverse populations. In doing so, they will be presented with options that include exploratory field work (interviews, community networking, etc.) as well as

secondary research (statistical correlation methods, database searches, comprehensive literature reviews, etc.). The scenario will prompt students to employ what they've learned about forming a targeted needs assessment as well as bring in their understanding of cultural competencies.

(Optional) Characters, Organizations, and/or Environments in the Scenario.

If you opt to develop fictional characters, organizations, or environments for your scenario, it helps to have an easy place to reference your selected names, characteristics, roles, pronouns or anything else that may come up as you develop your PathFinder. It's recommended that you keep characters to three or less to reduce potential confusion and cognitive load.

- Examples:
  - Characters:
    - First year resident
    - Elderly patient presenting with symptoms of Hep-C
    - Concerned family member
  - Setting:
    - After-hours urgent care center

(Optional) Develop the Characters and/or Environment

Keep track of your scenario's people, organization, or other environmental factors that you might refer to at different points in the activity.

Resources for the PathFinder Activity

Gather all resources for your scenario that are either necessary to the activity or will make it stronger. This may include lectures and readings in your course, images (with source information!), accessible data tables, hyperlinks to relevant websites, etc.