

# STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE ONLINE TEACHING

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# BIGGEST CHALLENGES?

- Discuss what is most anxiety provoking when teaching an online class?
- Scenarios most common on this campus include:
  - Converting a course with which you are already comfortable into the online format
  - Blending a face to face course into a hybrid of online and f2f

# POSITIVE STUDENT FEEDBACK:

- My student evaluations echo those of studies done nationally, in which students report common benefits of online learning:
- More participation
- More quality engagement
- Anonymity/"I'm shy"
- Instant Gratification
- Increased flexibility and access

# 10 BEST PRACTICES FOR TEACHING ONLINE

- 1 Be present at the course site.
- 2 Create a supportive online course community.
- 3 Develop a set of explicit expectations for your learners and yourself as to how you will communicate and how much time students should be working on the course each week.
- 4 Use a variety of large group, small group, and individual work experiences.
- 5 Use synchronous and asynchronous activities.
- 6 Ask for informal feedback early in the term.
- 7 Prepare discussion posts that invite responses, questions, discussions, and reflections.
- 8 Search out and use content resources that are available in digital format if possible.
- 9 Combine core concept learning with customized and personalized learning.
- 10 Plan a good closing and wrap activity for the course.

# 1. BE PRESENT AT THE COURSE SITE

- Liberal use of in-shell “tools”
  - Discussion boards
    - Introductions
    - Q&A
    - Announcements
    - Watercooler
  - ‘Subscriptions’ for quick response rate to Q & A
  - Always mention an absence exceeding 2 days
  - Strategically timed emails

## 2: CREATE A SUPPORTIVE ONLINE COURSE COMMUNITY.

- Set up open dialogues between instructor and students
  - Introduction
  - Watercooler
  - Q&A
  - Eventually-Student Run Discussion
- Facilitate an open dialogue between/among students

# 3: DEVELOP A SET OF EXPLICIT EXPECTATIONS

- Post prominently, expectations for how students are expected to communicate online & with you.
  - Content focused questions reserved for course shell?
  - Weekend hours?
  - Grades turned around?
  - Office hours?
  - Rubrics posted in multiple locations with links so that it can't be missed!
  - Just as course is different, so is the syllabus!

## 4: USE LARGE GROUP, SMALL GROUP, AND INDIVIDUAL WORK EXPERIENCES.

- Variety is important
- Working in groups doesn't necessarily mean group deliverables
  - Discussion boards
  - Paper Feedback
  - Optional Teamwork

## 5: USE SYNCHRONOUS AND ASYNCHRONOUS ACTIVITIES

Depending on the discipline, synchronous could be quite beneficial, however, logically, is far more complex and opens you to a myriad of student problems.

- Support is readily available
- Choose early/Prepare ahead
- Anticipate any technology needs
- Time-zone differences, access issues, etc.

## 6: ASK FOR INFORMAL FEEDBACK EARLY IN THE TERM

- In public space?
  - What's working thus far?
  - How could your learning experience be improved?
  - What material are you hoping we cover?
  - Additional Feedback?

# 7: INVITE RESPONSES, QUESTIONS, DISCUSSIONS, AND REFLECTIONS

- Model Socratic - type probing and follow - up questions. " Why do you think that? " " What is your reasoning? " " Is there an alternative strategy? "
- Ask clarifying questions that encourage students to think about what they know and don ' t know.
- Stagger due dates of the responses, and consider a midpoint summary or encouraging comments.
- Provide guidelines and instruction on responding to other students. For example, suggest a two - part response: (1) " What resonated with you? " What are you still curious about? "
- Don ' t post questions soliciting basic facts or questions for which there is an obvious yes - or - no response. The reason for this is obvious: once one student responds, there is not much more to say. Specific fact-based questions that you want to be sure that your students know are good items for automated quizzes or for students to record in blogs.

## 8: USE DIGITAL RESOURCES/CONTENT IF POSSIBLE.

- Digital data base
- Add to Navigation Bar

## 9: COMBINE CORE CONCEPT LEARNING WITH CUSTOMIZED AND PERSONALIZED LEARNING

### First, identify Learning Outcomes/Performance Goals

“[...] making students thinking visible [...] requires students to create, talk, write, explain, analyze, judge, report, and inquire. These types of activities make it clear to students themselves, the faculty, and fellow learners what they know and don't know, what they are puzzled about, and about what they might be curious. Such activities stimulate students' growth from concept awareness to concept acquisition, building in that series of intellectual operations required for concept acquisition.” (Collins, Brown, & Holum, 1991 ).

# 10: EFFECTIVE CLOSING AND WRAP UP TO THE COURSE

- Ramp up direct communication:
  - encouraging them to look at the grade-book for any errors
  - “gentle reminders” about upcoming closing/due dates
  - “you’re getting there!”
- Begin lessening the intensity of the discussion boards to maintain balance

# QUESTIONS?



# TIPS TO GETTING STARTED

- Avoid focusing on “bells and whistles” in terms of technology
- Don’t consider this course conversion- and don’t be afraid to completely change the delivery of the material
- Evaluate the type of support you need and then ask for it

# BRAVE NEW WORLD

- Student learning comes first and the technology follows
- Learning happens through interaction and active participation
- Online courses use a student-centered, constructivist approach where the instructor facilitates student learning

# TEN CORE LEARNING PRINCIPLES

- Principle 1 Every structured learning experience has four elements with the learner at the center.
- Principle 2 Learners bring their own personalized and customized knowledge, skills, and attitudes to the experience.
- Principle 3 Faculty mentors are the directors of the learning experience.
- Principle 4 All learners do not need to learn all course content; all learners do need to learn the core concepts.
- Principle 5 Every learning experience includes the environment or context in which the learner interacts.
- Principle 6 Every learner has a zone of proximal development that defines the space that a learner is ready to develop into useful knowledge.
- Principle 7 Concepts are not words but organized and interconnected knowledge clusters.
- Principle 8 Different instruction is required for different learning outcomes.
- Principle 9 Everything else being equal, more time on task equals more learning.
- Principle 10 We shape our tools, and our tools shape us.