

GETTING STARTED WITH CREATING AN ONLINE COURSE

INTRODUCTION

Creating an online course for the first time can seem an overwhelming and daunting task. Teaching online has both unique challenges and opportunities. Online learning opens up worlds of possibilities for rich student interactions and personalized student assessments that may not be possible in a face-to-face class.

Most of the same principles for effective instruction in undergraduate education apply in an online course format. Seven principles for good practice to keep in mind include:

- Encourage faculty-to-student interaction
- Encourage student-to-student interaction
- Promote active learning
- Communicate high expectations
- Facilitate time on task
- Provide rich, rapid feedback
- Respect diverse learning

(A.Chickering and Z. Gamson. "Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education." AAHE Bulletin, March 1987.)

FIRST STEPS IN ONLINE COURSE DESIGN

Many instructors may be tempted to begin by worrying about details of technology for implementing their online course. Instead, your course creation process should begin with Learning Outcomes. Before doing anything else, you want to figure out what it is you want students to learn and how you will measure their success.

Once you have settled on your Learning Outcomes, you will want to begin thinking about the course Learning Experiences. How will students be presented with content? What sorts of learning activities will the students engage in? This is where you can start looking at technologies and what sorts of learning experiences might be possible in the online format. An instructional designer may be help to help you shape content delivery and learning activities suitable to your course learning outcomes.



How to Start Writing Learning Objectives

- Start with what you want students to learn
- Then say how you will know if they achieve that outcome

THE ROLE OF THE ONLINE INSTRUCTOR

The online instructor plays many critical roles within the online course:

- Teacher
- Facilitator
- Community builder
- Motivator
- Evaluator



The instructor does not just deliver content. Instead, the instructor is responsible for designing learning opportunities for the students and then guiding them through these learning experiences. The instructor facilitates communication around an academic topic. They help build a community of learners. The instructor also serves as a motivator, encouraging students as they progress through the material. Finally, the instructor is an evaluator. They review student work and provide feedback on how well the student is meeting course learning outcomes.

ONLINE COURSE QUALITY AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Online courses a priori should have no lower quality or lower academic integrity standards than traditional, face-to-face course. As the instructor, it is up to you to hold high quality standards for your online course and build into it the same level of learning experiences and rigor of assessments that you would have in any other course. Do not make accommodations on course content quality!

There are many ways to ensure academic integrity online. Examples include:

- Online proctoring services (Ex. ProctorU)
- Plagiarism detectors (Ex. turnitin.com)
- Randomized exam problems from large question banks
- Short quiz and exam windows
- Computer signature or keystroke signature services



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Guiding Principles for Distance Teaching and Learning from the American Distance Education Consortium](#)
- [10 Easy Steps to Creating Your Online Course from Blackboard Inc.](#)
- [Vai, M. & Sosulski, K. \(2011\). Essentials of Online Course Design: A Standards-Based Guide. Routledge.](#)