

Success Tips for Online Teaching

Preparing Your Course

- Make sure everything in the course is clear, written well, free from errors and, whenever possible, visually appealing.
- Anticipate students' needs as learners. Provide all materials, information, instructions, links, and resources that students will need to complete assignments and achieve success in the course. Most online courses include PowerPoints or video lectures of each week's instruction and a weekly discussion, along with any quizzes or assignments that assess, support, or reinforce student learning.
- Provide opportunities for students to interact with one another and with you.
 - In online learning, this usually occurs in discussion boards where the instructor posts a question that students must answer. Students are usually required to comment on two or more of their peers' answers to the question.
 - Make sure your expectations are clear. For example, you can specify the word count for their peer comments and their answers to online questions.
 - Repeat instructions as often as is necessary for students to gain understanding and post written instructions in multiple places within the online classroom.
 - Be patient with your students and with yourself as everyone acclimates to the online learning environment.
 - Holding live discussions through the tools available in the LMS or via technologies such as GoToMeeting, Skype, or ZOOM helps facilitate interaction.

Communicating with Students

- Send students an email welcoming them to the online classroom. For the purposes of our efforts right now, reintroduce yourself to the students, provide your contact information, and give them an idea of what the course is about and what they'll be doing in the online course.
- Send a weekly email to all students, reviewing what they learned up to that date and previewing what they'll do in the coming week.
- Respond to all student email within 24 hours. Students become very frustrated when their instructors are unresponsive, especially when they're asking a question about an assignment.
- Be careful how you say things online. We cannot convey facial expressions or tone of voice in writing, so we should anticipate how our comments might sound to our students. We should always project an attitude of kindness, support, and understanding.

Online Classroom Management

- Check your online classroom at least 5 days per week, if not every day.
- Notify students if you're going to be unavailable for any reason.
- Read all students' discussion posts and peer comments. Respond to students every day. Students value your input and they need to know that you're paying attention.
- Grade all assignments or assessments within 48 hours of the due date, providing substantive feedback to students. They should understand why you graded their work the way you did and how they can improve their work in the next assignment. Provide opportunities for revision and resubmission of work that did not meet your expectations, if possible.
- Keep track of which students have responded to discussion boards, posted peer comments, and submitted their assignments. When students stop participating in the online classroom, contact them. If they don't respond to email, make a phone call. If they don't answer your call, contact advising and enter an alert in the portal. We cannot be content to let any student fall off the radar – their success should be our priority.
- Your comments in discussions and feedback on students' work are your primary tools for teaching online. Online course content is often rather static, but we control what we say to students. Our responses have a powerful influence over their learning.