Recommendations when teaching online

Syllabus: layout out the terms of the course, expected responsibilities, behaviors, & grading criteria

1. Clear specific directions, expectations, sequencing of assignments, policy on late assignments, specifications for writing assignments, plagiarism, & cheating are vital
2. Explain the course organization (i.e. each week begins on Mon. & ends on Sun.)
3. Note where students can get technical support & your availability
4. Class participation should be defined if counted in the final grade
5. Provide feedback on all work/questions within 24 hours
6. Provide detailed instructions for students, including student roles & responsibilities
7. Develop rubrics for assignments & include in syllabus along with stellar student examples
8. Allow at least two days between assignments
9. When assigning due dates, remember students may be in different time zones

10. Create a calendar of work to keep students on track
11. Write material in a conversational tone with an active voice
12. Clearly state learning objectives in the syllabus
13. Directly tie each assignment, learning activity, or post to an objective

Course structure: instructor as guide on the side

1. Introduction video by professor discussing the course
2. Begin each class or unit with a video, joke, or comic & tie it into the lesson(s)
3. Hold online office hours via email, IM, Skype or other
4. Post all materials for class on the first day
5. Use announcements/email for course modifications
6. Use a week-by-week format, make assignments due Mon. AM or when you are prepared to grade them
7. Consolidate reference materials in one location
8. Include interactive opportunities to challenge students & accommodate different learning styles
9. Include Podcasts lectures
10. Narrate PowerPoints to elaborate on points; include lecture notes area
11. Incorporate reflection/opinion papers weekly to tie points together
12. Integrate video/audio clips to enhance student learning; students can locate & post these

Discussion: experience your students by the words & ideas they express in their assignments

1. Post pictures/videos/audio of students to build community
2. Keep your posts to approximately 20% of the total discussion or the students will begin posting to you instead of the class
3. Set rules & standards for good netiquette
4. Ask questions focused on knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, & evaluation
5. Encourage interactions between: instructor to student, student to content, & student to student
6. Require students to provide substantial posts backed up with class information, readings & resources
7. Post an example of a stellar response
8. Alternate postings by assigning students to respond every other week; or summarize discussion points
9. Set up a discussion board where students can post the murkiest point; monitor & respond daily
10. Incorporate external websites links to maintain current discussions
11. Summarize the important points in the discussion boards weekly as announcements
12. Create mind maps that show connections & relationships to use as summaries
13. Assign groups a different course topic to explore; post in the main discussion area for review & comment
14. Assign discussion groups to create a product such as: a quiz for the class, write a response to an author, compose a critique of a reading, brainstorm a topic, create a journal article review, compare & contrast an issue, reinforce procedures or processes by asking them to relate it to daily life, or respond to a case study; post products in the main discussion area for review & comment

Lecture: a verbal delivery of content asynchronously

1. Upload an audio lecture or podcast recording
2. Add your lecture notes to the bottom of the PowerPoint slides
3. Integrate audio into the PowerPoint slides
4. Videotape a lecture given in a classroom & upload
5. Add links to related resources in your PowerPoint
6. Create a notebook of lecture notes & have the students download it & read
7. Use web conferencing software to record a lecture

Testing: measuring student knowledge acquisition & application

1. Questions should relate to discussion boards, lectures, case studies, & other class activities
   Example essay: Write a 6 page paper characterizing the major trends in the art of the Augustan era, using at least 3 primary source documents or images presented in class, & 5 additional library resources. In presenting your characterizations, incorporate 1 topic from class discussions.
2. Ask application, implementation, compare/contrast, dispute sides, predict outcomes, personal reflection & critical thinking questions
3. Time your tests
4. Use at least 2 other methods of evaluation in addition to tests (i.e. presentations (via Skype), essay papers, reflection pieces, journal composition, & discussion participation)
5. Use portfolios as a mode of evaluation; the student is assessed by a progressive series of work

Time: faculty commitment to redesign & deliver

1. Between 10-120 hours to redesign an online course for 1st time
2. Requires preparation in advance
3. Modifications are communicated through announcements or email
4. Faculty spent 4 to 30 hours per week teaching during course delivery

Readings

Teaching Online: A Practical Guide, 2010, Ko and Rossen


Building Online Learning Communities, 2007, Rena M. Palloff and Keith Pratt

Effective Online Teaching – Foundations and Strategies for Student Success, 2011, Tina Stavredes