Distance Learning Recommendations

Hybrid Teaching Faculty Learning Community
2010-2011

Table of Contents

Online Accessibility .................................................................................................................. 2
Faculty Workload.................................................................................................................. 5
Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment..................................................................... 9
Organizing a Course .............................................................................................................. 11
Faculty Preparation for Teaching through Distance Learning.......................................... 14
Online Interaction.................................................................................................................. 17
Student Readiness ................................................................................................................ 19
Basic Hardware and Software .............................................................................................. 23

Hybrid Teaching Faculty Learning Community Participants:

Ann Witham, Coordinator
Ruth Benander
Nancy Bowers
Kristine Hickey
Beverly Knauper
Alan Lundstedt
Kent Lutz
Jan Ojdana
Pam Rankey
Leonynette Wilson
Introduction
Making online course materials accessible to all students is not a choice; it is the law. It is important to realize that the law pertains to all courses that have an online component, including classroom courses that require students to take online quizzes or to access course documents online. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and Sections 504 and 508 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act (Section 508 was amended in 1998 to include electronic media) are the two major federal laws that pertain to higher education. While faculty need to create course materials that comply with these laws, the scope of making materials equally accessible to all students is overwhelming and beyond the expected role of faculty.

Online Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Federal Laws governing equal access</th>
<th><a href="http://www.ada.gov/cguide.htm">http://www.ada.gov/cguide.htm</a></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University of Cincinnati Accessibility Information</td>
<td><a href="http://www.uc.edu/ucomm/web/accessibility.html">http://www.uc.edu/ucomm/web/accessibility.html</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.uc.edu/ucomm/web/accessibility/resou">http://www.uc.edu/ucomm/web/accessibility/resou</a> rces.html</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

College Wide Recommendations
Establish a committee, possibly consisting of the Director of Disability Services, the Director of Network Resources, the web administrator, and the Director of the Learning and Teaching Center, to identify who will determine that online course materials are compliant with accessibility laws. Making online course materials equally accessible requires the knowledge of the laws as well as appropriate accommodations for persons with disabilities, requires knowledge of writing HTML code and web construction, and requires the appropriate pedagogy.
An instructional designer should work with Disability Services to help faculty develop online materials that are compliant.

**Additional Suggestions**

1. Since students with disabilities may require services from the Disability Office, the earliest communication with students in the online course should include a statement such as:

   RWC is committed to providing all students equal access to learning opportunities. Disability Services is the official campus office that works with students who have disabilities to arrange reasonable accommodations. Students who have or think they have a disability are invited to contact Disability Services for a confidential discussion. **It is recommended that students with disabilities initiate contact with Disability Services as soon as possible, preferably before the course begins, in order to allow adequate time for services to be arranged.** Location - Muntz Hall, room 112E. Telephone - (513) 792-8625.

2. Students should be referred to Disability Services for text to speech programs for visually impaired students, technology access concerns (keyboard and mouse accessibility), and testing time and condition adaptations.

3. Faculty need to be able to provide the following when needed.
   a. For the hearing-impaired, narrations could be scripted while developed, or transcribed to written documents.
   b. For the visually-impaired, all course documents and assignments need to be in a form compatible with programs for text to speech conversion, or large print or braille conversion. Figures and diagrams in Powerpoints can be described as needed.

**Additional Resources**

The Web Accessibility Initiative of the World Wide Web Consortium
[http://www.w3.org/WAI](http://www.w3.org/WAI)

In 2008, WAI issued version 2 of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.
[http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG20/](http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG20/)
WebAIM (Web Accessibility in Mind) provides a checklist for conformance to ACAG20.
http://www.webaim.org

Blackboard Accessibility Statement
http://www.blackboard.com/Platforms/Learn/Resources/Accessibility.aspx
Introduction
While there is not a consensus in the literature about the effect that teaching online classes has on faculty workload, most research agrees that teaching online requires differences in the allocation of time when compared with traditional classes.

Online Resources

www.neiu.edu/~hrd/mwr2p09/Papers/Conceicao_Baldor.pdf
Faculty Workload for Online Instruction: Individual Barriers and Institutional Challenges
Simone C. O. Conceição and M. Julia Baldor
This article looks at a number of studies about online teaching. Hardy and Bower (2004) say that teaching online takes more time than face-to-face because learners often need more individual attention, it takes extra time for course development, and that it takes longer to write a response than just to reply to a student in person. DiSalvio (2007) states that online instruction demands more time because of the type of interaction involved. Andersen and Avery’s (2008) study found no statistically significant difference in teaching time requirements, but advance preparation time for web-based classes was not taken into consideration in the study. Depending on the type of course being taught online, the increase in class size may increase workload. According to DiBiase and Rademacher (2005), it takes about equal time to teach online if the instructor is experienced, the course is not a discussion-intensive class, and help from instructional design specialists and graduate assistants is available. Faculty are the content experts, but they are also approached by students regarding technical aspects of online education. In order to reduce time in providing technical support to students, it would be appropriate to have a graduate assistant available for technical support to students.


http://www.ipfw.edu/tohe/Papers/Nov%202010/015_the%20upper%20limit.pdf

**The Upper Limit: The Issues for Faculty in Setting Class Size in Online Courses**

Joy L. Colwell, Assistant Professor of Organizational Leadership and Supervision
Carl F. Jenks, Professor of Organizational Leadership and Supervision
Purdue University Calumet

A report commissioned by the National Education Association (NEA) from June 2000 contains survey data which notes that 31% of distance learning courses have 1-20 students, 33% have 21-40 students, 17% have 41-700 students, and 19% were not sure of the total students in the class. One author suggests that the maximum number of students for online courses is really very low—in the range of twelve to twenty students, depending on the level of instruction. [3]

Faculty reported in the AFT report that preparation time for distance learning courses is much greater than for a classroom-based course, with some estimates ranging from 66% to 500% greater. It also takes considerably more time to communicate with students, and faculty must keep up to some degree with the odd hours of online students. [2]

Although it is recommended that professors receive some form of relief or compensation for the additional workload of online courses, very few professors do so. In the NEA report, 84% of faculty who teach web-based courses get no course-reduction. [1] In other words, distance learning takes more time and energy from faculty, but seldom has rewards. In the NEA report distance learning faculty tell that two of their top three concerns were that distance learning would result in more work for the same amount of pay, and that faculty would not be compensated fairly for their intellectual property. [1]
The authors of the article recommend the following.

- Presumptive maximum course size should be twenty students for undergraduate courses, and eight-fifteen for graduate courses. Upper level undergraduate courses may need to be smaller, depending on course content and structure. Courses which require a substantial number of lengthy written assignments may need to be smaller to minimize instructor burden.

- Courses with more than twenty students should be divided into smaller groups, if possible, to foster the building of learning communities.

- Faculty who develop and manage online courses should be compensated for the additional burdens of development of course materials, either with release time or additional compensation, or by counting distance learning courses as more than one course for purposes of computing full time employment. It should be noted that release time is often insufficient to compensate for the number of hours required to develop online courses.

- Larger online sections should be staffed by faculty who are assisted by graders, graduate assistants and/or instructional designers to help them manage the burden.


**College Wide Recommendations**

Unless exceptional circumstances exist, online course size should not exceed 20 students. Lower limits may need to be set for writing-intensive courses.

Because teaching online appears in most cases to require substantial extra time from faculty when compared with classroom-based courses, this should be recognized in matters such as RPT and merit.

The college needs a support system/helpline to field student technology calls.

Historically some RWC faculty members have received compensation or release time to develop online courses, but since this is not currently the norm, compensation and release time are not generally recommended. Some courses may require extensive time and effort to develop online and compensation and/or release time should be negotiated on a case-by-case basis.
Additional Resources

College Teaching, 56(1), 17-21 Winter 2008
WEB-BASED INSTRUCTION AND COMMUNITY COLLEGE FACULTY WORKLOAD
Davison M. Mupinga and George R. Maughan

The Transition from Face-to Face to Online Teaching
Rosemary Macy, Ph.D.
Introduction

In all of our courses, we list our student learning outcomes (SLOs) and we outline our assessments. However, we often leave the relationship between the two implicit. To help our students understand why we are asking them to do the work of the course, we can work to make the relationship between the assessments and SLOs clearer. One way to do that is to create a graphic representation of the SLOs and assessments.

Online Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Link</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality Matters Home Site</td>
<td><a href="http://www.qmprogram.org/">http://www.qmprogram.org/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality Matters Rubric with content area recommendations</td>
<td><a href="http://www2.pvc.maricopa.edu/hybrid/docs/QMRubric.pdf">http://www2.pvc.maricopa.edu/hybrid/docs/QMRubric.pdf</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

College Wide Recommendations

A Quality Matters review is an inter-institutional quality assurance process for online learning. Based on the QM rubric, faculty review online and hybrid courses to help ensure a continuous improvement model for online learning. We recommend that we pursue the QM standards as the basis for our review of online courses. We also recommend that our faculty be trained in the application of the QM rubric for peer review purposes.
### General QM Standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard 1</th>
<th>Instructions make clear how to get started and where to find various course components</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standard 2</td>
<td>The course learning objectives describe outcomes that are measurable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 3</td>
<td>The TYPES of assessment selected measure the stated learning objectives and are consistent with course activities and resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 4</td>
<td>The instructional materials contribute to the achievement of the stated course and module/unit learning objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 5</td>
<td>The learning activities promote the achievement of the stated learning objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 6</td>
<td>The tools and media support the learning objectives, and are appropriately chosen to deliver the content of the course</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Rationale

The University of Cincinnati belongs to the Quality Matters Consortium. Since this is a nationally recognized system of review, we can assure that our courses are designed according to the best practices outlined in this system. In addition, by having our faculty participate in Quality Matters training, we assure that our courses are not only peer reviewed according to these criteria, but that they are designed with the criteria in mind. This quality assessment will result in better courses, and it can also be used as a marketing tool to promote the quality of our courses in comparison to our competitors.
Introduction
Organizing a course for online instruction in Blackboard should reflect the overall organization of the content and progress of the course.

Online Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Carnegie Mellon advice on organizing a course</th>
<th><a href="http://www.cmu.edu/teaching/designteach/design/contentschedule.html#coursestructure">http://www.cmu.edu/teaching/designteach/design/contentschedule.html#coursestructure</a></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

College Wide Recommendations
Most online programs have a template for all their courses to insure a certain amount of organizational consistency. If an instructor is using a publisher’s course management site, he or she should have the entry point through Blackboard with at least a syllabus and contact information in Blackboard. We recommend that everybody place Announcements as the entry point to their BB site. If Blackboard is the main site for the course, we recommend that everybody include the following three areas in their main menu:

- Communication (announcements, syllabus, contact information),
- Content (topic tabs for the progression of the course),
- External Resources (the library, the textbook, other key resource sites).
Basic Elements that could be included

**Syllabus**

The syllabus for an online course needs to be more detailed than a face2face course because you need to explain items in explicit detail. You might also include a separate calendar with due dates on it for redundant clarity.

Even though this information is on your syllabus, create a button called “Contact the Professor” for your main menu and use the “contacts” template in BB. Also include a “Starfish” link for office hours.

Include a “Start Here” button for the first week of class that helps orient students to support services, the online readiness assessment specific to your course, and other information they need to know to get started.

Organize your content buttons to follow how you progress through the course whether it be by unit, chapter, concept, or topic. Put the buttons in the order in which you will cover them as the course progresses.

If you use a publisher course management site, external blogs, or the RWC library, include links to these sites in the main menu of the BB course.

**Beginning**

*An Online Readiness Assessment:* an exercise that leads students through your expectations for Blackboard use and pre-requisite knowledge.

*A personal introduction:* you can ask students to introduce themselves in blogs or discussion boards. You should include one for yourself as well.

**Middle**

*Midterm survey:* in a midterm survey, you check in to see how everyone is doing in a survey or journal entry that asks what is working or not working. And you might describe the events here.

**End**

*Include the online course survey.*

*Assign an end of course reflection* in the discussion board or the journal where students reflect on their performance of the student learning outcomes.
General Organizational Advice

Due Dates
Since many students do a lot of online course homework on the weekends, it is recommended that weekend due dates be on Tuesdays so that you can troubleshoot any technology difficulties on Monday.

Exams
If you give online tests, have the due date span several days. This way you can fix problems students will have with the test, such as getting thrown off due to a bad internet connection, or submitting it incorrectly. If you give an exam that is only open on one day, you might consider providing a phone number at which you can be easily reached for the above mentioned predictable emergencies.

Reducing Clutter
Turn off or hide buttons that are not pertinent to the course at the moment. Hide tools in the “tools and communication” area that you do not use, such as Blackboard Messaging.

Course Recycling
Some things copy to another course nicely and some don’t. Setting up content by units or topics copies quite nicely. Creating items and attaching documents copy easily. Assignments (using the assignment manager link) and SafeAssign items with related attachments and instructions don’t copy. For the most convenient course-copy, put the assignments and attachments in their own item. Make the assignment link or SafeAssign link simply for submitting the assignment. Then you only have to remake the assignment link and not the entire assignment text with attachments. If you consider this as you structure your course you can save significant time with multiple sections or courses you repeat.
Introduction
Faculty need extended seminars to expose them to learning and teaching in an online environment. We must design experiences that will help novices learn about the experience of online learning and teaching, as well as support advanced online instructors create better online courses.

Online Resources

| Virginia Commonwealth University Online Teaching Whitepaper | http://www.vcu.edu/cte/resources/OTLRG/index.html |
| Resources on the Ohio Online Learning Network | http://www.olin.org/ |

College Wide Recommendations
We will offer seminars to support novice and advanced users
The college should offer a basic hardware/software package to all instructors who will teach online.
  o Headset with microphone
  o Screen capture software
  o Audio recording software
The college should clarify copyright issues.
The college should dedicate resources to pursue grant opportunities to support online technology development.

Basic Seminar Outlines

Exploring Online Teaching

5 weeks: Summer and Winter

Purpose: Exploring Online Learning for instructors with no experience with online teaching or learning.
Limit: 20 but generally will take more.

Outcome: Blackboard Course Shell

Facilitator: TBA

  Pre-Meeting: Face to face meeting organized by campus to discuss how the course works, what the participant responsibilities are, what the instructor’s responsibilities are, and what the special issues of online teaching and learning are.

  Reading: CTE White Paper: Building from Content to Community: [Re]Thinking the Transition to Online Teaching and Learning (May 2009)

  Week 1) Intro and online learning
  Week 2) Delivery Methods
    *Online tone and responsiveness
  Week 3) Online issues: Elluminate and how to use it. Virtual office hours.
    Articles that articulate the PROS and CONS
  Week 4) Technology
  Week 5) Objectives and Assignments
Developing Online Courses

8 weeks: Fall and Spring

Purpose: Advanced users training in refining pedagogies and technologies. Exploring is a prerequisite OR one can test out of it through an online readiness assessment. If difficulty--then consider the exploring course or else use tutorials.

Limit: 20 but generally will take more.

Outcome: Blackboard Course ready to be offered.

Facilitators: Ruth Benander and Robin Lightner

Unit 1: Basic Course Design
  SLOs, Assessments and activities
course graphics
  *basic syllabus with graphic representation (mostly done already)--separate out calendar

Unit 2: Basic Website Design
  ADA compliance
design basics--organizing the menu, banner, buttons, organizing folders etc.

Unit 3: Online Communication
  Communication setting up blogs, journals, group areas. Using these forms of communication.
  *Copyright issues. See UC website.

Unit 4: Assessments:
  Respondus, surveys, gradebook,

Unit 5: Activities and feedback
  Assignment manager and gradebook, webquest

Unit 6: Classroom management
  monitoring, what do you do when they don't show up. Online evaluations,
  administrative support--early intervention

Unit 7: Student readiness last: what do students need to know what to do. Create assessment module.

Unit 8: Quality Matters Assessment: peer review
Online Interaction

Managing electronic communication and interactivity in distance learning courses.

Introduction
Online interaction includes electronic communication, both instructor/student and student/student. This could also include student/computer interactions as with textbook publishers' interactive internet-based systems.

References


College Wide Recommendations
I. We recommend that effective online interaction be accomplished via two main categories, synchronous and asynchronous:
   a. Synchronous interactions might include instant messaging, live chats, live lectures, special tools such as Second Life or Lingua
Moo, web conferencing (for example, using Blackboard’s Elluminate Live), video conferencing, and telephone calls.

b. Asynchronous interactions could include email, discussion boards, blogs, Bb groups, group projects, and file transfer systems.

Asynchronous interactions have some benefits over synchronous in that they provide time for reflection and synthesis as well as promote feelings of connectedness.

II. Instructor’s Role as an Interactive E-Coach

a. Design quality discussion questions or topics.

b. Model participation and provide feedback using a wide variety of brief, concise observations, questions, clarifications, affirmations, and acknowledgements to maintain “social presence.”

III. We recommend that assessment of interactivity be handled as follows:

a. Assessment of student performance should be accomplished by using well-crafted rubrics for grading discussion posts, blogs, etc.

b. Assessment of course-student interaction (what worked vs. didn’t work, what was clear vs. unclear) should be accomplished by use of student feedback via surveys, reflective papers.

Rationales

Effective online interaction results in several important outcomes.

a. It increases retention by helping students feel connected to the course, instructor, and other students.

b. It creates an environment that fosters learning by motivating and supporting students and providing timely feedback.

c. It increases self-regulation, which in turn helps students participate more actively.

d. Well-designed discussion questions and assignments improve understanding and promote deeper levels of discovery and exploration.

e. It enables deeper interaction with content by giving students time to think before responding to content/questions. (as opposed to “shooting from the hip” in face-to-face discussion).
Introduction

Students must demonstrate readiness before enrolling in a distance learning course by passing a readiness assessment. The assessment, which must include actual demonstration of online skills, will serve as gateway to enrolling in a distance-learning course.

References


Sample OnLine Skills Assessment (This version is used at Cerro Coso Community College) http://www.cerrocoso.edu/studentservices/heather/quizaccess.htm

College Wide Recommendations

1. Students must demonstrate readiness by passing a readiness assessment.

2. A training module is needed to prepare students for distance learning who do not demonstrate readiness. The readiness assessment must still be
passed prior to enrolling in a distance learning course.

3. Successful completion of the readiness assessment is a pre-requisite for all distance courses. (This could be accomplished by assigning a course number to a one-hour Readiness Assessment course, and requiring that students successfully complete this course. An orientation flag that blocks registration could be established. Advanced standing could be awarded if a student passes the assessment without taking the course.)

**Background and Rationale**

I. What is Student Readiness for Distance Learning?
   Research has shown that factors affecting student readiness include the broad areas of (1) computer/internet self-efficacy, (2) self directed learning, (3) motivation for learning, (4) learning control, and (5) online communication efficacy.

II. Assessing Student Readiness
   a. Self Reported Readiness is not enough. Students must demonstrate readiness.
   b. Students must be prevented from enrolling in an online or hybrid course if they have not demonstrated readiness.

III. Preparing Students for Distance Learning
   a. A standalone or on demand prep course should be developed to prepare students for distance learning.
   b. The readiness assessment must still be passed prior to enrolling in a distance learning course. Students would need to take the assessment, not just complete the course.
Alternate Delivery Methods

**Assess**

An Online Readiness Assessment: an exercise that leads students through your expectations for Blackboard use and pre-requisite knowledge.

**Self-Study**

A student with moderate skills may review on their own or use referred to resources to prepare for successful completion of the assessment.

**Course**

Face to Face Course
Hybrid Module

Basic skills that must be included in the readiness assessment
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning</th>
<th>Create a plan to accomplish a task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal Setting</strong></td>
<td>Create learning goals for an upcoming class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self Directed Motivation</strong></td>
<td>Students must be able to motivate themselves for learning without a face to face instructor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Technical Skills</strong></td>
<td>Send an e-mail.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Create and attach a Word document to as assignment link in Blackboard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Read a pdf file; install adobe reader if necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post to a Discussion Board, a Blog, or a Journal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Perform an Internet search.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self Assessment of stated, and additional skills</strong></td>
<td>As part of the assessment students should be asked to do a Self-assessment rating habits, time available, etc. to help manage expectations. Although self-reporting is not ideal, it introduces awareness to the skills mostly likely to make them successful.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction
Distance Learning software and hardware needs go beyond having a computer. In order for students to gain access to online course materials their computer must meet certain criteria. In addition, in order for faculty to make distance learning content accessible to students they need tools for their computer to produce and store course content.

Below, please find a listing of software and hardware recommendations for both students and faculty to get started with online instruction.

College Wide Recommendations
STUDENT
- Personal Computer (PC): Desktop or Laptop (1-3 years old)
- Internet Service Provider (ISP) Connection
- Network Card (Browser)--Internet Explorer, Firefox
- Portable Storage (USB drive; Disk)
- Word Processing Software (Microsoft Office)
- Media Player (Quick Time)
- PDF reader (Adobe Reader)
- Email
- Hardware Recommendation at least 250 GB of Hard Drive; 32 MB RAM
- Access to a scanner, printer, and external drive

**FACULTY**

- Personal Computer (PC); Desktop or Laptop (1-3 years old)
- Word Processing Software (Microsoft Office)
- Network Card (Browser)--Internet Explorer, Firefox
- Media Player (Quick Time)
- PDF editor
- Screen Capture Software (Camtasia)
- Voice threading software or audio recording software (Audacity)
- Video Storage (Screencast Pro--$100.00)
- Headset with microphone
- Eluminate License