

Texas Wesleyan University Online Instructor's Guide 2004-2005

Welcome to E-learning. This guide is intended to provide you with some answers to frequently asked questions and information about procedures specific to the delivery of online courses. If you are a first time online instructor, you will want to read through this guide and refer to it often. If you are a veteran online instructor, you will want to review the guide looking for changes and additional information.

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E-learning Contacts

Services related to E-learning are provided through the Office of the Provost. Staff associated with E-learning are housed in the Faculty Resource Center located in the West Library on the Historic Campus.

Web site: <http://department.txwes.edu/atw/>

Marcus Kerr

- Manages the development of new projects.
- Provides information regarding the proposal process for new project funding/major revisions.
- Provides assistance with instructional design, course development, and course management.

Telephone: (817) 531-5818

Email: mkerr@txwes.edu

Jason Neal

- Responds to help desk requests from students and instructors.
- Provides assistance with Web development.
- Provides training on Course Management Systems.

Telephone: (817) 531-5859

Email: jneal@txwes.edu

Richard Massey

- Provides design and production services with a variety of media, including video, audio recording, illustration and animation graphics, photographic and print material.
- Prepares materials for delivery via the Internet.

Telephone: (817) 531-5863

Email: hmassey@txwes.edu

Charles Martin

- Provides technical support for and assists in the delivery of ITV courses.
- Provides design and production services for media objects.

Telephone: (817) 531-5856

Email: cmartin@txwes.edu

Additional University Resources

Information and Communication Technology

Telephone: (817) 531-4428

Email: helpdesk@txwes.edu

Web: <http://www.ict.txwes.edu/>

West Library

Telephone: (817) 531-4800

Email: cswigger@txwes.edu

Web: <http://department.txwes.edu/lib>

Getting Started

There are a few things that will help you with regard to the administrative aspects of teaching your course. Before your course begins you may want to ensure you have:

- Obtained authorization for online delivery and submitted the Course Request Form
- Library access
- A network account and networked computer, which meets technical specifications for online courses
- A comprehensive syllabus
- Required texts and materials for your course
- Completed the orientation to teaching online
- Understand the role of Academic Technology and Web Services and that of the instructor in addressing student problems

Authorization for Online Delivery and Course Request Form

The first step is to gain approval to develop and offer an online course from your Department Head and Dean. Then, two months prior to the term the course is to be delivered, you should complete and submit the *Course Request Form* found online (<http://department.txwes.edu/atw/>). Within two weeks of the receipt of this form, a Course Development Account will be created for you and you will be able to complete the requisite tutorials and training and develop your online course.

Library Access

Instructors should obtain a University Identification Card to gain access to library resources and media equipment. You can do this by going directly to the West Library with one form of picture ID (driver's license or state ID). If you are teaching from a distance and do not come to campus, email the person in charge of issuing university identifications at lsherwood@txwes.edu.

Online access to the library is available through the library web site at <http://department.txwes.edu/lib/>

Network Account and Computer

Every faculty member is issued a network account upon confirmation of employment. In order to access WebCT you will need to use your Network ID and Password. If you are new to Wesleyan, have forgotten your ID or password, or wish to change your password, visit the Ramlink web page at <https://ramlink.txwes.edu>. If you need assistance, contact the University Technical Help Desk at helpdesk@txwes.edu or (817) 531-4428.

If you are teaching an online course, you may want to consider purchasing a home computer or upgrading your existing home computer and acquiring high-speed access (i.e., ADSL, cable, etc.) through an Internet Service Provider (Charter, Dish Network, Sprint, etc.) at home. The teaching of an online course may require you to be online 10-15 hours per week at various times of the day and on the weekend.

Syllabus

Every course is required to have a syllabus. The syllabus is a way to put course goals, policies, requirements, grading criteria, and assignments in writing. A syllabus is more than a list; it is an introduction to the course and a contract with the students.

Syllabi for online classes are slightly different than those for residential courses. Specifically, online syllabi are much more detailed than those of their residential counterparts. A syllabus for an online course usually includes the following information:

- Course Number and Title
- Instructor and Program Contact Information

- Course Description
- Course Prerequisites
- Course Goals
- Required Course Materials
- Methods of Communication for the Course
- Methods of Assessment and Grading Scale for the Course
- Course Requirements
- Course Policies
- Information for Students with Disabilities
- Detailed Course Schedule
- Contact Information for Technical Support and Library Services

The course syllabus should be completed several weeks prior to the semester the course is being offered and submitted to the Dean of your School.

Required Texts and Materials

Be sure to coordinate the ordering of all necessary texts with the [Wesleyan Bookstore](#). If books are not available through the bookstore, students can order them directly from the publisher or an online bookstore (Amazon.com or BarnesandNoble.com).

A Course Materials package containing journal articles or excerpts from books is another way to include supplementary readings. This can be used instead of, or in addition to, the West Library digital collection and/or materials available on the Web. This package is gathered and put together by you, then printed and sold to students by the [Wesleyan Bookstore](#). If you plan to use Course Materials, full publication data for each of your selections is needed so that the Bookstore can obtain advance permission to reproduce material held in copyright.

Orientation to Online Instruction

Within two weeks of the receipt of the Course Request Form, a Course Development Account is created for you. The Course Development Account includes an introductory tutorial, a course development tutorial and a WebCT course account. You complete the tutorials, which provide the information necessary to fully develop your online course, and load the materials into WebCT.

Responding to Student Problems

As students are becoming familiar with the course they may encounter problems such as forgotten or incorrect logins or pages of content that will not display. For technical assistance **not** related to course content, students should contact Academic Technology and Web Services using the Technical Assistance web form found online (<http://department.txwes.edu/atw/webct/assistanceRequest.htm>).

If a student needs to be added to or removed from the course, you may add or remove that student using the student management tools available in WebCT.

If a problem is related to your course content, students should address their questions to you as course designer and not Academic Technology and Web Services. If you encounter a problem of this type that you cannot resolve, contact the appropriate E-learning staff member (see contacts section of this document for contact information).

Instructional Guidance

Establishing a Presence

Establishing a presence is an important step in ensuring quality learning. This process usually begins with the instructor sharing some professional and personal information. This may include information about:

- Your background and experience
- What you expect in terms of your interaction with students
- Something about how you intend to operate within the context of the course
- Information about your online teaching style
- How and when you should be contacted and how promptly you will reply to student emails and postings; whether you will respond to each post or only those where clarification, guidance, or comment are needed.

This is accomplished by posting a brief autobiography describing your background, interest in the course material and something about you and your life that you may want your students to know in the Main discussion forum of the course site.

Regular contact with students is essential for establishing and maintaining a presence. Your first contact with students is the most important. Your first contact, usually via email, should be warm and welcoming, an opportunity for students to seek clarification from you regarding course requirements or content, a chance for you to impart something about who you are, and the invitation for two-way communication so that you can get a sense of who they are.

A part of your continual communication with students, you may want to consider regular postings of announcements, upcoming events, and assignment due dates. This gives students guidance and keeps them on track.

Course Welcome Message

A welcome message, posted on the home page of the course site during the first week of class, is important in setting the tone for the course. What would you like your students to think about the course, how are you going to grab their attention? In your first message you want to capture the student's interest and provide the initial motivation for the course.

To do this, present the course as interesting and challenging. Students should understand that the course will test their abilities and the necessary instructional support and guidance will be there to ensure success.

According to the Task Value Expectancy Model (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002), two conditions have to be present to engage and motivate students:

1. They must value what they are doing.
2. The perceived cost (time and effort) to be successful at what they are doing should not be greater than the value (knowledge and skills) attained from it.

As an instructor, part of your role is to manage student's perceptions of these two conditions, beginning with the Welcome message. Other important considerations for setting the tone are in the course description and the course schedule where the course elements are laid out, timelines attached and the grading structure is made clear. Below is an example of a welcome message that takes these two elements into account:

Sample Welcome Message

Welcome to this course. I am looking forward to being your instructor and I do hope that, when the course

is over, you (and I as well) will have enjoyed the experience.

This is the first time that [Course], has been offered on the web and so I face, as much as you do, a sharp learning curve. In constructing the course I tried to make its content as good and as effective as I know how, but there are certainly some rough spots - things that need improvement. It is very important that you let me know whenever you encounter problems.

The discussion forum lies at the heart of this course. For the course to be successful, participation in the discussion is required. In that way, we can learn together and build a sense of community and shared achievement. Don't be afraid to ask questions, ask for clarification, and share your ideas. As instructor, I will be acting as guide to the discussion. I won't be laying down the law or telling anyone what to think. So don't be afraid of what I or anyone else shares in the discussion. I will certainly intervene if a discussion goes off course. The subject of this course is a very controversial and complex. It is easy but not very rewarding to be moralistic and condemnatory. Let's keep the tone of the discussion moderate.

Finally, it is important that contributions to the discussion focus on the subject and that they be as brief and cogent as possible. So, taking my own advice, let me sign off here. Remember, my name is [Name]. I am here to guide you through the content and support your learning as you discuss issues and concepts presented here with your peers and myself.

Communicating With Your Students

Contact Information

If a student does not know how to contact you, two-way communication becomes extremely difficult. Be sure that your contact information is visible to students and in a logical location in the course site. You will want to include:

- Your email address
- Your phone number
- A fax number for your department
- A link to your personal web page
- A phone number for the departmental/program secretary

Email

As an online instructor, almost all of your communication will be in writing. Email is one tool available to students and instructors for written communication. In establishing an email presence with students you will want to:

- Email your students within the first few days of class. This email will be the students' first impression of the course and you as the instructor. A sample email is provided below.
- Follow up your introductory email with periodic emails to individuals who are not actively participating in the class. Perhaps you will need to ask if they are having any trouble, or are just being quiet. This establishes that you care that you have not heard from them. Often, one or two emails will clarify any potential problems or issues.
- When necessary repeat any course announcements via email to the whole group. The second notice will reinforce important announcements and establish you as a good source of course information.
- Email in full sentences, using jargon and abbreviations only after establishing their meaning in the context of the message.
- Use a friendly welcoming tone. Avoid clipped sentences or demand sentences. Make your sentences open and conversational. Avoid a "superior" or "aggressive" tone.
- Ask open ended and directed questions in your email to set up a dialogue and encourage the student to talk to you via email.

- Being polite is critical. Online, our cues come from the writing: how it sounds and how it looks. Sometimes the way we write, projects an image or attitude that is unintended. Consider this when composing messages and when reacting to the messages of your students.
- If you find yourself reacting negatively to a student email, write the response and re-read it before sending it. You may even want to wait a day before sending it, especially if your reaction was to the tone and style of the email rather than the content.
- Establish a timeframe for email feedback and stick to it (usually 24-48 hours to respond to a student's email).

Sample First Contact Email

Welcome to [Course],

Please visit the Academic Technology and Web Services (ATW) web site (<http://department.txwes.edu/atw/>) for information on how access the course site. The site also provides important information about WebCT tools and how to request technical support.

Once you have logged into the course site you should familiarize yourself with some of the items on the left navigation bar. If this is your first online course, I encourage you to read the *Students Guide to WebCT @ Texas Wesleyan*, which contains some answers to frequently asked questions and information about resources available to students in WebCT.

You should then begin reading the Welcome section and Course Syllabus, taking a look at the course schedule, and glancing at the Assignments. Once you have done that, go into the section called Discussions. You should always read the Announcements discussion forum first, since this is where I will be posting important messages. You will notice that I have already posted a welcome message--try posting your own "hello" message in the Main discussion forum that introduces yourself to your classmates. If you are having any technical problems, you can contact the ATW helpdesk through the ATW web site (<http://department.txwes.edu/atw/>). If there is a problem with or error in the course content, please contact me via email.

The course will get busy very quickly, so I encourage you to get logged on and become familiar with the contents as soon as possible.

I look forward to reading your introductions!

Be sure you do everything that was promised in the email (post the Welcome message, syllabus, course schedule, assignments, opening announcements in the Announcements discussion forum and your autobiography in the Main discussion forum which has been set up to receive the students' "Hello" messages).

Synchronous Chats

Chat tools allow you to communicate with a student or students in real time by typing over the Internet. As you type, the student on the other end sees what you are typing in real time. This allows for the simulation of conversation. WebCT has pre-developed chat rooms available for use.

Students can enter the chat room at prearranged times. Chat rooms are very important for building relationships, making decisions as part of group work, planning a project, and other group activities. Deeper discussion and more meaningful thinking will more likely take place in the asynchronous discussion forums (email and discussion boards). Small groups work better in the chat environment. Try to limit a chat to five people (or less).

Here are a few tips that might facilitate your use of the WebCT Chat Rooms:

1. Make sure that `Enable Java` and `Enable Java Script` are selected in your browser's preferences.
2. Make sure pop-ups are enabled (this is essential in WebCT in general).
3. Try to stagger logons in your chat group rather than having everyone logon simultaneously to prevent Java script errors.
4. Do not begin your discussions until you see that everyone in your group has logged on.
5. Keep chat groups fairly small (five or less).
6. When you click on the Chat link, wait until the page is fully loaded before clicking on a chat room, even if the chat room icons are visible.
7. Have a well-planned agenda for the discussion but remain flexible enough to pursue relevant student interests.

Online Discussions

When you use discussion forums that are not in real-time, like chat, you are using asynchronous discussions (a.k.a. bulletin boards or forums).

There are four common types of discussion groups:

1. Instructor moderated: This discussion group usually includes the entire class (if the class size is 20 or less) or subgroups (two or more groups of 11-20 students) for large classes and is moderated and facilitated by you.
2. Student moderated: Only students in a group and the instructor post to this group space, allowing for privacy from the rest of the class. Group work proceeds and final products move to the public discussion forums once the group is ready to present their work.
3. Guest moderated: This discussion group may be facilitated by a guest who is an author of course materials such as the text or readings, or who is an acknowledged expert in the field to be studied. It is a unique opportunity to have the students interact with other experts in their chosen professions.
4. Social Discussion Forum (a.k.a. Student Café): This is an unmoderated discussion forum for social exchange between the students. This discussion area can be the social and networking aspect of this course and provide an opportunity for the students to meet informally outside of the topics generated by the course.

Other discussion groups may be added to meet the specific needs of the course design.

Purpose of Online Discussions

The purpose of online discussions is to allow students and instructors to share their experiences, knowledge and interpretations of the course content with each other. It can also be used to monitor and facilitate student learning. In this way, you ensure that students learn from each other and that the course ends up as a "virtual community of inquiry." This approach has several important implications for how the online discussions are moderated.

These discussions are not meant to be simple question and answer sessions. Students are expected to contribute their perspective on discussion questions and to follow up with responses to contributions from other students. They are expected to bring their readings, research and other academic materials into the discussion and to tie it to their practical experiences. In order for this to occur, discussions should be left open for at least 10 days.

The First Discussion

The first discussion forum will be one in which you and the students introduce yourselves. You should start this process by introducing yourself and talking about your background, your interest in the course, and your professional experience (post your autobiography). You should then invite the students to do the

same (post “Hello” messages). One way to assist students with the process is by asking them to include the answers to a few simple questions in their initial post. For example:

- What do you do?
- Where do you live?
- Why are you taking this course?
- Have you had any previous experience with online courses?
- What are you hoping to get out of this course?
- What are your future plans or career goals?

By asking students to share some professional and personal information, you are ensuring the students feel the presence of the other students and you.

The Structure of Discussions

Most discussions will begin with instructor-initiated questions based on readings or assignments. Here are some guidelines for having students participate in these discussions:

- When posting a discussion ask students to keep their quotes from readings or other sources to one or two maximum per post.
- Where possible ask students to use personal experiences and observations to supplement their academic readings.
- Where possible ask students to make an effort to not only post their own thoughts but to comment on the discussion contributions of others in the group.
- Where possible ask students to indicate in their subject line, after the topic, if their posts are: initial contributions, additional comments, follow up comments, or a summary of previous comments.

Developing and Guiding Discussions

Your role as a discussion facilitator is critical to ensuring that active and thoughtful discussion develops. In facilitation, the instructor adds to the discussion any comments s/he feels are necessary. As a discussion facilitator you:

- Monitor the discussion forums on a daily basis and acknowledge student contributions as quickly as possible.
- Play the role of facilitator or guide rather than the authority figure.
- Weave different student comments together by pointing out similarities and/or differences in the arguments.
- Stimulate discussion by asking two students who have presented different viewpoints to respond to each other.
- Do not hesitate to ask students to clarify or elaborate on their positions.
- Keep track of who has contributed and who has not and call on students who have not contributed after several days.
- Summarize the main points that have been made.

When you open a discussion, be sure your expectations of students are clear. Specifically identify:

- The beginning and ending dates for the discussion;
- The deadline for making an initial contribution and a follow-up contribution;
- How students are expected to answer the questions (supporting examples or evidence from the course material, their readings or their personal experience, etc.);
- How often students are expected to log in and monitor the discussions and post follow-up responses; and
- The quality and quantity of posts expected.

Netiquette

Prior to using the email, chat, or discussion tools, you will want to establish what acceptable conduct in an online environment is. Many instructors have adopted [The Rules of Netiquette](#) (Shea, 1994). These rules are summarized below:

- Rule 1: Remember the Human
- Rule 2: Adhere to the same standards of behavior online that you follow in real life
- Rule 3: Know where you are in cyberspace
- Rule 4: Respect other people's time and bandwidth
- Rule 5: Make yourself look good online
- Rule 6: Share expert knowledge
- Rule 7: Help keep flame wars under control
- Rule 8: Respect other people's privacy
- Rule 9: Don't abuse your power
- Rule 10: Be forgiving of other people's mistakes

If you wish to have students participate in the development of Rules of Conduct, you may choose to develop a discussion forum where students post their ideas of what is acceptable and unacceptable conduct in an online course. You can compile and summarize the postings then use the chat tool to have a class meeting where the class decides to adopt, remove, or modify the proposed Rules of Conduct.

Academic Dishonesty

Be sure that your policy on academic dishonesty is clear to students and they understand the consequences of "cheating". Your stated policy for academic dishonesty should be consistent with that of other university courses (residential and online). Below is an example of a statement on academic dishonesty.

Sample Statement on Academic Dishonesty

Please see the student handbook regarding appropriate standards of conduct in courses at Texas Wesleyan University. Cheating and Plagiarizing will not be tolerated. Any indication of academic dishonesty (page 54) will result in the student receiving an F for the course and recommendation of dismissal from the University to the Dean. A link is provided below:

<http://www.txwes.edu/registrar/catalogs/undergrad/UndergraduateCatalog0405.pdf>

If many of your assignments require students to write and submit papers and you are concerned about plagiarism, you may want to consider subscribing to a plagiarism detection service such as My Drop Box (<http://www.mydropbox.com/>).

Office Hours

Some instructors offer set office hours that guarantee student access to them in a pre-assigned chat room within the course site or at a telephone number during a certain time of the day, several days each week, for the length of the course. Some instructors will offer students access to their home or personal telephone numbers or respond to student emails on their home computer at night and on weekends. The choice of how to set up your office hours and availability for student contact is up to you. When making your choice, be sure to remember how important continual, consistent contact is for student success in online courses. Try to never be away from the class and unavailable to students for more than 48 hours at a time.

Grading

Be sure that the grading structure is clear to students and they understand how they are being evaluated in the course. The grading structure should be consistent with other courses (online and residential) in the academic department.

The grading structure should be completely outlined on the course site and in the syllabus. Unclear guidelines for grading may lead to many student appeals. This can be avoided by thinking through a number of questions and ensuring those answers are made available on the course site.

Questions to consider (DETC, 2004)

1. Is a passing grade on the final exam a requirement for passing the course?
2. What constitutes a passing grade?
3. Is this consistent with other courses in the department?
4. Is this clearly specified in the course syllabus and on the web site?
5. How many marks are awarded for online participation in discussion forums?
6. Are students expected to post weekly?
7. What constitutes an acceptable posting in a discussion forum?
8. Are these expectations made clear on the course site?

Assignment Feedback

Knowing what has been learned and what has not been learned helps to focus student efforts. Students generally appreciate detailed comments, specifically addressing strengths and weaknesses and clearly defining why the assignment was given a particular grade. It is important to link your comments and grade directly to the stated requirements for successful completion of the assignment.

If students are required to complete their assignments using Microsoft software applications (Word, Excel, etc.) and then submit them electronically for grading, it is usually a good idea to use the **Insert > Comment** function found in Microsoft applications to enter detailed feedback and then send a graded copy of the assignment back to the student via email attachment. If you are using rubrics or checklists, be sure to also send an electronic copy of the rubric or checklist used in grading the student assignment.

Course Evaluations

Student course evaluations are distributed and collected online. All online instructors are sent a link to the survey four weeks prior to the end of the semester. Generally, the instructor posts the link on the course entry page at least two weeks prior to the end of the course and requires students to complete the survey before proceeding to the final exam.

Checking the Course Site

A few days before the class starts, you will want to do a final check of the course site to ensure that all updates are in place. Be sure to check:

- The course syllabus for accuracy and completeness
- The course schedule to ensure that assignment dates and deadlines are posted accurately
- The assignment requirements (to ensure that these are clear and relevant to the assignments you are using this term)
- The discussion forums to ensure that the Introduction discussion is available to students and your Introductory post is visible
- The Welcome message is visible to students on the course home page
- Grading structure is clearly stated and visible
- Exam information is accurate and visible
- Only the grade book columns you want to be visible to students are visible

Appendix A: Information for Online Instructors

Elements Critical to the Success of Online Courses (Palloff & Pratt, 1999):

1. Honesty
 - a. Students must feel safe and able to trust others in order to connect with others.
 - b. Participants must feel confident that the others in the group are who they say and posted messages will provide open, honest feedback.
 - c. All posts should be received in an atmosphere of caring, connection and trust.
2. Responsiveness
 - a. Learning in an online environment only occurs when participants interact with each other and with the instructor.
 - b. Through interactions, the members of the group create understanding of the material through shared experience.
 - c. While many courses will have a high amount of student-content interaction, having student-instructor and student-student interaction is essential for meaningful learning to occur.
 - d. They are mutually responsible for the acquisition of knowledge.
 - e. The interaction between and collaboration with other members of the group distinguishes computer-mediated distance learning from correspondence.
 - f. The responsiveness of the instructor to the needs and concerns of the students is a crucial element.
 - g. An instructor is on duty seven days a week.
3. Relevance
 - a. Online courses can bring life in the outside world into the classroom.
 - b. For students to comprehend what they are studying, it must have personal relevance.
 - c. Relating subject matter to their life experiences and being encouraged to share real-life examples to illustrate it only enhances the learning outcomes.
4. Respect
 - a. Members of an online community must feel respected as people.
 - b. Begin with an initial welcome and continue with the respectful receipt of their posts and the receipt of constructive and expansive feedback on the material they present.
 - c. Students need to feel as though they are equal participants in the learning process.
 - d. The instructors should relinquish power to the group and participate as an equal whenever appropriate.
 - e. Guidelines for ethical behavior should be negotiated by the group and agreed to by everyone.
5. Openness
 - a. Relates to the environment created within the group and is a product of the ability to be honest with and have respect for others.
 - b. Students should feel free to share their thoughts and feelings without fear of retribution
 - c. Grades should not be affected by the nature of their opinions.
6. Empowerment
 - a. A sense of empowerment is both a crucial element and a desired outcome of participation in an online learning community.
 - b. Participants take on new roles and responsibilities in the learning process and should be encouraged to pursue knowledge.
 - c. The participants gain a new sense of confidence in their ability to interact with knowledge.

Organizing Course Content and Activities

Student workload

- Regular assignments and weekly activities are necessary to keep students motivated and on schedule with their learning.

- Student workload should be determined in hours of work per week and should be spread out throughout the course.
 - Be sure to include the amount of time necessary to locate and review materials when determining hours of work per week.
 - Students need to know when assignments are due and what they need to cover to meet the requirements of the assignment.
 - Student workload should be carefully scheduled and monitored.
- The course should not be scheduled until the general content, skills, and learning outcomes have been decided.
- The course should be completely developed prior to the start of the semester. Ad hoc teaching in online courses is usually disastrous.
- Scheduling entails dividing the teaching into discrete amounts of study for the students.
 - The aim is to determine a rough, average amount of study over the whole course, in hours, then ensure that each chunk or work fits within the overall target
 - Time estimates should include all student learning activities (literature searches, assignments, discussions, and follow up activities)
- The organization of study time should be clearly communicated to students
 - To enable the extra technology-based activities to be accommodated, it may be necessary to reduce or eliminate some content to prevent students from being overworked and confused
- Focusing on essential skills to be learned within a subject will allow you to selectively choose content to facilitate the development of essential skills
 - The exponential growth of knowledge is one reason that strategies such as problem based learning are becoming popular
 - Core areas of content and references to further areas of content can be organized through the Web in this type of learning
- Students can be given problems that drive them to explore the full range of content
 - The aim is for student to identify where they can find information they need to solve specific problems and focus on the development of skills (information retrieval and analysis and problem solving)
 - As the knowledge base changes, students have the skills to continue to learn and keep up with the subject
- Prioritizing content
 - In order to narrow down the content to be covered, it should be classified into three categories:
 - Essential to know
 - Useful to know, especially for future courses, and
 - Interesting, but can be skipped

Instructor Workload

- Teaching with technology is more work for the instructor initially than face-to-face teaching
 - More work has to go into the front-end of teaching (design and development) but with careful management the initial efforts can be counter-balanced with savings in time in the delivery of the course
- Instructors can reduce their workload by using a project management approach to designing and developing a course
 - Using this approach an accurate estimate of instructor work-time required can be made
 - If you are interested in developing a course using this technique, contact Marcus Kerr.
- Good design aims to identify clearly the content and skills to be taught and to organize the course material so that there is an even and manageable spread of work for both students and the instructor

Roles in Online Courses (Palloff & Pratt, 1999)

Instructor

- To ensure that some type of educational process occurs among the students involved.

- Provide gentle guidance and a loosely constructed framework as a container for the course, thus allowing students to explore the course material, as well as related materials without restriction.
- Provide thoughtful comments on student works and stimulate further discussion.
- Facilitate and make room for personal and social aspects of the online community.
- Create a space where everyone can let their hair down and be comfortable with one another.
- Post guidelines and rules for participation.
- Evaluate outcomes both in terms of the learning process and student satisfaction.
- Relinquish the role of power within and over the educational process in order to allow the students to take on their process management role.

Student

- Students are responsible for actively seeking solutions to problems contained within the broad confines of the knowledge area being studied and raising the level of those solutions to one of more complexity.
- Work with others collaboratively to generate deeper levels of understanding and critical evaluation of the material under study.
- Participate within minimal guidelines, interact and engage with one another, speak up if the course or discussion is moving in a direction that is uncomfortable, and take responsibility for the formation of the online learning community.

Nine Strategies for Increasing Participation (Palloff & Pratt, 1999)

1. Establish participation guidelines that the students discuss and agree to
2. Be clear about how participation will be evaluated and how it figures into the course grade
3. Create a clear syllabus and easy to follow course structure
4. Be clear (and reasonable) about how much time it will take to complete assignments and participate in the course
5. Be sure that the navigational structure is easy to follow and logical (for the student)
6. Be visible on a daily basis within the course site
7. Step in and set limits if participation is waning or is heading in the wrong direction
8. Make phone calls to people who are not participating to ask why and draw them back in
9. Strive to create a community through inclusion of the human elements normally involved in a course (these are real people with human needs and expectations)

Organizing Discussion Forums

- Online discussion forums are areas where a group of students and an instructor can discuss a particular topic of group of topics around a common theme.
 - These forums can be synchronous (everyone participates at the same time) or asynchronous (students log on at different times to participate).
- In addition to the academic forums it is a good idea to have one social area open to all students in the class.
 - This student café is an area where students can discuss a range of issues, related or unrelated to the course.
 - This area is lightly moderated to make sure no students are flaming or harassing others in the course.
 - The café can be also be used as an area to search for partners for collaborative projects
- Discussion forums can be used to bring in other experts from outside the institution (authors of required books, guest instructors, or people in the profession).
- When developing discussion forums, it is best to keep student numbers below 20 (groups of four-five students are ideal) and to keep the same students in the same discussion groups so the instructor and students get to know each other better.
- Good discussions take time to build, so be patient.

- In discussions not designed for clarification, it usually takes a minimum of seven to ten days after the topic is opened for an asynchronous discussion to build to a point where students are fully benefiting from the discussion.
- Students usually need to do some reading before they contribute meaningfully to the topic.
- Participation is always greater and more meaningful if the discussion topics are related to the topic being covered in the assignments.
 - Hence, a course with three major assignments will need three discussions opened throughout the course, each lasting about three weeks.
- Discussions should be driven and supported by the educational goals of the course.
 - Students should clearly understand the purpose and function of each discussion forum and the requirements for participation.
- Having common start and finish dates for each discussion forum makes it easier to summarize each topic and bring it to a close.
- Assign students to discussion forums at the beginning of the course.
 - You may also want to consider assigning a “study buddy” for each student. This may improve retention and in many cases improve student learning.

Common Course and Time Management Concerns (Palloff & Pratt, 1999)

Concern 1

Minimal or no participation on the part of one or more students due to information overload

Response

- Make personal contact to determine the problem
- Suggest a daily log on time for reading only
- Print messages from course site
- Set two additional times per week to respond
- Prepare responses on a word processor and copy and paste
- Assist in management of outside reading

Concern 2

Information overload due to poorly managed or organized information

Response

- Make sure students are posting to the appropriate discussion forums and correct if necessary
- Add discussion forums if necessary to separate and organize material
- Present outside reading in manageable chunks
- If the class is large, break it into smaller groups
- Establish time limits on discussion topics
- Review and reorganize the course using the data collected

Concern 3

Communication anxiety

Response

- Make personal contact to reassure the student
- Give supportive response every time the student posts until anxiety is reduced
- Ensure that the student is comfortable with the technology being used
- Encourage preparation of posts prior to the required posting time

Concern 4

Lack of participation due to technical difficulties

Response

- Make personal contact with the student to provide instruction on the technology in use
- After any course modification, double check links and postings using the student view to make sure everything is working as intended
- Contact system administrators to resolve technical problems that cannot be resolved by the student or instructor
- Create a Technology Trouble Shooting discussion board where students can post and respond to technical problems

Concern 5

Reduced participation due to concerns about privacy and exposure

Response

- Make personal contact with students to determine the nature of concern and encourage participation
- Offer supportive responses to student posts to reduce anxiety and encourage participation

Copyright Issues (Cunningham & Billingsley, 2003)

Basics of copyright

As soon as a work is created and fixed into a permanent medium, copyright is bestowed.

Materials created while under employment may belong to or copyright may be shared with the employer.

The copyright act gives the owner of copyright the exclusive right to do and to authorize others to do the following:

- Reproduce the copyrighted work in copies or recordings
- Prepare derivative works based on the copyrighted work
- Distribute copies or recordings of the copyrighted work to the public by sale or other transfer of ownership, or by rental, lease, or lending
- Perform the copyrighted work publicly

Creating a copyright

Anytime you fix an original expression in a fixed medium, then you have a copyright on that work.

- Expression- a fact or idea cannot be covered by copyright, but the expression of that idea can be
- Original- the work must originate from the author who created it and not someone else; it must be the product of the author's own creative labor.
- Copying or summarizing the works of others is not an original expression.
 - Notes created by an instructor summarizing an article or textbook chapter for class use are not considered original expressions.
- Fixed medium- the work must be captured in some permanent medium in order to carry copyright (data on hard drives, web pages, and electronic communications are all covered by copyright)

Fair use

The fair use provision of the copyright act allows reproduction and other uses of copyrighted works under certain conditions for purposes such as criticisms, comment, news reporting, teaching, scholarship, or research.

Four factors that must be considered when determining whether a specific action is "fair use":

1. The purpose and character of the use, including whether such use is of commercial nature or is for nonprofit educational purposes
2. The nature of the copyrighted work
3. The amount and sustainability of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole
4. The effect of the use on the potential market for or value of the copyrighted work

Instructors who create summaries of copyrighted materials (i.e. notes) for use in class are generally protected from the legal action by the original author under fair use.

Fair use does apply to materials kept for classes in WebCT.

Works in the public domain

Works in the public domain include those whose copyright has expired, or those whose author has expressly declared to be in the public domain.

- Government documents are generally considered works in the public domain as soon as they are published
- All works created after January 1, 1978 become works in the public domain 50 years after the death of the author

Obtaining Permission for Use

The first contact with the rights holder should be made by telephone to confirm precisely to whom the written request should be addressed. The phone call can also be used to discuss the proposed use of the materials and negotiate fees. Following the phone conversation, a written request outlining the proposed use and agreed upon fee should be sent to the rights holder. The letter should include (at minimum):

- Your name, position, institution, mailing address, and phone;
- Identification of the item to be used, including title and author or producer;
- Complete description of the intended use, including purpose, course name, number of copies, format, means of distribution, intended dates of use, description of recipients, and precautions anticipated to prevent further reproductions (if applicable);
- Date by which permission is requested (at least six week from the mailing of the letter); and
- Any applicable details from the phone conversation.

While approval can be granted over the phone, written records are necessary to protect you in the event of a lawsuit.

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