

Taking Your Course Online Info

Introduction

Regardless of whether or not you have designed or taught an online class before, moving a face-to-face course to the online environment is a large task. It becomes even more difficult under the current time constraints. That being said, the Distance Education Instructional Design team would like to give some basic tips and best practices to help you in the transition.

Communication is Key

Even if you haven't come up with a plan, please communicate with your students. During this time of anxiety and unrest, a quick email letting them know you are there for questions (even if you may not have answers) and are working on getting the course sorted out will reassure your students. They will feel more anxious about the rest of the semester if they hear nothing from you.

Please communicate regularly and consistently with your students. A best practice is letting them know what to expect communication-wise for the rest of the semester. Are you going to post an announcement once a week? Are you going to email them twice a week with updates? Make a communication plan, let your students know the plan, and then stick to the plan as much as possible. We suggest emailing your class using your APSU email (not the D2L email) and posting the email as an announcement in D2L. Having the information both directly sent to students and posted in their course will ensure they get important information about course changes and updates.

Keep the importance of communication in mind as you go through the next sections about making the transition to online. The students will appreciate your transparency and your effort in letting them know what to expect moving forward.

Rethink Your Course

- Start with the syllabus and the Planning an Online Course Template:
 - What instructional content and topics remain to be taught this semester?
 - What student assignments/tasks remain for students to complete in the course? Are these going to translate easily to an online environment? Refer to the [F2F to Online learning activities translation table](#) for help and ideas.
 - Example: Student group project. This could still be possible, but you may have to change your expectations of what the final project will look like. Or, you may choose to abbreviate the assignment and have students complete it individually.
 - Start by deciding what assignments/tasks you are going to keep, which ones you need to alter, and which ones you can altogether omit (if any). The key here is to really align everything with your learning objectives. The learning objectives will help you make these sometimes difficult decisions.
 - How does the course material need to be chunked? Here are some guiding questions:
 - How long will each unit/module last? Weekly? Will the length vary between the modules/units?

- Complete the Planning an Online Course Template to lay out the new course structure. This template can be found on the [Govs Go Digital website](#) under the Getting Started tab.
- Get the updated syllabus posted in the D2L course shell and emailed to students as soon as possible. *Don't forget to make it accessible!

Building the Course

- Once you've decided how your modules will be structured, you're going to need to make more decisions about how you are going to present the materials and assessments. Here are some tips and best practices:
 - Each module should have a checklist for students (refer to the Planning an Online Course Template) that includes everything they have to do, in order, to complete the module successfully. Including due dates in the checklist is very beneficial to students as well. Here's an example of what a checklist might look like for an online course:
 1. Read the module learning objectives.
 2. Watch the lecture video.
 3. Read Chapter 8 of your text.
 4. Post any questions in the Q&A discussion board.
 5. Read the discussion prompt and post in the Module 1 discussion (due: Wednesday by 11:55 pm CST).
 6. Attend the synchronous zoom session (if you are unable, be sure to watch the recorded session).
 7. Complete Dropbox assignment #1 (due Sunday by 11:55 pm CST).
 8. Reply to at least two classmates in the Module 1 discussion (due: Sunday by 11:55 pm CST).
 - How will you structure each unit/module? Think about the best way to layout your directions to students, instructional materials, and assignments and then **consistently** do this throughout the course. Labeling each component and laying out the directions, links, videos, etc. in the same manner will help students know where to go to find the information they need.
 - If you'd like some help with this, Distance Education has a very simple course template that help get you started and an instructional designer can work with you as well.
 - Content can be added in a variety of ways and it is truly up to you how it will be formatted. Will you upload Word documents? Or copy and paste the information into a D2L webpage? Will you embed a video? Or paste a link to a video that will open in a new window? These decisions don't have a huge impact on the course; however, being **consistent** can. For example, if you decide to upload Word documents, continue to do so throughout the course.