

Becoming an Online Teacher

Many faculty joined the profession because we love the classroom interactions between instructors and learners. We're steeped in models and experiences of face-to-face instruction: energizing lectures, lively class discussions, engaging small group problem solving, and the excitement of watching learning happen in real time as students draw connections and share them.

It can be challenging to imagine how all that we love about teaching in a classroom can translate to online instruction—but evidence from research and from the experiences of our colleagues shows us that online learning can be as productive, engaging, and inspiring as the experiences in face-to-face classrooms. Since our students will follow our lead, it can be helpful for new online instructors to consider how best to take advantage of the opportunities that online learning offers to our students.

1. Focus on Student Learning

Remember that the goal is to *enable learning* more than to provide information or specific experiences. If you feel stuck trying to "translate" a F2F meeting to online, try asking yourself what you *most* wanted students to learn about key course material that day, and see if there are questions or problems you can pose to them that move them toward that learning along a different path, especially focusing on higher-order work like analysis and evaluation.

2. Build on Your Teaching Principles

Online courses can and should have all the core elements of face-to-face teaching: information and framing provided by the instructor; opportunities for students to ask questions, respond to problems or scenarios, interact with one another, and receive in-progress feedback; and complete projects and exams to have their learning assessed.

3. Play to Your Strengths in an Online Environment

Faculty's roles shift in online teaching toward roles like curator (connecting students to selected materials), facilitator (providing questions and feedback to guide student inquiry and engagement), and supporter (encouraging students to engage with relevant information, take risks with their thinking, and master key concepts). Look for ways to teach "from the side" rather than the front of a classroom.

4. Maximize the Advantages of Online Learning

In a "vibrant class discussion" face to face, who participates, and who might feel left out? Many students appreciate that online learning provides them more thought-time before responding, more opportunity for in-depth thinking, and more opportunity to see other students' work. Faculty members, too, often get to see more of our students' work, earlier in a process, so that we can identify where some or many students are struggling with a concept.

Becoming an Online Teacher

5. Manage Expectations to Manage Your Time

Faculty often report that switching to online teaching requires more time. Not only do faculty take responsibility for more details of managing the online environment, but since individual students' contributions go up, and faculty can be perceived as more directly accessible for questions, faculty time in responding to students usually goes up. The more you decide in advance, and *tell your students*, how you will prioritize your time, the lower everyone's stress levels will be.

- ***Set Boundaries Around Your Online Time***

Let students know when you will be online and when you will be unavailable; provide them with options for asking questions of one another.

- ***Prioritize Your Feedback Time***

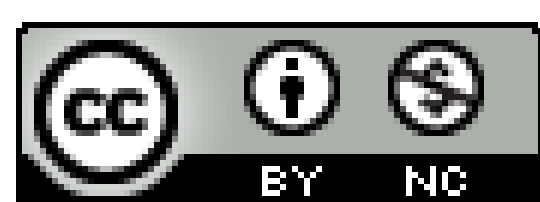
Provide individualized commentary where it has the most impact: early in a project or term when students can use it to adjust, and/or on projects linked to crucial outcomes.

- ***Use Guides, Models, Rubrics, Automated Quizzes, and Group Responses ...***

...to provide feedback—which is crucial for student learning and engagement—with less instructional time. Invest time in designing clear instructions and criteria and/or models of successful projects up front; in designing a rubric that addresses key features; in responding to a discussion thread collectively; or in creating low-stakes quizzes that provide immediate feedback on student comprehension.

6. Teach Imaginatively

Finally, don't sell yourself short, even as a new online instructor. If you have a special project that's crucial to your course that you don't think can translate to an online setting, please check with an ID before you decide it's impossible; there may be options you're not aware of that could help you and your students be satisfied with the learning experience.



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Online Course Readiness

Is Your Online Course Ready to Go?

There are 3 Main Areas of Online Course Readiness



SYLLABUS

Syllabus is fully complete with detailed information about course schedule, assignments & grading, course materials, technology requirements, course & university policies.



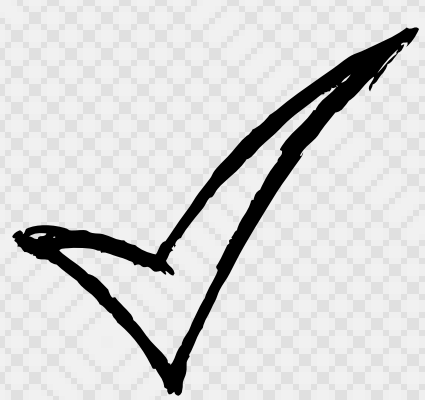
COURSE NAVIGATION & PRESENTATION

The course structure and tools are completely set up in Blackboard. All course content is posted and ready.



ACCESSIBILITY

The course is fully accessible. The course employs accessible materials [e.g., documents, images, and videos] and a variety of instructional methods [i.e., to address different learning styles].



The online readiness checklist represents an inventory of important elements of an online course, based on national standards of best practice and instructional design principles.

As instructor, you have flexibility of where & how to include these items within your online course.

Stearns Center for Teaching & Learning

Looking for feedback about your online course?

The Stearns Center can provide faculty members with feedback on the quality, design, and delivery of their online courses.

Please contact: stearns@gmu.edu (email);
703-993-6200 (phone)



Assistive Technology Initiative

ATI helps faculty address course accessibility needs pertaining to Universal Design, Section 508 Compliance, web accessibility, and the use of assistive technology. ATI provides free video captioning and audio/video description support to Mason faculty.

Please contact: ATI@gmu.edu (email);
703-993-4329 (phone)

Online Course Readiness Checklist

This checklist provides the minimum readiness standards for a quality online course.
These standards are based on research & best practices for online teaching & learning.

SYLLABUS

A syllabus for online course should include the following basic components [at a minimum]:

Basic Information about instructor & course

Course Details [*e.g.*, course schedule, course materials, technology requirements]

Assignments & Grading [*e.g.*, assignment descriptions and rubrics]

Additional Student Resources [*e.g.*, info about academic integrity, disability accommodations, tutorials]

Department/Program Requirements

University Policies [*e.g.*, diversity, religious holidays, student privacy, student services]

Please see complete syllabus checklist at:

<https://stearnscenter.gmu.edu/knowledge-center/online-teaching/online-syllabus-checklist/>

COURSE NAVIGATION & PRESENTATION

Well-designed Home Page (course entry point)

Weekly Announcements

Course Welcome with instructor bio and contact info; welcome message to students; clear instructions for getting started

"Ask the Instructor" Discussion Forum

Printable (downloadable) version of Syllabus and Course Schedule.

Modules or Units with:

- course content
- all assignments and associated grading criteria/rubrics;
- links to recorded lectures/presentations;
- links to external websites (e-book, YouTube videos, etc);
- discussion/blog /journal prompts

If applicable, Online Tests or Quizzes with assigned points

Course Tools [*e.g.*, MyGrades, Email. Collaborate, WordPress, SafeAssign]

Student Resources, such as Blackboard Help; FAQs

ACCESSIBILITY

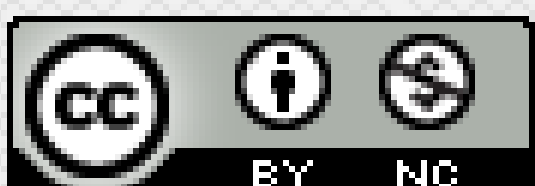
Videos: All videos are captioned and have transcripts.

PowerPoint: Accessible PowerPoint Slides are available for each video lecture/presentation.

Word: All Word Documents are accessible.

PDF: All PDF documents are text-based and fully accessible.

External Resources: All publisher-provided resources are accessible, or alternate equivalent resources or strategies are provided.



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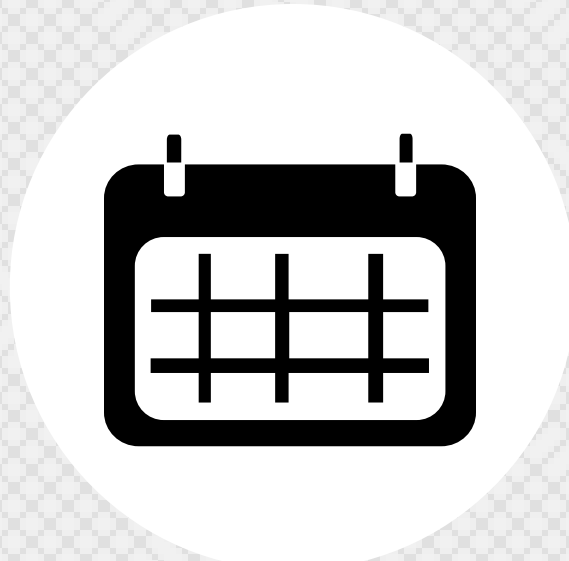
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Time Management

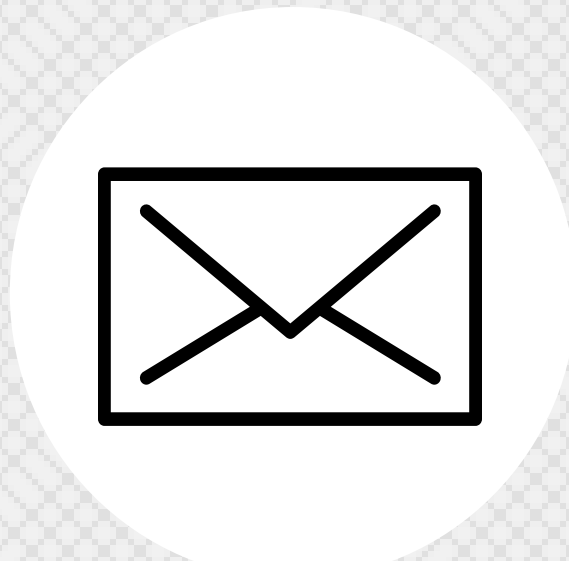
How can you manage your time efficiently when teaching online?

TIP
1



Schedule dedicated blocks of time each week for your online course, working at times when you can be most focused without distractions.

TIP
2



Manage your email efficiently by checking for messages at set points during the day, flagging and prioritizing emails. Establish student email guidelines [e.g., include the course name and number in the subject line when emailing you].

TIP
3

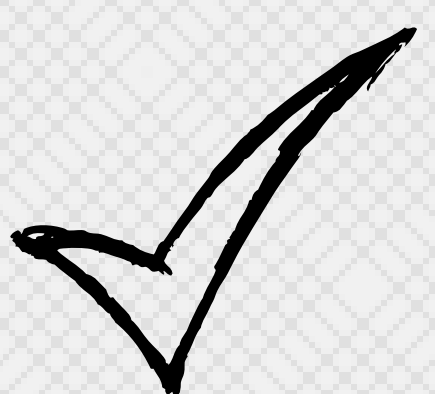


Work smarter, not harder, at grading. Use rubrics, space out assignments, and set due dates that allow for prompt turnaround time for grading.

TIP
4



Establish a consistent routine for your online course, and communicate it to your students. Use the syllabus to inform students of online office hours and to establish expected turnaround times for email responses and graded work.



Get organized and set a routine. Use technology and tools to create efficiencies for your online course.

Blackboard includes features that can help you manage your online course more efficiently. These include:

- Calendar
- Rubrics
- Online Quizzing/Exams
- Announcements
- Email



Learn more about ITS Blackboard Support for Faculty at:

<https://its.gmu.edu/knowledge-base/blackboard-instructional-technology-support-for-faculty/>

Email: courses@gmu.edu
Phone: 703-993-8870

Best Practices from Mason's Online Faculty

How do YOU approach time management in your online course?

Budget Time and Use Blackboard Tools

"Teaching online takes time. I find that I must budget twice as much time for an online class than a face-to-face course. I dedicate specific times and days of the week where I focus singularly on updating my modules, creating new materials, grading, and posting announcements.

Using the Blackboard Rubrics Tool and linking rubrics to the Grade Book makes the evaluation of assignments less time consuming."

-Prof. David Miller, Instructor, Communications (CHSS)

Set Times to Check Discussion Boards and Post Regular Announcements

"I set a specific date for when discussion board posts and follow-up posts should be submitted. For example, initial posts are due Thursday and follow-up responses are due Sunday. That way, I know when to check participation on the discussion boards, rather than doing it intermittently throughout the week. I create a 'Sunday Announcement' each week that summarizes the upcoming lesson objectives, highlights the lesson activities, and includes homework and upcoming assignments or projects. While it takes about 30 minutes to create each announcement, it has saved me a lot of time on the back end. Students no longer email me with questions about what to do - or what is due - during the week."

-Dr. Anne Marie Balzano, Assistant Professor, Education Leadership (CEHD) *[formerly at Mason]*

Try High Impact Grading

"I use high impact grading for short assignments: 0 points if incomplete or not submitted; 1 point if complete but with significant errors; 2 points if complete and mostly correct; and, rarely, 3 points for outstanding work. After the due date, I write 1-2 sentences for each student and point them to a 'model' response that I post.

The advantage for me is that it keeps me from overly detailed grading of short, low stakes assignments, while still giving students a chance to learn from their mistakes."

- Prof. Rebecca Ericson, Instructor, Physics and Astronomy (COS)



Learn more about time management!

Raines, D. (2011). Be Efficient, Not Busy: Time Management Strategies for Online Teaching. Retrieved from: <http://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/online-education/be-efficient-not-busy-time-management-strategies-for-online-teaching/>



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Updated
August 2019

Online Discussions

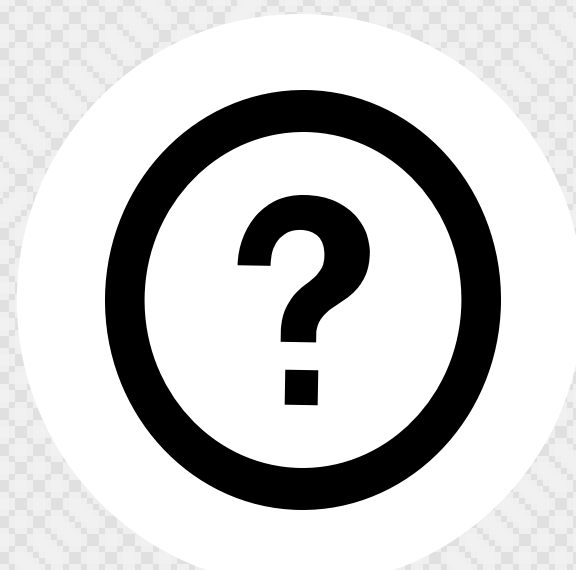
How to foster effective discussions in your online course?

TIP
1



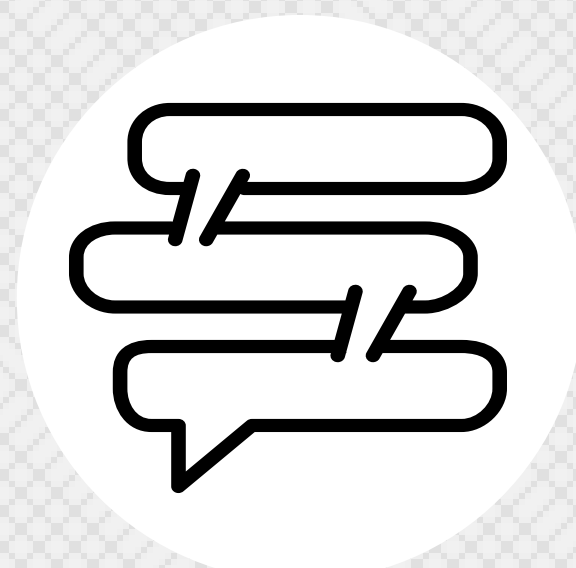
From the start of the course, provide students with clear expectations and guidelines for online discussions. Make sure that you model these discussion expectations in all of your own postings to online discussions.

TIP
2



Create open-ended questions or questions with multiple answers, promoting critical thinking and connecting discussions to course learning outcomes.

TIP
3

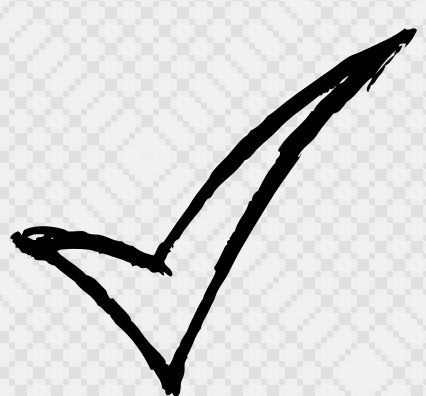


Use different discussion-board designs (e.g., student-led facilitation, case-study scenarios) to provide opportunities for students to discuss concepts & solve problems with each other.

TIP
4



Assess and evaluate the quality of students' discussion posts using grading rubrics. Provide students with standards of performance with model examples of good, medium, and poor discussion postings.



Build learner interaction into your online discussions through careful planning, with due dates for postings and responses spaced throughout the week.

Use Blackboard "Subscribe" Setting for Alerts of New Discussion Posts

The "subscribe" setting in Bb allows instructors and students to receive an email when new entries are posted in a discussion forum or thread. Note that forum or thread subscriptions are not a default; course instructor must enable the "subscribe" setting.

For help with Blackboard discussion board settings, please contact GMU Courses Support at: courses@gmu.edu.



Be Strategic With Discussions in Your Online Course

Although discussion boards are often considered the "heart" of an online course, they may seem like "busy work" to learners, if not planned carefully.

- Make sure that discussions address & map to COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES .
- Make sure that discussions enhance CRITICAL THINKING & LEARNING.
- As instructor, develop EFFICIENCIES for responding & grading discussion postings.

Best Practices from Mason's Online Faculty

How do YOU use discussions to enhance learning in your online course?

Focus Online Discussions with Rubrics and Guidelines

"It's recommended not to limit the length of students' online discussion posts. Best practices indicate that critical thinking can be enhanced in online discussions, not by limiting posts, but by focusing discussions with detailed rubrics, guidelines and etiquette documents.

Dr. Nada Dabbagh (GMU, CEHD) has developed some useful online discussion rubrics and protocols available at:
https://usm.maine.edu/sites/default/files/assessment/Rubric-OnlineDiscussion_1.pdf

-Dr. Larisa Olesova, Senior Instructional Designer, Stearns Center for Teaching & Learning; Adjunct Faculty (CEHD)

Assign Roles to Students in Discussion Groups

"I like to put students in groups of 5 or 6, using the Blackboard 'groups' function. For each weekly discussion, I assign roles to three students in the group: a starter, a wrapper, and a skeptic. The starter and wrapper are tasked with beginning and ending the conversation, respectively, according to a question or task that I assign to the group. Meanwhile, the skeptic's job is to ask questions during the week to keep their peers thinking and to move the conversation forward. I have separate rubrics for these 'special' roles versus the regular role. I've worked closely with an instructional designer to design the discussions and to assess their impact." -Dr. Margaret Slavin, Associate Professor, Nutrition and Food Studies, CHHS

Discuss Case Studies

"I use management case studies in my online business class. I find that it helps discussion to start by making a provocative observation about the issues in the case, leading students to take a side on the issue. Students then must support their perspective with evidence from the case. I select solid responses representing the differing perspectives and lead students to work through the logic and the implications of the different positions for managerial decision makers. The fact that a decision is ultimately required by the end of the online discussion helps to keep the conversation from becoming too theoretical or drifting off topic."

- Dr. Gregory Unruh, Arison Professor of Values Leadership, School of Integrative Studies

How is an online discussion like a dinner party? Find out!

Hayek, C. [2012]. How Many Faculty Discussion Posts Each Week? A Simply Delicious Answer.

Faculty Focus: Higher Ed Teaching Strategies.

Retrieved from:

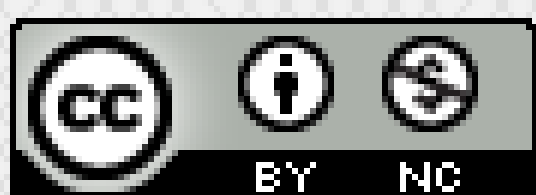
<http://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/online-education/how-many-faculty-discussion-posts-each-week-a-simply-delicious-answer/>

More about using scripted roles in online discussions

Olesova, L., Slavin, M., & Lim, J. [2016]. Exploring the Effect of Scripted Roles on Cognitive Presence in Asynchronous Online Discussions. Online Learning, 20[4].

Retrieved from

<https://olj.onlinelearningconsortium.org/index.php/olj/article/view/1058>



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Synchronous Teaching Online

How to engage students in an online synchronous session?

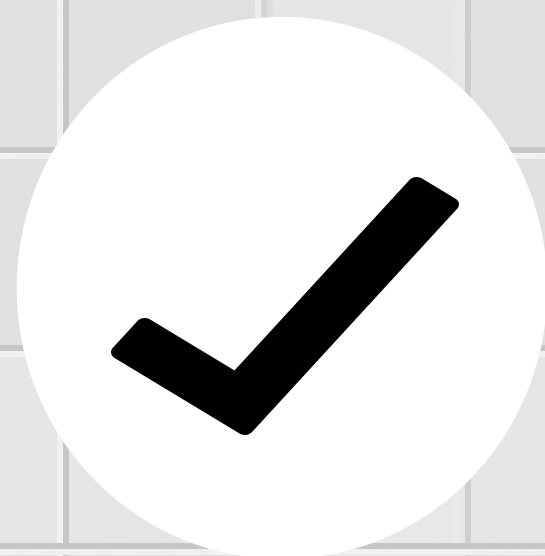
TIP
1



Thoughtfully plan your synchronous online activities, such as real-time discussions, debates, or presentations, to promote active learning.

Use active learning strategies in your online synchronous sessions. Keep students active (not passive) having them thinking, creating and solving problems in real-time. See "Active vs. Passive Learning in Online Courses" at: <http://citt.ufl.edu/online-teaching-resources/activelearning/active-vs-passive-learning-in-online-courses/>

TIP
2



Make sure that synchronous sessions are relevant and helpful for the course.

Make sure that synchronous sessions relate to learning outcomes, and are relevant, beneficial, and helpful to students. Prepare your students for each session, and invite them to bring their questions about the course to the session. You also may use synchronous session time for consultations, to review important concepts, to discuss class projects, participate in group work, etc. Make sure it is worth their time for students to participate in online synchronous sessions.

TIP
3



Make sure that students test the technology before the session.

Make sure that your students test out the synchronous technology before the scheduled sessions. Provide detailed instructions about how to access the technology, providing information from Mason Information Technology Services (ITS). For info on Blackboard Collaborate Ultra, see: <https://its.gmu.edu/knowledge-base/where-can-i-find-help-on-how-to-use-blackboard-collaborate-ultra/>

TIP
4



Record synchronous sessions, in case students cannot attend in "real-time".

Schedule synchronous sessions carefully, so that all/most students will be available to participate. Take a poll to find best time. In case a student may miss a session, make sure that you record all synchronous sessions and post the recordings in your online course.



In synchronous sessions online, use active learning strategies to ensure energetic, interactive, & productive learning for your students.

Technology Tips

- Provide clear instructions to your students about how to use the technology [e.g., Blackboard Collaborate Ultra, Webex].
- Tell students what to expect, in terms of accessing the technology, the overall agenda for each synchronous session, and how they will actively participate in the synchronous session.
- Make sure your students test the technology before the real-time session. Provide back-up plan for what a student should do if they lose connection during the session.



Pedagogy Tips

- Before the session, let your students know what topics or questions the session will cover, how they should prepare, and what they'll be expected to do in the online session.
- Use time during the session for students to think and process information. Pose a question and give your students a moment to write during the synchronous session.
- Use some of the session time for "social time" -- for students to interact with each other; to interact with you (as instructor); and to provide you with real-time feedback about the course.

Best Practices from Mason's Online Faculty

How to engage students in an online synchronous session?

Engage Students with Visible Thinking Slides

"Keep students engaged with visible thinking slides. When students type their thoughts and record them publically, it holds them responsible for comprehending, analyzing, and summarizing."

-Dr. Theresa Wills, Assistant Professor, Mathematics Educational Leadership, Graduate School of Education, CEHD

Engage Students with Multiple Means of Interaction in Blackboard Collaborate Ultra

"Building an online community in which students can network and share resources with one another is a primary reason I use Blackboard Collaborate Ultra in my synchronous [online] teaching."

I create student interactions through purposeful planning of several distinct areas including: student groupings, follow-up questions, whiteboard use, incorporation of breakout rooms, and the incorporation of multiple means of interaction. A student can ask questions in the chat box or mark up a whiteboard slide to demonstrate connections between content while other students are taking notes, or utilizing other media sources. My advice to anyone trying to increase student interaction with both content and peers in Blackboard Collaborate Ultra is to purposefully plan each activity to maximize student interaction. Using the graphic organizers from the resource "Making Thinking Visible" (Ritchhart et al. 2011) provided me with several great structures that naturally incorporate group communication and collaboration."

- Dr. Courtney Baker, Assistant Professor, Mathematics Education Leadership & Elementary Education, Graduate School of Education, CEHD



Mason Faculty have access to several synchronous online platforms available through Mason's Information Technology Services (ITS):

- Blackboard Collaborate Ultra:
<https://its.gmu.edu/knowledge-base/introduction-to-blackboard-collaborate-ultra/>
- WebEx:
<https://its.gmu.edu/service/webex/>

Contact ITS Support Center for further information & assistance with these synchronous online platforms.

Email: support@gmu.edu
Phone: 703-993-8870

Learn More!

Norman, M. [2017]. Synchronous Online Classes: 10 Tips for Engaging Students. Retrieved from:

<http://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/online-education/synchronous-online-classes-10-tips-engaging-students/>



Ritchhart, R.; Church, M.; Morrison, K. (2011). Making thinking visible: How to promote engagement, understanding, and independence for all learners. Hoboken, NJ: Jossey-Bass. (Available from Mason Libraries).



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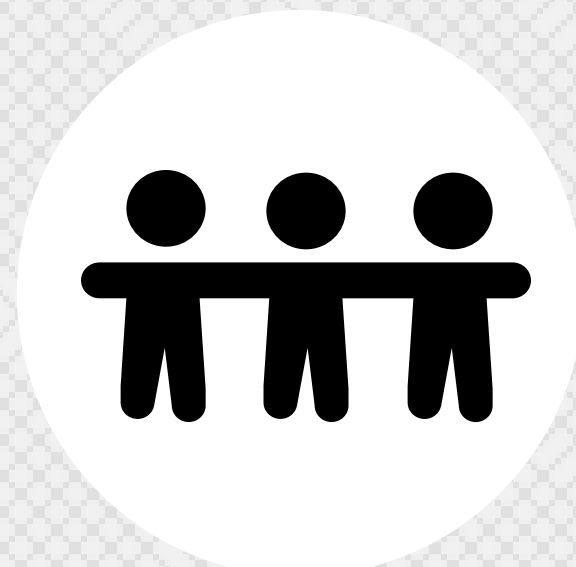
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Group Work Online

How to effectively manage group work in your online course?

TIP
1



Assign groups in Blackboard using group function. You may select manual, random, or self-enrollment for group sets. Provide each group with access to the Blackboard collaborative tools which will be needed for the group work.

TIP
2



Establish clear expectations about the tasks, timelines, and each group member's specific role. Have each group develop and agree on a team contract. Contact The Stearns Center for examples of team contracts.

TIP
3

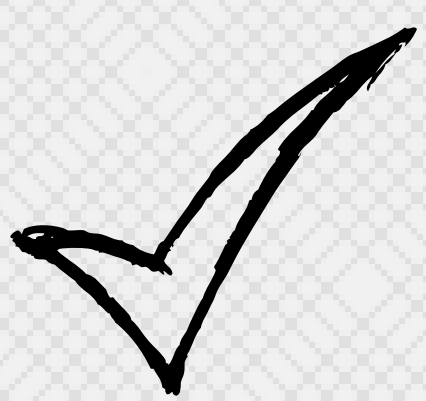


Make group work assessment criteria and grading scheme clear from the start. Include assessments of the overall group product, the team process, and each individual's contribution to the team. Contact The Stearns Center for examples of group rubrics.

TIP
4



Direct students to online communication tools to check in regularly with each other. For extended, multi-staged group projects, require groups to submit progress reports at specific checkpoints.



Online group work promotes student skills for communication, project management, accountability, peer review, and self-regulation.

Assign Roles to Group Members

Have groups establish and agree on roles for each team member.

Roles can rotate or remain the same, depending on the duration of the project.

Roles can include team leader, scribe, editor, researcher, etc., depending upon the group project.



Prepare a Contingency Plan

What happens if a group member drops the course?

What happens if a group member is a no-show or refuses to participate in the team?

Make sure that you have a plan in place with clear policies to guide teams through such situations.

Best Practices from Mason's Online Faculty

How do YOU manage group work in your online course?

Clarify Expectations

"To set the tone and clarify expectations, I developed a document which I post on Blackboard called "Group Work Ground Rules". In order to allay fears and anxiety, group work is not required each week. I also developed a "Peer Evaluation of Group Members" which they have access to at the beginning of the semester. It is an easy-to-use Likert scale based tool.

Group members are evaluated on three main attributes: quality of contributions, engagement and communication. I use the Discussion Board, File Exchange and Email tools in Blackboard to facilitate communication among group members."

-Dr. Beverly Middle, DNP, RN, AGCNS-BC,
Assistant Professor,
School of Nursing (CHHS)

Use Blackboard Collaborate for Group Interactions in Real Time

"Building an online community in which students can network and share resources with one another is a primary reason I use Blackboard Collaborate in my synchronous [online] teaching. I create student interactions through purposeful planning of several distinct areas including: student groupings, follow-up questions, whiteboard use, incorporation of breakout rooms, and the incorporation of multiple means of interaction. A student can ask questions in the chat box or mark up a whiteboard slide to demonstrate connections between content while other students are taking notes, or utilizing other media sources. My advice to anyone trying to increase student interaction with both content and peers in Blackboard Collaborate is to purposefully plan each activity to maximize student interaction. Using the graphic organizers from the resource "Making Thinking Visible" [Ritchhart et al. 2011] provided me with several great structures that naturally incorporate group communication and collaboration."

- Dr. Courtney Baker, Assistant Professor, Mathematics Education Leadership & Elementary Education (CEHD)

Use Wikis for Collaborative Group Learning Activities

"Here are my tips:

- Instruction should be clear, so students know their expectations.
- Assign each student a role and provide an individual's task. Then, give students tentative due dates for each task.
- Provide a concrete rubric with each criterion for assessment of the final outcomes for students to use as a guide of quality expectations
- Get in Wikis often and check each group's progress. Then, send an appreciation & encouragement announcement in the mid way period. (for example, if it is a two-week-group work, send the announcement after one week)."

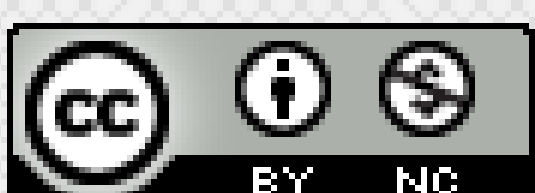
-Dr. Yoosun Chung, Associate Professor,
Graduate School of Education (CEHD)

Learn More !

Wells, G. (2015). Five steps to improving online group work assignments. Faculty Focus, Magna Publications.
<http://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/online-education/five-steps-to-improving-online-group-work-assignments/>

Milman, N. B. (2015). Navigating online virtual group work: Tips for instructors and students. Distance Learning, 12(4), 51-54. [Available from Mason Libraries]

Ritchhart, R.; Church, M.; Morrison, K. (2011). Making thinking visible: How to promote engagement, understanding, and independence for all learners. Hoboken, NJ: Jossey-Bass. [Available from Mason Libraries].



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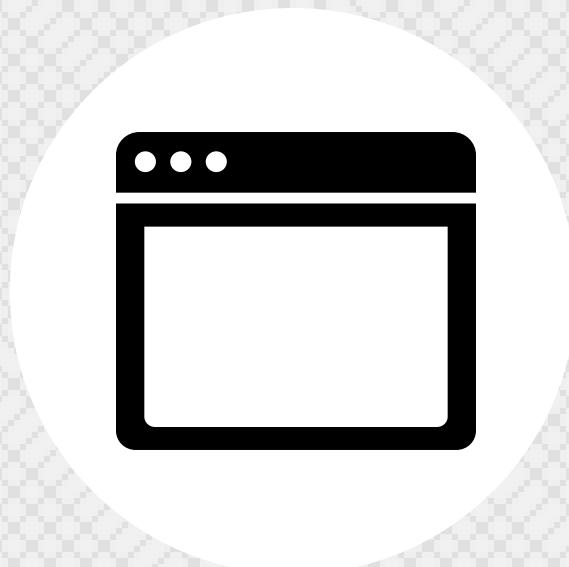
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Accessibility for All Learners

How can you improve accessibility in your online course?

TIP
1



Establish consistent, easy navigation throughout your online course. When developing course design and content, select color contrasts and fonts that allow for maximal readability and minimal distractions.

TIP
2



Ensure that all documents and presentations (Word, PDFs, PowerPoint, etc.) are accessible. See ATI's Blackboard Course Accessibility Checklist at: <https://ati.gmu.edu/resources/accessibility-resources/course-checklist/>

TIP
3

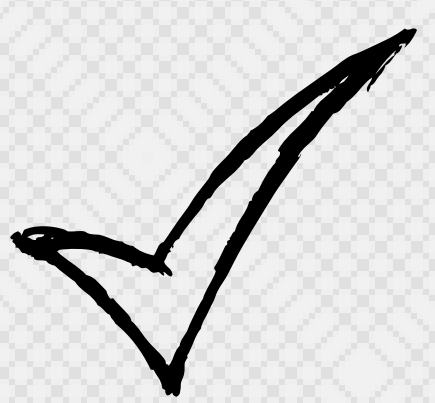


Make sure that all videos are captioned and/or have transcripts. All course videos should stream through an accessible video playback platform like Kaltura Capture or YouTube. Contact ATI for free closed captioning.

TIP
4



If you have required applications and/or website resources beyond your Blackboard course (e.g. publisher resources), check that all are accessible or have accessible alternatives.



Be proactive about accessibility. Use universal design for learning (UDL) principles to optimize teaching and learning for all of your students.

Assistive Technology Initiative (ATI)

ATI provides services for Mason faculty, staff, and students to ensure equivalent access to curricula and resources.

Web: ati.gmu.edu
Phone: 703-993-4329
Email: ati@gmu.edu

ATI Services for Faculty

ATI services for Mason faculty include:



- Closed captioning and audio description for videos
- Training and support for creating accessible materials
- Course accessibility reviews/audits

Best Practices from Mason's Online Faculty

How do YOU improve accessibility in your online course?

Providing Additional Time for Tests

"When students need additional time to complete tests, I create a copy of the test and configure the test settings in accordance with the accommodations needed by students. Then, I use adaptive release to create a rule that provides access only to students who need it."

- Dr. Esperanza Roman-Mendoza,
Associate Professor,
Spanish (CHSS)

Following UDL Principles

"The best way to reach all learners is to design your online instruction following the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL).

By providing multiple means of representation, multiple means of action and expression, and multiple means of engagement, faculty can ensure that the online environment becomes accessible for students with various abilities, needs, preferences, and environmental circumstances."

- Dr. Anya Evmenova,
Associate Professor, Special
Education & disAbility Research
(CEHD)

Leveraging Free Accessibility Resources at Mason

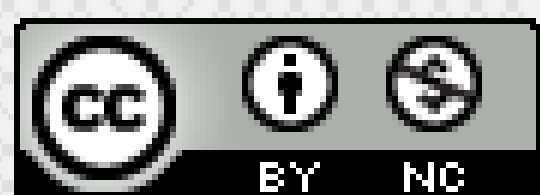
"Accessibility is simply the degree to which any resource - regardless of whether it is a device, program, service, or environment - is available to a given user. Relating this to online education, the technology platform and the instructional resources used in an online or hybrid course play a critical role in how much a student is able to participate. An inaccessible technology resource could adversely impact some students with disabilities. The ATI's role is to support instructors with designing instructional materials that ensure equal access for all learners."

- Dr. Korey Singleton, Manager, Assistive
Technology Initiative (ATI)

Learn more about improving accessibility in online courses!

Moore, E. A. [2014]. Improve Accessibility in Tomorrow's Online Courses by Leveraging Yesterday's Techniques. Retrieved from: <http://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/online-education/improve-accessibility-tomorrows-online-courses-leveraging-yesterdays-techniques/>

Ten Simple Steps Toward Universal Design of Online Courses. Retrieved from University of Arkansas at Little Rock: <http://ualr.edu/pace/tenstepsud>



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Updated August 2019

Web: stearnscenter.gmu.edu | Email: stearns@gmu.edu | Phone: 703-993-6200

Academic Integrity Online

How to promote academic integrity in your online course?

TIP
1



State the academic integrity policy in your syllabus, and provide the link to The Mason Honor Code. Include course orientation activities to engage students with academic integrity policy and Honor Code.

TIP
2



Design your online course to reduce pressure to cheat; include self assessments or low-stakes activities to test student understanding; pace the deadlines to keep student workload manageable; model academic integrity through your own postings & behavior.

TIP
3



Consider using a series of scaffolded assignments that build toward a final paper or project, as an alternative to a midterm and final exam (*i. e.*, objective tests) in your online course (Kelly, 2014).

TIP
4



Use plagiarism detection tools (such as Blackboard SafeAssign) to check originality reports on student submissions. For more information, contact ITS Learning Support Services, Phone Support: (703) 993-8870; Walk-in Support: Johnson Center 311 CLUB; Email: courses@gmu.edu.



Promote academic integrity in your online courses, by thoughtfully revising and refreshing course assignments each semester.

Use A Multi-Layered Approach for Academic Integrity

- Design syllabus, course content & assessments, to stress importance of academic honesty.
- Communicate clearly and often with students during the course.
- Monitor and track student work carefully.
- Rework and revise your online course each semester.

[Christie, 2003]



Include Info about Academic Integrity in Your Syllabus

The Office of Academic Integrity provides suggested language about Academic Integrity to include in your syllabus. Please feel free to use and/or adapt as needed. Also include in your syllabus specific academic integrity standards for your program, department, or college.

For OAI suggested language, please see:

<https://oai.gmu.edu/suggested-syllabus-language/>

Best Practices from Mason's Online Faculty

What strategies do you use to promote academic integrity in your online course?

Contact Office of Academic Integrity with Questions or Concerns

"It is important to include a statement about Academic Integrity and the Mason Honor Code on your syllabus. Sample language can be found at our website (<https://oai.gmu.edu/>).

Remember that all suspected incidents must be forwarded to the Office of Academic Integrity for review. However, it is up to the professor to determine if the issue is truly academic dishonesty or a "teachable moment".

If an incident is reported during a time when grades are due, report a grade of "HC" in Patriot Web.

If you have questions, feel free to consult with our office."

- LaShonda Anthony, Ph.D.
Director, Academic Integrity
Phone: 703-993-6209
Email: oai@gmu.edu

Promote Academic Integrity through Course Design

"In addition to the usual "policing" strategies, instructors can promote academic integrity through their course design. The goal is to reduce the incentive to cheat by promoting student motivation and engagement. Frequent, low-stakes assessments ensure that students are making steady progress through the course and help students build confidence in their learning. Dropping the lowest exam grade and/or allowing them to make corrections for half-credit back reduces the pressure on students. Finally, small group or class discussions of "real world" issues builds a sense of community that may further de-incentivize academic dishonesty."

-Jennifer Brielmaier, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Psychology/Neuroscience (CHSS)

Promote Academic Integrity by Talking about Source Integration

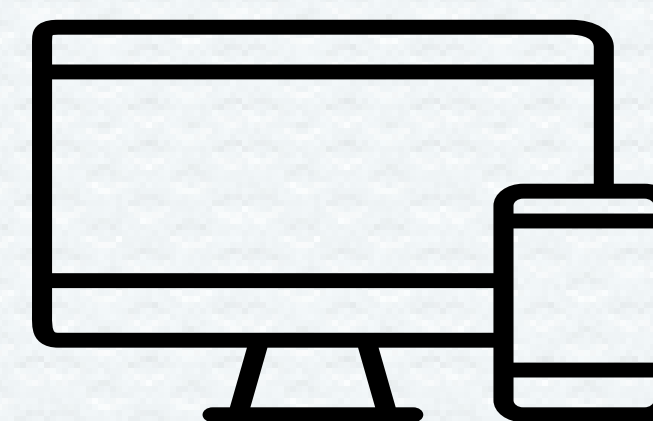
"When instructors talk about academic integrity, it is helpful if they also talk about source integration.

Here are some questions for instructors to answer for themselves and then discuss with students:

- How did you learn to integrate sourced material in your writing?
- What caused you to learn strategies for source integration?
- What have been some of the effects of having learned to integrate sources?"

-Karyn Kessler, Ph.D., Associate Director, Curriculum and Instruction, Term Assistant Professor, ESL/Applied Linguistics, INTO Mason Global Center

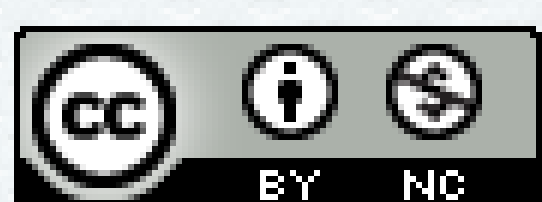
Learn More!



Christie, B. 2003. Designing online courses to discourage dishonesty. The EDUCAUSE Quarterly. 26 (4): 54 - 58. Retrieved from: <https://www.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/eqm0348.pdf>

Kelly, R. 2014. Promoting academic integrity in the online classroom. Faculty Focus. Magna Publications. Retrieved from: <http://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/online-education/promoting-academic-integrity-online-classroom/>

Updated AUG 2019



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