Center for Academic Excellence

APPALACHIAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Course Organization

Moving a course fully or partially online requires thinking about a course from a new perspective. How will teaching change given these new conditions? How will I organize my course so students are successful in this online environment? While there is no single best way to approach a redesign, here are some suggestions and resources to help you develop a quality course with online components. If you are new to online, we recommend you peruse these brief modules that will help get you started.

1. **Create a predictable structure for the course.** Start by determining an appropriate course format based on your goals and type of course. Create a predictable structure that will help students be successful throughout the semester and utilize headings, fonts, and other tools to help students navigate your course. Here is a roadmap template, a weekly participation example, and scenarios for two types of courses.

   ○ For seminar and discussion-based courses the weekly format might be *Read, Respond, Reflect.* Students (a) prepare by reading articles or viewing videos, (b) post their answers to questions posed by the instructor in the discussion forum and respond to their classmates' posts, and (c) reflect on what they have learned from their readings and their classmates in a two-minute reflection on Flipgrid.

   ○ For lecture-based courses the weekly format might be *Lecture, Quiz, Apply*. Students (a) view the instructor's posted lecture and complete an outline, (b) take a brief quiz on the lecture material and other assigned homework, and (c) engage in a structured activity to apply what they have learned. Group work could include analyzing a case study, posting a consensus on the discussion board about key take-aways, or designing a visual product with the content. Individual application activities could include posting a solution to a problem or an explanation of a concept on a Flipgrid post.

2. **Build your course for student success.** Finding ways to support student success in your online course is crucial. Here are suggestions for ensuring your course is inclusive and promotes the success of *all* students.

   ○ Consider basic strategies for making your teaching more inclusive with particular attention to providing a high amount of structure which is especially important in an online environment. Learn more about inclusive teaching online from the CAE Inclusive Excellence Team and how to create accessible course materials from the Office of Disability Resources. .

   ○ Prior to the first day, send a survey that will help you identify your students' technology resources. Choose technologies that are low tech when possible and

offer alternatives for engaging with course material when students have limited access.

- Set up a system for communicating on a regular basis. Post weekly updates through [Announcements](#) and [email students](#) directly from AsULearn. Start a Discussion Board for course Q&A to allow students an opportunity to communicate with you. Use your [Zoom personal meeting](#) room for office hours to avoid confusion.

- Share the link to [Online Success for Students](#) with each of your classes. This website provides App students with information about technology access, strategies for success in online courses, and links to access academic coaching and the writing center.

3. **Utilize strategies to build community and engage students**. As you organize your course, it is essential to identify ways that you will intentionally build community and engage students. Here are [suggestions and resources](#) to help you plan for connecting with students in an online environment.

4. **Re-evaluate how you will assess students.** There are multiple ways to assess student learning and you may wish to consider what methods work best as you transition to fully or partially online. Many methods for assessing students will no longer work as expected. [Here](#) are suggestions and resources to help you revise your assessment methods for your online course.

5. **Use technology purposefully**. It is crucial to make [smart decisions](#) about how you will use technology in an online course-- too much technology can disadvantage students without good access and distract your class from your primary goals. Remember the basics: shared [Google Docs](#) are a great space for collaborative work; [visual products](#) such as infographics and posters can offer alternatives to written documents; use Zoom for recording lectures or assignment directions, Discussion Forums and [Flipgrid](#) afford opportunity for asynchronous conversations between students and instructors; and Quiz Tool can help you assess student learning. Use the [AsULearn Faculty Support Pages](#) to help you get started and add yourself to the **AsULearn for Faculty Group** so you can watch videos and read news and tips about the latest in learning technologies. To join this group, click this [link](#) and then click the "Join Group' icon.

Open Educational Resources-- some of our favorites!

- [MERLOT access](#) to curated online resources and tools for all disciplines
- [OER Commons](#) to search for and create teaching tools and strategies
- [OpenStax](#) for access to high quality textbooks

Resources for Teaching Specific Types of Classes
- [Connecting our Current Context to the Curriculum](#)
- [Resource Sharing](#) for multiple disciplines
- [STEM Virtual Labs and Simulations](#)
- [Teaching Geoscience Online](#)
- [Science Labs](#)

- [Language Learning](#)
- [Academic Continuity: Labs](#) (Yale)
- [Labs & Studios](#) (Bowdoin)
- [Resources for Moving Dance-Based Pedagogy Online](#) (Dance Studies Association)
- [Teaching studio art in an era of social distancing](#) (Facebook group)
- [Teaching Media & Video Production](#) (crowdsourced from faculty affiliated with the University Film and Video Association)
- You might also address COVID-19 from the perspective of your discipline ([see assignment ideas here](#)). These could be opportunities for exchanging ideas as well as for much-needed mindfulness amid somewhat unpredictable circumstances.