Online Course Best Practices

Discuss online pedagogy with colleagues across departments.

Post the course syllabus with instructor bio information and audio/video welcome message introducing the instructor and the course.

Identify the course audience prior to the design of a course as the technology used for the content greatly depends on the goal of the course.

Instructions for assignments should be explicit.

Provide timely feedback. Students are already feeling virtually alone, especially first-time online students. Instructor's should not be expected to be available 24/7 just because the course is, though their presence should be known. Setup online office hours and explain to students when they should expect to hear from you.

The choice of technology is driven by the content. That is, the technology fits the content; not, the content fits the technology. The technology has been chosen because it was the best delivery method for the content and how it is being taught.

The course is ADA compliant Per SHSU Webservices Web Page Checklist

Course documents can be easily printed. Students are able to print documents to allow for portability. Some prefer to view content in this fashion.

The course layout is easily navigated and all hyperlinks are correctly connected. This includes, but is not limited to, clear access to the electronic classroom: assignments, lectures, course materials, off-site materials, the online bookstore, student support (library services, computer services), and instructor contact information.

Interactivity of the course: student/student, student/instructor, and
instructor/class interactivity. This will take place on many levels depending on the individual course. As a result, interactivity is judged on a course-by-course basis, in close collaboration with the instructor. Interactivity may include, but is not limited to, chat rooms, email, discussion boards, and telephone.

Design collaborative assignments.

Include peer-review of assignments, posts, or other collaborations.

Summarize or assign the summary of discussions.

Appropriate use of media. As online courses continue to grow in popularity, and as electronic media becomes easier and less expensive to create, instructors will rely more heavily on this media in delivering course content to students. The use of media in online courses is a decision left to the instructor and the evaluation of content to the department. However, where used, the technical quality of the media includes, but is not limited to, clarity of audio, viewing and physical size of image and video, proper file size for streaming, and media broadcast file length.

Proper use off-site and secondary resources. Instructors should work University’s Copyright Officer to verify permissions to use copyrighted materials on-site. The Newton Gresham Library (NGL) has an electronic reserves service that allows, through copyright clearance, the use of articles, text, images, and the like in online courses. Links and citations to off-site materials are an example or proper use.

Relative transparency of the technology. Because of the primacy of the course content, technology is only used as a tool and the use of technology should not hinder the dissemination of course content.