

## **DESIGNING ONLINE INSTRUCTION**

### **Meeting the Needs of Digital Learners**



#### **An Introduction SPSE 6900**

**Dr. Dorothy Valcarcel Craig**  
**Department of Educational Leadership**

**MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY**

#### **The Need for Online Instruction**

**“Learning in the Wild”** – The idea that the learner directs his or her own learning. Similar to what takes place when young children are exploring the world around

them. The idea of “Learning in the Wild” was presented by Don Tapscott (1999, 2000).

**Individualized Pacing** – The online environment encourages the learner to work at his or her own pace. In addition, the online environment enables the learner to work whenever—in the middle of the night, in the early morning, in the late afternoon...

**Lifestyle Changes** – The mobile society requires “learning on demand.” Due to lifestyle changes, learners must be able to access learning environments at any time.

**Technologically Literate Consumers** – The online environment is ideal for technologically literate consumers. These consumers include traditional students as well as non-traditional students.

**Lifelong Learners** – The online learning environment encourages the learner to continue on the path to lifelong learning because it accessible at all times.



### **The Demand for Online Learning**

- In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, 50% of all learning will take place online
- Businesses have a need for “Cognitive Transfer” to occur in order for employees to be able to multitask, work collaboratively, and continue on the path of lifelong learning
- The demand for “Integrative Learning” is met via the online environment due to the relevancy of content and the application of knowledge
- “21<sup>st</sup> Century Learners in Tennessee – Incoming freshmen, who will be entering higher education programs in the Fall 2003, have had technology in their learning environments since they were ten years old. These students were the recipients of Governor McWherter’s “21<sup>st</sup> Century Classrooms.



### **Who are the Learners?**

- More Females than Males – The UAAW study, *The Night Shift*, reports that females are taking advantage of the online environment due to family responsibilities. The environment is enabling them to continue on the path to completing degrees that may have been interrupted as a result of marriage, having children, etc.
- Varying Ages, Income, and Ethnicities
- Degree Seeking
- Non-Degree Seeking

### **Cognitive Learning and Online Instruction**

- Learning During Selected “Peaks” – late night, early morning, mid-afternoon—any time!
- Self-Pacing
- Promotes Focus
- Self-Evaluation and Regulation
- High Degree of Interaction with Instructor



## **Designing an Online Course**



### **Configuration Possibilities**

**Web-Based Design Software** – Common programs include WebCT, Blackboard, CourseInfo. These programs offer a format as well as structure for online delivery.

**Delivery Systems** – The delivery system depends on the instructor and will vary depending on the philosophy of learning theory held by the individual.

**Pre-Packaged Courses** – Many “pre-packaged” courses are available to instructors. The content modules offered through textbook companies usually provide minimal content via low-level slide show presentations.

**Web Site Delivery** – Instructors sometimes opt to forego any web-based design software and upload materials to individual web sites.

**Text Support** – Text support should be considered in order to provide a smooth transition from the traditional classroom to the online environment.

### **Consider Your Own Philosophy of How Learning Takes Place**

Behaviorist or Constructivist?

Why the Constructivist Approach Works:

- Instructor naturally becomes a guide and mentor
- Information provided in “chunks”
- Modules do not deliver, but are made available
- Promotes guided inquiry and collaboration
- Web serves as scaffold
- Encourages self-direction and learner-control

### What is Blended Learning?



“Blended Learning” is a continuous process that incorporates:

- a) job or lifetime experience
- b) knowledge gathering
- c) guidance and mentoring
- d) counseling
- e) performance feedback from a “more capable peer.”

Consider the Forms and Configurations of Online Instruction:

- Course Content on Web Site
- Web-Support for an Onsite Course
- Web-Enhanced Course
- Discussion Forums and Assessment
- Online Course Delivered via Web-Based Software System

Web Site	Partial course content and resources on web site
Web Support	Handouts and other resources available on web-based delivery site
Web Enhanced	Onsite meetings matched with web-based assignments, evaluations, and resources
Web Tools	Utilization of web-based delivery software system for assessment and discussion
Online	Course taught entirely online-content, assessment, interaction

## **BEGINNING DESIGN**

### **WHAT DO I DO FIRST?... WHERE DO I BEGIN?**



#### **COMPONENTS:**

**Curriculum Design** – As with any quality course design, you must begin with curriculum design. This is the key to success.

**Course Outline** – Begin by examining the Course Outline. Be sure to include any skills, content, objectives, and goals outlines.

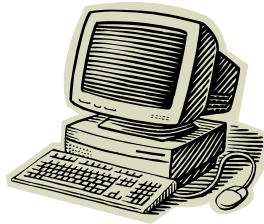
**Textbook and Resource Selection** – Review and peruse textbooks, resources, and supplemental texts. Select those that will provide structure, content, and relevancy.

**Long Range Planning** – Outline your long range plans. Consider the questions, “What should the student gain from completing the course?”

**Curriculum Mapping** – Engage in Curriculum Mapping before any online design takes place. The course should be fully mapped out before online design begins.

**Evaluation and Assessment Design** – Consider multiple forms and tools for assessing student progress. Also include an instrument for assessing and evaluating the effectiveness of the course and instructor.

## **The Importance of Goals and Objectives**



### **Course Goals and Objectives will Drive the Online Learning Environment**

Goals and Objectives must be:

Clear and measurable

Publicly available

Explicitly communicated to learner

- Expectations
- Requirements
- Assessment

### **Instructional Strategies**

The Next Crucial Piece to Successful Online Teaching



What's needed?

- Detailed online syllabus to guide progress
- Strategies that reflect personal philosophy
- Learner-centered approach
- Active learning rather than passive learning
- Application of Content for Assessment
- Detailed and clear guidelines for assignments
- Redundancy – more than one location

### **Learning Tasks and Assignments**



Learning tasks and assignments are crucial. Student success depends on the effective design of relevant, applicable assignments.

- All assignments should reflect goals/objectives
- Attainment of skills and knowledge
- Application, analysis, and synthesis
- Varied learning styles
- Sequenced and structured, but student-centered

### **Creating a Virtual Learning Community Interaction via Online Communications**

Learning tasks should encourage frequent meaningful interactions  
Online communication may take on many different forms. Utilize the form to suit the demands of the content and course.

<b>E-mail</b>	<b>Instructor, Students</b>
<b>Forums</b>	<b>Content, Students, Instructor</b>
<b>Chat</b>	<b>Real time, Students, Instructor</b>
<b>Groups</b>	<b>Projects, Discussions, Studying, Collaborating</b>



### Evaluation and Assessment

Evaluation and Assessment Assist the Instructor in Determining the Effectiveness of the Course and Delivery



- Utilize multiple forms and methods
- Formal and Informal, Formative and Summative
- Assessment should be multi-leveled, traditional, and authentic
- Ongoing for improving practice

Technique	Bloom's Cognitive Level
Exams, Quizzes	Knowledge, Comprehension, Application
Case Studies Interactive Journals Teleresearch Metacommentaries Collaborative Projects Forums	Knowledge, Comprehension, Application, Analysis, Synthesis, Evaluation
Rubrics for Assessment Purposes	

### Getting Started

Knowledge Generation	Collaboration	Process Management
<p>Instructor serves as guide</p> <p>Learners are responsible for effectively using the guidance in thinking critically, problem solving, questioning, engaging, and reflecting</p>	<p>Instructor serves as facilitator and mentor</p> <p>Learners are expected to work collaboratively, dialog with peers and instructor, generate ideas, and engage</p>	<p>Instructor serves as “manager”</p> <p>Learners are expected to participate without face-to-face instructions, interact, and engage with each other</p>



### Goals, Outcomes, and the Online Syllabus – Questions to Consider

- Is course overview clear and defined?
- Are objectives, goals, and outcomes outlined?
- Do guidelines create a clear picture of expectations?
- Is syllabus organized in a manner that is understandable in the absence of face-to-face?
- Are software / hardware requirements listed?
- Initial procedures for logging on and accessing?
- What resources are available and are they included?

Note: See additional Guiding Questions listed on pg. 109 (Palloff and Pratt)

### **More on Collaborative Learning in the Online Learning Environment**

- Formulate a shared goal for learning by outlining guidelines for collaboration
  - Discussion Forums
  - Collaborative Projects
- Be sure to provide detailed and descriptive instructions
- Provide a rubric for evaluating collaboration and interaction

#### **Suggestions:**

- Begin with an Introduction Forum
- Encourage multiple postings
- Form Teams for specific assignments
- Design relevant, applicable assignments
- Require additional “inquiries” or questions
- Have students facilitate certain forums

### **TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING VIA ENGAGEMENT AND COLLABORATION**

- Learning based on reflection and on the interpretation of the experiences, ideas, and assumptions gained through learning
- An unanticipated result of the online learning process
- *Learning about learning* through the use of technology and via engagement in the online environment