CoDev

An Educator's Guide for Successful
Course Development

by the Gertrude C. Ford Center for Teaching & Learning Team

DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY

Gertrude C. Ford Center for Teaching and Learning Faculty Checklist

☐ Visit the FCTL website
☐ Login to Canvas and go to the Faculty Resource page
☐ Complete Level 1 training (once unless requested by Chair/Dean)
☐ Complete Level 2 training (once unless requested by Chair/Dean)
☐ Update courses per Online Course Analysis
☐ Review the exemplar courses in the Faculty Resource page
☐ Schedule a one-on-one session with an Instructional Designer
☐ Visit Academic Affairs page for the most current DSU course syllabus template
☐ Copy content and publish courses for next term (beginning in November and April)
☐ Check past global announcements in Canvas, regularly for any announcements you may have missed over the semester/s
☐ Visit the FCTL Center (Maker Space, Wellness Station, Gaming & more)
☐ Present in the FCTL Faculty Speaker Series (at least once a semester)

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SECTION I: Planning and Development

Overview

Delta State's *Online Educator's Guide: Course Development or CoDev 2022* serves as a reference guide for DSU educators developing online courses. While the guide focuses primarily on online courses, many of the guiding principles can be used by educators while developing hybrid and technology-enhanced courses as well. This guide is not intended to be all-encompassing, but one of many tools available to help educators think intentionally about their course design. Developing and facilitating online courses is different than the process for face-to-face courses; much more time is required upfront in the online course development as the materials need to be in before the actual course start date. This guide is intended to help you consider the many steps in the development process.

> *"I really enjoy the professors that have lectures or helpful recorded videos that will give a general direction of the way we need to think for assignment completion."* – DSU Student

In addition to using this guide to support course design, the Ford Center for Teaching and Learning Team of instructional technologists and instructional designers strongly encourages all educators to take part in an online course or workshop as a student – having walked a mile in the online student's shoes can powerfully inform the perspective of an online educator. Multiple online workshops exist on the topic of online teaching & learning and online course development; taking a course in this subject can strengthen your knowledge on the topic through both the subject matter examination and the experiential learning opportunity. Contact FCTL (Ford Center for Teaching and Learning) if you would like recommendations.

DSU Course Review Rubrics

Overview

ℹ️ *Clear standardization of course expectations across Delta State University for faculty.*

The DSU Course Review Plan sets an internal standard (Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3) for all Online, Online Synchronous, and Hybrid courses. Improved course design will help students to persist to graduation in a timely manner. The course-review plan supports several tenets of DSU's strategic plan: distance-education training, distance-education offerings, technology training, institutional-review process/accreditations/institutional effectiveness, IHL reports, recruitment, and student retention.

DSU Standards

ℹ️ *Three-Level DSU Course Certification Path*

Level #1:

This rubric represents the responsibilities of the Instructional Design Team for checking completed course components in compliance with DSU online course standards. This rubric is to be completed over a two-week period (the week prior to the start of the semester for all courses that were not assigned instructors late in the process, and the first week of the semester for late assigned courses, course revisions, etc.). All course shells must satisfy these criteria every semester. The chair will be notified of the results of the

review. If necessary, an instructional designer will make an appointment with faculty to discuss any changes for Level 1. The chair will discuss an improvement plan with the faculty, if needed. Academic chairs set the deadline for noncompliant courses to reach compliance and are ultimately responsible for making sure noncompliant courses meet Level 1. All online and hybrid courses must be published no later than 12:01 a.m. of the first day of class each term the course is offered.

Required Training

- By Monday, August 2: "Online Course Review Training" (previously Expedited Online Course Review Training"). (Note: Faculty who completed the training during the 2020-21 academic year do not have to retake it. After completion, faculty will share the training certificate with academic chair.)

Level #2:

This rubric represents the responsibilities of the department chair for checking course delivery and facilitation in compliance with DSU online course standards. This rubric is to be completed during the semester the course is being offered. It is highly recommended that all courses meet these criteria every semester. Faculty will be notified if any of their courses' delivery or facilitation do not meet standards. This notification will include a list of modifications to ensure compliance, for the current or future semesters.

Required Training

- By Monday, September 13: "Advanced Online Pedagogy" and "Next Level Course Design." (Note: Faculty who completed the training during the 2020-21 academic year do not have to retake it. After completion, faculty will share the certificate with academic chair.)

NOTE TO CHAIRS: Chairs are required to complete Level 2 Training in Canvas prior to administering the Level 2 rubric. Chairs are free to add criteria for departmental or disciplinary needs. Consider using the rubric as a conversation starter. Via Zoom or in person, open the course shell in front of the faculty member to discuss the feedback in Canvas SpeedGrader or other aspects of the course.

Level #3:

This rubric represents the responsibilities of the Course Review Team, which consists of the academic chair, a subject matter expert, and an instructional designer. This rubric is intended to prepare a course for a Quality Matters review, which is completely voluntary. If a course is volunteered for a Level 3 review, then it is expected that the course review will be completed within 6 months, following the completion of Level 2 review.

To view the most current DSU Course Review Rubrics document go to Faculty Resources.

Faculty Resources: https://deltastate.instructure.com/courses/33107
Gertude C. Ford Center for Teaching and Learning (FCTL): https://www.deltastate.edu/fordctl/

Delta State University
Level 1: Rubric
ID/Dashboard Review

This rubric represents the responsibilities of the Instructional Design Team for checking completed course components in compliance with DSU online course standards. This rubric is to be completed over a two-week period (the week prior to the start of the semester for all courses that were not assigned instructors late in the process, and the first week of the semester for late assigned courses, course revisions, etc.). All course shells must satisfy these criteria every semester. The chair will be notified of the results of the review. If necessary, an instructional designer will make an appointment with faculty to discuss any changes for Level 1. The chair will discuss an improvement plan with the faculty, if needed. Academic chairs set the deadline for noncompliant courses to reach compliance and are ultimately responsible for making sure noncompliant courses meet Level 1. All online and hybrid courses must be published no later than 12:01 a.m. of the first day of class each term the course is offered.

Required Review: YES
Course Completion Deadline: the Monday of the week prior to start of the semester
Reviewer: Instructional Designer
Review Deadline: prior to start of course, unless late instructor assignment to the course—then within a week of course start
Name of Reviewer:
Instructor:
Course Prefix, Course Number and Title:
Semester:

Level 1 Criteria	Description	Yes	No	Comments
Canvas Template	DSU approved Canvas template is used in the course			
Navigation	Left navigation bar (Course Menu) is clear. Unused items are hidden.			
Home Page	*Course Homepage is updated.*			
	Instructor Picture			
	Instructor Name/Title			
	Contact Information			
	Instructional Method (Online/Online Synchronous/Hybrid)			
	Office Hours			
Syllabus	Most recent version of the DSU syllabus template.			
	Syllabus is complete with all required information.			
Course Introduction Module	*Course Introduction Module is updated.*			
	Get Started			
	About the Instructor bio with video			
Module/Week/Topic	*The first module should contain a minimum of the following:*			
	Dates in the Title			
	Measurable Learning Objectives–per Bloom's Taxonomy			
	Fully completed module with content for the first week of class.			

Delta State University
Level 2: Rubric
Chair Course Review

This rubric represents the responsibilities of the department chair for checking course delivery and facilitation in compliance with DSU online course standards. This rubric is to be completed during the semester the course is being offered. It is highly recommended that all courses meet these criteria every semester. Faculty will be notified if any of their courses' delivery or facilitation do not meet standards. This notification will include a list of modifications to ensure compliance, for the current or future semesters.

NOTE TO CHAIRS: Feel free to add criteria for departmental or disciplinary needs. Consider using the rubric as a conversation starter. Via Zoom or in person, open the course shell in front of the faculty member to discuss the feedback in Canvas SpeedGrader or other aspects of the course.

Required Review: YES
Course Completion Deadline: N/A
Reviewer: Division Chair
Name of Reviewer:
Review Deadline: within first 7 weeks of the semester
Instructor:
Course Prefix, Course Number and Title:
Semester:

	Not Present	Revision Needed	No Revision	Not Applicable	Action Plan
Welcome announcement with instructor video					
Discussion forum for self-introductions					
Content and assessments align with SLOs and PLOs					
Modules, assignments, & assessments vary in depth & complexity					
Evidence of teaching beyond connecting students to third-party resources					
Evidence of structured student-student interactions					
Timely, detailed feedback					
Grading aligned with rubrics and feedback					
Clear organizational structure					

Faculty Resources: https://deltastate.instructure.com/courses/33107
Gertude C. Ford Center for Teaching and Learning (FCTL): https://www.deltastate.edu/fordctl/

DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY
Level 3: Rubric
Adapted From: OLC QUALITY SCORECARD SUITE
Click on a standard below for explanations and examples from https://OSCQR.suny.edu

This rubric represents the responsibilities of the Course Review Team, which consists of the academic chair, a subject matter expert, and an instructional designer. This rubric is intended to prepare a course for a Quality Matters review, which is completely voluntary. If a course is volunteered for a Level 3 review, then it is expected that the course review will be completed within 6 months, following the completion of Level 2 review.

Required Review: NO
Course Completion Deadline: upon submission
Reviewer: Course Review Team
Name of Reviewer:
Review Deadline: 6 months
Instructor:
Course Prefix, Course Number and Title:
Semester:

	Sufficiently Present	Minor Revision	Moderate Revision	Major Revision	Not Applicable	Action Plan
Course Overview and Information						
Course includes Welcome and Getting Started content. (QM SRS 1.1)						
An orientation or overview is provided for the course overall, as well as in each module. Learners know how to navigate and what tasks are due. (QM SRS 1.1)						
Course includes a Course Information area that deconstructs the syllabus for learners in a clear and navigable way. (QM SRS 1.1)						
A printable syllabus is available to learners (PDF, HTML).						
Course includes links to relevant campus policies on plagiarism, computer use, filing grievances, accommodating disabilities, etc. (QM SRS 1.4, 7.2)						
Course provides access to learner success resources (technical help, orientation, tutoring). (QM SRS 7.1, 7.3)						
Course information states whether the course is fully online, online synchronous, or hybrid.						
Appropriate methods and devices for accessing and participating in the course are communicated (mobile, publisher websites, secure content, pop-ups, browser issue, microphone, webcam). (QM SRS 1.5)						
Course objectives/outcomes are clearly defined, measurable, and aligned to learning activities and assessments. (QM SRS 2.1)						
Course provides contact information for instructor, department, and program. (QM SRS 1.8)						
COURSE TECHNOLOGY & TOOLS						
Requisite skills for using technology tools (websites, software, and hardware) are						

clearly stated and supported with resources. (QM SRS 1.6)					
Technical skills required for participation in course learning activities scaffold in a timely manner (orientation, practice, and application - where appropriate).					
Frequently used technology tools are easily accessed. Any tools not being utilized are removed from the course menu.					
Course includes links to privacy policies for technology tools. (QM SRS 6.4)					
Any technology tools meet accessibility standards. (QM SRS 8.6)					
DESIGN AND LAYOUT					
A logical, consistent, and uncluttered layout is established. The course is easy to navigate (consistent color scheme and icon layout, related content organized together, self-evident titles). (QM SRS 8.1)					
Large blocks of information are divided into manageable sections with ample white space around and between the blocks. (QM SRS 8.2)					
There is enough contrast between text and background for the content to be easily viewed. (QM SRS 8.2)					
Instructions are provided and well written.					
Course is free of grammatical and spelling errors. (QM SRS 8.2)					
Text is formatted with titles, headings, and other styles to enhance readability and improve the structure of the document. (QM SRS 8.2)					
Flashing and blinking text are avoided. (QM SRS 8.2)					
A sans-serif font with a standard size of at least 12 pt is used. (QM SRS 8.2)					
When possible, information is displayed in a linear format instead of as a table. (QM SRS 8.3)					
Tables are accompanied by a title and summary description.					
Table header rows and columns are assigned. (QM SRS 8.3)					
Slideshows use a predefined slide layout and include unique slide titles. (QM SRS 8.3)					
For all slideshows, there are simple, non-automatic transitions between slides.					
CONTENT AND ACTIVITIES					
Course offers access to a variety of engaging resources that facilitate communication and collaboration, deliver content, and support learning and engagement. (QM SRS 4.5)					
Course provides activities for learners to develop higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills, such as critical reflection and analysis. (QM SRS 2.5)					
Course provides activities that emulate real world applications of the discipline,					

Faculty Resources: https://deltastate.instructure.com/courses/33107
Gertude C. Ford Center for Teaching and Learning (FCTL): https://www.deltastate.edu/fordctl/

such as experiential learning, case studies, and problem-based activities.						
Where available, Open Educational Resources, free, or low-cost materials are used.						
Course materials and resources include copyright and licensing status, clearly stating permission to share where applicable. (QM SRS 4.3)						
Text content is available in an easily accessed format, preferably HTML. All text content is readable by assistive technology, including a PDF or any text contained in an image. (QM SRS 8.3)						
A text equivalent for every non-text element is provided ("alt" tags, captions, transcripts, etc.). (QM SRS 8.4)						
Text, graphics, and images are understandable when viewed without color. Text should be used as a primary method for delivering information.						
Hyperlink text is descriptive and makes sense when out of context (avoid using "click here").						
INTERACTION						
Expectations for timely and regular feedback from the instructor are clearly stated (questions, email, assignments). (QM SRS 3.5, 5.3, 5.4)						
Expectations for interaction are clearly stated (netiquette, grade weighting, models/examples, and timing and frequency of contributions). (QM SRS 3.2)						
Learners have an opportunity to get to know the instructor. (QM SRS 1.8)						
Course contains resources or activities intended to build a sense of class community, support open communication, and establish trust (at least one of the following - Icebreaker, Bulletin Board, Meet Your Classmates, Ask a Question discussion forums). (QM SRS 1.9)						
Course offers opportunities for learner to learner interaction and constructive collaboration. (QM SRS 5.2)						
Learners are encouraged to share resources and inject knowledge from diverse sources of information in their course interactions.						

"Shopping List" for Course Development

Before delving into creating the actual course components, it is helpful to gather the necessary resources and create a development plan to ensure you understand all the elements that will be required to make the course development process a success. This shopping list should help you think about the resources you will need. The more time you spend on your course **BEFORE** the semester starts the better the experience will be for you and your students.
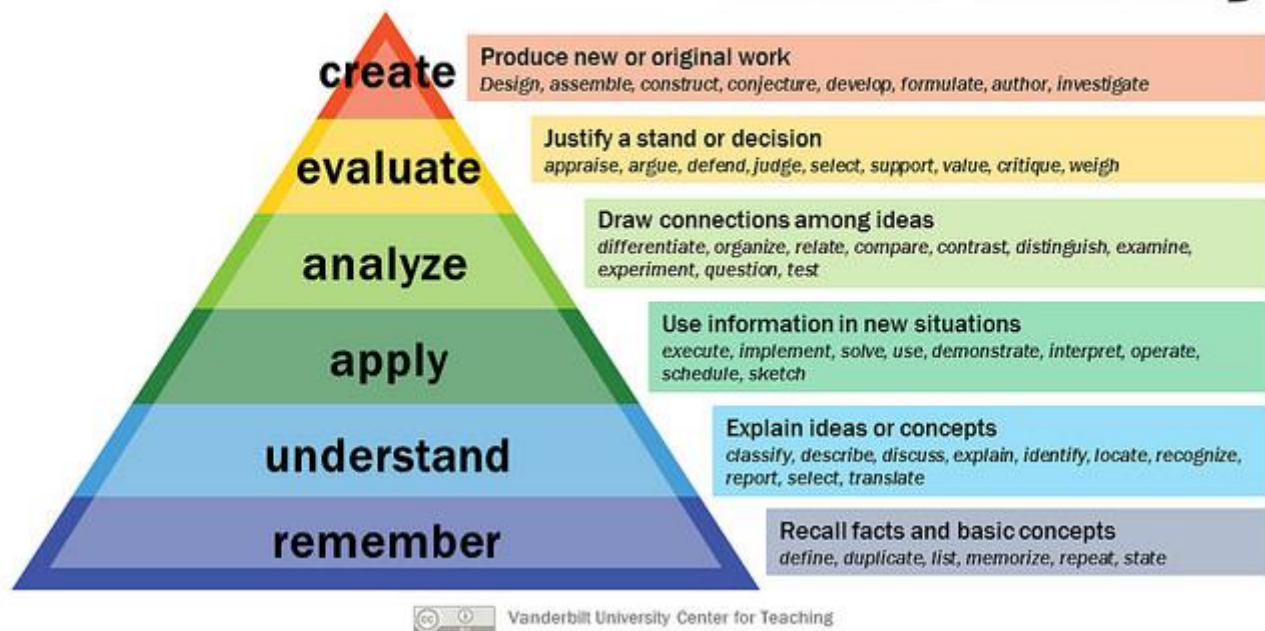
> *"I like when Professors set up discussion boards and post their PowerPoints so I can't study inside and outside of class." – DSU Student*

- o Build a development timeline.
    - o Create a vision statement as to how you want your course to be seen and experienced.
    - o Set a target end date.
    - o Set progress benchmarks at regular intervals before the targeted end date.

    When will this course be taught? It is ideal to have at least one semester to create an online course from conceptualization to completion. All course components should be completed and ready BEFORE the course starts – ideally well before the course starts so you can review and so students may be allowed in the virtual classroom a few days early to explore and familiarize themselves with the course structure.

- o Storyboard the course.

    - o Get a big picture idea of what you want your course to be. In general terms (don't get lost in the details yet): What will the course "look" like? Where should students be at the end of the course? What major topics will be covered? What learning materials will be presented? What technologies and media will be needed? Start thinking of the key elements.

- o Consider adding learning outcomes via Bloom Taxonomy.

    - o The FCTL team recommends that educators consider using Bloom's Taxonomy when creating assessments, curricula, and other educational content. The rationale behind this suggestion is twofold. First, Bloom's strong academic credentials and been used for decades in higher education institutions. Second, Bloom's is easy to learn and apply to almost any learning environment. See below for an example of Bloom's verbs. The FCTL team encourages you to look at Vanderbilt's Center for Teaching for guidance on incorporating Bloom's into your curriculum.

Bloom's Taxonomy

create — Produce new or original work
Design, assemble, construct, conjecture, develop, formulate, author, investigate

evaluate — Justify a stand or decision
appraise, argue, defend, judge, select, support, value, critique, weigh

analyze — Draw connections among ideas
differentiate, organize, relate, compare, contrast, distinguish, examine, experiment, question, test

apply — Use information in new situations
execute, implement, solve, use, demonstrate, interpret, operate, schedule, sketch

understand — Explain ideas or concepts
classify, describe, discuss, explain, identify, locate, recognize, report, select, translate

remember — Recall facts and basic concepts
define, duplicate, list, memorize, repeat, state

Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching

- o Gather the appropriate course design tools.

    Accounting for accessibility is an important part of the course development. There is a growing amount of research that shows the positive impact of adding elements of accessibility. We encourage you to FCTL has made available a Course Design Checklist and an Accessibility Checklist Guidelines for accessibility can be viewed by using the Microsoft accessibility checker.

- o Get instructional design support.

    The FCTL team has been trained in Quality Matters – instructional design principles related directly to designing online courses. Schedule a consultation to review course design plans. Get a copy of the Quality Matters Workbook (copies available upon request from FCTL). We encourage you to use the plethora of resources at our FCTL website; available to all DSU faculty.

- o Gather the appropriate instructional technologies resources.

    What technologies will be needed to design and deliver the course? Make sure that you prepare for the semester ahead of time. We encourage you not to wait for the last minute to learn what technologies are available and how to use them.

    Some of the EdTech tools that we recommend include but are not limited to the following

    - Kahoot – Fun, in-class resource

    - PearDeck – Adding voiceover and prompts to prerecorded lectures

    - Edpuzzle – Embedding prompts and questions to YouTube videos

- Canva – Graphic design software for presentations, graphics, and visual illustrations

- Flipgrid – Digital notecards with gamification options

- Merlot (Multimedia Education Resource for Learning and Online Teaching) – open educational resources

o Get technical training if needed.

Take advantage of the FCTL team's resources – listen to pointers they can offer on best practices for using the instructional technologies, along with the technical support they provide through workshops, newsletters, and Q&A sessions.

Principles of Course Design

Before starting your course development, it is helpful to have a foundational understanding of instructional design to help you create a purposeful learning experience. Course design is a cyclical process for which many models exist, including **ADDIE** (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, Evaluation), **SAM** (Successive Approximation Model), and **Backward Design**. The advantage of employing one of these models is that they provide a research-driven and systematic approach to design instruction. This guide will focus on course design using Backward Design[1] approach.

Backward Design – The Basics

What is Backward Design?

"To begin with the end in mind means to start with a clear understanding of your destination. It means to know where you're going so that you better understand where you are now that the steps you take are always in the right direction." (Covey, p. 98)

Essentially, Backward Design means to begin with the end in mind. Using Backward Design, objectives are set before a course and FCTL components are designed. Following formulation of the course-level and unit-level objectives, the course assessments are designed, and then finally the course content. The idea is that if you know what you want students to take away from your course, you can better design the components of the course that will get them to that point, like giving your students a compass and a map to reach their destination.

The main principles of Backward Design can be captured in three central ideas (Wiggins & McTighe):

- Stage 1: Identify Desired Results
    - Where do I want students to be by the end of the course?
    - To answer this question, you can look to your learning objectives (the destination).

- Stage 2: Determine Acceptable Evidence
    - How will we know they've gotten there?
    - Using assessments that align with your learning objectives will help to put students on the right track.
    - Using rubrics helps you to determine if the students are achieving the objectives, you are intending students to meet.

- Stage 3: Plan Learning Experiences and Instruction

- How can I help them get there?
- What "modes of transportation" or learning activities makes most sense to get students to the desired destination?

What Does Backward Design mean for me?

Backward Design helps create order and purpose to course activities.

Backward Design is a great tool for building online courses (face-to-face courses as well!). Knowing the outcome, you want students to achieve helps to guide you through your entire course development. In the online classroom organization and explicitness is necessary; Backward Design can help you achieve those goals by making sure each activity is tied to the desired outcome.

It also provides transparency for students - in your final product (the course) they get to see what they should be learning, how the information they are reading and watching is relevant to their learning, and how the activities and assessments are helping them to achieve the goals of the course, connecting their learning to the course content. More depth and detail will be spent covering Backward Design further into this document.

Quality Matters (QM ™)

What is Quality Matters?

Quality Matters is a program that provides educational organizations with the tools for evaluating the design (not teaching) of online and blended courses. The following excerpt was taken directly from the Quality Matters website:

> The **Quality Matters (QM) Program** is a nationally recognized, faculty-centered, peer review process designed to certify the quality of online courses and online components. Colleges and universities across and beyond the U.S. use the tools in developing, maintaining, and reviewing their online courses and in training their faculty.

"Simple instructions, clear rubrics. ONE example of how they expect to see homework, discussions, papers formatted." – DSU Student

The **QM Process** for continuous improvement is the framework for quality assurance efforts in online learning and provides effective professional development for faculty making the transition into distance education.[2]

The **Quality Matters Rubric** has become the most widely used set of standards for the design of online and blended courses at the college level. Today, more than 700 colleges and universities subscribe to the non-profit Quality Matters Program.

The Quality Matters Rubric is a set of 8 general standards and 41 specific standards used to evaluate the design of online and blended courses. The Rubric is complete with annotations that explain the application of the standards and the relationship among them. A scoring system and set of online tools facilitate the evaluation by a team of reviewers.[3]

"Allow resubmissions, give detailed explanations for assignments, allow enough time for assignment completion, record class meetings, be very understanding of student life, respond to questions in a timely manner, etc." – DSU Student

In many ways, Quality Matters (QM) compliments the Backward Design method of instructional design as one of the main focal points of QM is learning objectives – in fact, most of a QM review will hinge upon if you have successfully written measurable, learner-centered objectives, and then base the course materials and activities around achievement of those objectives. This is a concept QM refers to as Alignment.

Achieve alignment in a Quality Matters (QM) review.

Backward Design can help you to achieve alignment among the critical elements in your course. The objectives, assessments, and learning activities are deliberately connected. As you build each piece of your course upon the previous, you naturally progress toward full alignment.

What is QM Alignment?

From the QM website: Critical course components - Learning Objectives, Assessment and Measurement, Resources and Materials, Learner Engagement, and Course Technology - work together to ensure that students achieve the desired learning outcomes. When aligned, each of these course components is directly tied to and supports the learning objectives.[4]

In a QM Review, certain parts of a course (the critical components listed above) are examined to make sure they bring each other into line, assuring each part is relevant to helping students achieve the objectives of the course. If one of those parts is not considered "in alignment" the course will not be considered to have met the standard(s) of the review. Using Backward Design to thoughtfully construct your course can help ensure you are aligning the "critical components" of your course. See the annotations within the QM Rubric Workbook to find out exactly how each critical component should align with the next.

QM design expects that a course will "demonstrate a commitment to accessibility for all students… [incorporating] the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and is consistent with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)." (Quality Matters ™ Rubric Workbook for Higher Education). Specifically, the standard looks for the use of accessible technologies, guidance for students on obtaining accommodation, use of transcripts or closed captioning, readable and non-distracting course design, and course materials that accommodate the use of assistive technologies. See the annotations in the Workbook for examples of how you might achieve these

results. Also, FCTL has created an [Accessibility Checklist](#) to which you can refer as you develop your course materials.

How can we use QM at DSU?

The Rubric focuses heavily on the alignment of learning objectives, assessments, and instructional materials in the course design as well as the clarity of all information provided in the course. The Rubric can serve as a guide as you develop a course. However, QM can be employed in varied ways, such as:

- Use the QM Rubric to do informal reviews of your courses to identify opportunities for improving course design.
    - *If you don't already have one, be sure to contact FCTL to receive a copy of the Quality Matters Workbook.*

- Submit your course for a formal QM Review to receive QM Certification.
    - *Please contact the FCTL office for availability information on how you can join the next cohort to be QM Certified.*
        - *Gertrude C. Ford Center for Teaching and Learning*
        Phone: 662-846-4038
        James M. Ewing Hall, RM 239

- Take QM workshops as professional development in online course design and facilitation.
    - *Online workshops are available through the [FCTL resource portal](#) or contacting the FCTL staff directly at 662.846.4038 or via [email](#).*

- We would love for you to serve on our Faculty Advisory Committee. Please contact [Dr. Ouida McAfee](#) if you would like to learn more on how you can participate in the online review process and other FCTL initiatives.

Key Elements in Your Course

Before you work through the three stages of course development, it may be helpful to conceptualize your course by understanding and identifying some of the key elements that will be needed in your course. These key elements may influence how you think about presenting your course objectives and materials to your students.

Course Components	Key Design Elements
Initial Support	• Welcome & introductory email sent to students 1 week prior to course start date – *More details on what that might look like are presented later in this document.* • Course opens one week early to allow perusal • Orientation activities
Course Information	• Structure and flow of content • Course Calendar includes all activities and due dates • Syllabus information • Semester-long activities explained • Special instructions provided for third-party software
Building Community	• Introductions discussion thread for students and educator • Open discussion forum(s) (i.e., "Raise your hand" or "Ask the class/educator") provide space for communication not related to a specific assignment/activity • Announcements posted regularly
Content Presentation	• Includes personal commentary from the educator (written, video, and/or audio) • Goes beyond reading assignments – illustrates course topics, makes relevant to life beyond the books • Incorporates personality of educator • More conversational than formal • Written for the web – incorporates headers and chunking • Anticipates where students may struggle and provides support (in text or FAQ) • Appropriate use of media • Keeps accessibility and UDL in mind
Activities	• Linked to learning objectives • Build from concept knowledge to practice, application, and analysis • Discussion encourages synthesis • Discussion follow-up encourages reflection • Quizzes used for reinforcement of concepts and auto-grading of homework

Faculty Rights and Responsibilities
Policy Statement

Proper functioning of the academic program involves many details. Systematic compliance with the regulations governing the various aspects of the entire process lends itself to a smoothly operating and efficient academic program. A faculty member should be familiar with the University catalogs and become familiar with all regulations concerning the academic program.

The full version of the faculty rights and responsibilities can be found by clicking here or by visiting the Delta State University Policy page online.

I do like it when they have interacting assignments that help me learn the material and not just assignments that make me read the chapter. – DSU Student

Section II: The Course Development Process

SECTION II: The Course Development Process

When ready to begin creating and compiling materials for your course, work through Stages 1-3 of the development process. Be sure to keep handy your instructional design resources: the Course Design Checklist, the Accessibility Checklist, and the QM Workbook to help guide you.

Stage 1: Identify Desired Results

It's now time to write the objectives you will use to set the framework for your course. Begin by writing the course-level objectives, and then proceed to the unit-level objectives. Thinking in terms of Backward Design, where do you want your students to be by the end of the course?

Objectives are *the most critical element* in the course design process. They provide the foundation and infrastructure to guide the development of assessments, learning activities and learning resources.

Resources for guiding the course development process use the terms goals, objectives, and outcomes, sometimes interchangeably. However, goals are the broadly defined statements that provide direction for defining specific and measurable objectives, which result in student learning outcomes. For our purposes here, we will be focusing on course-level and unit-level objectives in the course development process.

What is an objective?

An objective is a statement that describes what students are expected to be able to know, do, think, or feel upon completion of a course. Objectives must be clearly defined, student-centered, measurable, and achievable.

What's the difference between a course-level and a unit-level objective?

The basic difference is *scope*: course-level objectives are simply broader than unit-level objectives. Course objectives are the overall outcomes you want students to take away from the course. In designing course objectives, ask yourself: what are the enduring ideas I want students to remember when this course is over (or in two, three, or four years from now)? These outcomes are related to the core values or skills of your specific discipline. Unit objectives are smaller, more specific outcomes that, collectively, will help students to achieve the overarching course objectives. While both sets of objectives need to be written in measurable terms, unit objectives are often more precise, measuring competencies in a specific task or skill.

> *"Prompt responses, answering questions in discussion forums just in case someone else has the same question. Give examples not just rely on the textbook."*
> *– DSU Student*

Example of Objectives:

This example drills down from a program-level objective to specific unit objectives focusing on the concept of communication in the global business environment to illustrate the narrowing scope that emerges as you drill down through the various levels.

The program objective here is overly broad and will impact all areas of preparing students to succeed in the global business environment. In this case, we drill down to focus more specifically on how to pursue global business opportunities. Relating to this course-level

objective, there are several concepts that are related including political/legal issues, economic conditions, cultural factors, etc. Finally, we focus specifically at the unit level on cultural factors to be considered in the communication process that takes place while pursuing market opportunities worldwide.

Why are objectives important in the course development process?

In the example above, we turned key concepts into measurable learning objectives. These objectives will guide us to develop assessments, learning activities, and instructional materials that are aligned. For example, Unit Objective 1 above indicates that students will be able to "identify the five dimensions in Geert Hofstede's Model of Cultural Dimensions." The verb, to identify, guides us to an assessment that requires students to recall information. A quiz question or short answer question are appropriate assessments for this objective. The second unit objective, however, indicates that students will be able to "discuss Hofstede's primary findings about differences in cultural values." A discussion activity or essay would be appropriate assessments for this objective.

How do I identify objectives?

The easiest way to identify objectives is to crack open the textbook and see what's listed there. Is that the best strategy? Probably not, but it shouldn't be completely discounted. Textbook objectives can provide some of the learning objectives for your course. But to determine what to keep and what to throw out the window, you need to have a guide to determine what is most important. While we would all like to believe our students remember every bit of information that came up in our courses, the reality is that much of the information is lost after time. So, a good place to start when identifying learning objectives is to ask this question:

"Prompt responses, answering questions in discussion forums just in case someone else has the same question. Give examples not just rely on the textbook."
- DSU Student

"What are the key concepts my students should remember from this course?"

Once you answer that question, you can take those concepts and convert them into course objectives by identifying what your students should be able to know about and do with these key concepts. From there, you can drill down and generate specific unit learning objectives.

In their book, *Understanding by Design*, Grant Wiggins, and Jay McTighe provide a Venn diagram guide for prioritizing learning objectives as part of the Backward Design model of course development (2005).

Those items placed in the smallest circle (Enduring Understanding) are your course-level objectives – the most important concepts that students should take away from the learning experience. They are the foundational "must-know" pieces students will take away from the course.

The second circle (Important to know and do) provides support to achieve the enduring understanding of the major concepts and are, therefore, the unit-level objectives. They are the "need to know" pieces.

The last circle (Worth being familiar with) allows for you to identify some of the concepts and information that are related to the main course objectives and worth of mention throughout the

course but may not be important enough for assessment. These can be considered the "nice to know" pieces.

How should objectives be written?

No matter if the learning objective is at the course level or the unit level, there are certain criteria to follow in writing the objective.

- o Is the learning objective measurable?

  Meaning: Use action verbs, such as "identify" or "evaluate" or "apply". While course-level objectives are meant to be broader than unit-level objectives, it's still important to ensure they are measurable; it is best to avoid verbs that are difficult to assess such as to know, understand, appreciate, and familiarize whenever possible as they are difficult to measure.

- o Does the learning objective utilize an effective action verb that targets the desired level of performance?

- o Is the learning objective student-centered?

  Meaning: Written in a way describing what the student will be able to do, not what the educator will do in the course...i.e. "Following this unit, the student will be able to..."

- o Does the learning objective target one specific aspect of expected performance?
- o Is the learning objective written in terms of observable, behavioral outcomes?
- o Does the unit objective stem from a course objective?

"I do like whenever they post rubrics to follow, post resources to help us learn the material, and are quick to respond whenever we have a question." – DSU Student

Verb List

The following table breaks down the levels of understanding based on each domain of learning (as defined by Bloom's Taxonomy) and into the various levels within those domains. The "Relevant Verbs" column provides a list of appropriate verbs that can be used when writing learning objectives to correspond with the appropriate level of understanding you want your student to achieve.

01 KNOWLEDGE:	02 UNDERSTAND:	03 APPLY:	04 ANALYZE:	05 EVALUATE:	06 CREATE:
Define, Identify, Describe, Recognize, Tell, Explain, Recite, Memorize, Illustrate, Quote	Summarize, Interpret, Classify, Compare, Contrast, Infer, Relate, Extract, Paraphrase, Cite	Solve, Change, Relate, Complete, Use, Sketch, Teach, Articulate, Discover, Transfer	Contrast, Connect, Relate, Devise, Correlate, Illustrate, Distill, Conclude, Categorize, Take Apart	Criticize, Reframe, Judge, Defend, Appraise, Value, Prioritize, Plan, Grade, Reframe	Design, Modify, Role-Play, Develop, Rewrite, Pivot, Modify, Collaborate, Invent, Write

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Once you've determined the objectives students should be meeting in your course, it becomes much easier to tailor your assessments and activities to help students meet the desired outcome.

Bloom's Taxonomy

Bloom's taxonomy provides us with a formula for thinking about instructional design, i.e., objectives, class activities, and assessments. Using Bloom's Taxonomy to design our courses does the following:

It informs the **students**:

- what they should study
- how they will be assessed

It guides the **educator**:
- in assessment strategies
- in teaching strategies

It tells the **educator** (and **accreditation** agencies):
- if teaching strategies worked
- if assessment strategies

See Recommended Resources for additional information on Learning Objectives and Bloom's Taxonomy.

> "My professor is extremely responsive to any issues I have. He gets back to me within minutes a lot of the time, which is great". – DSU Student
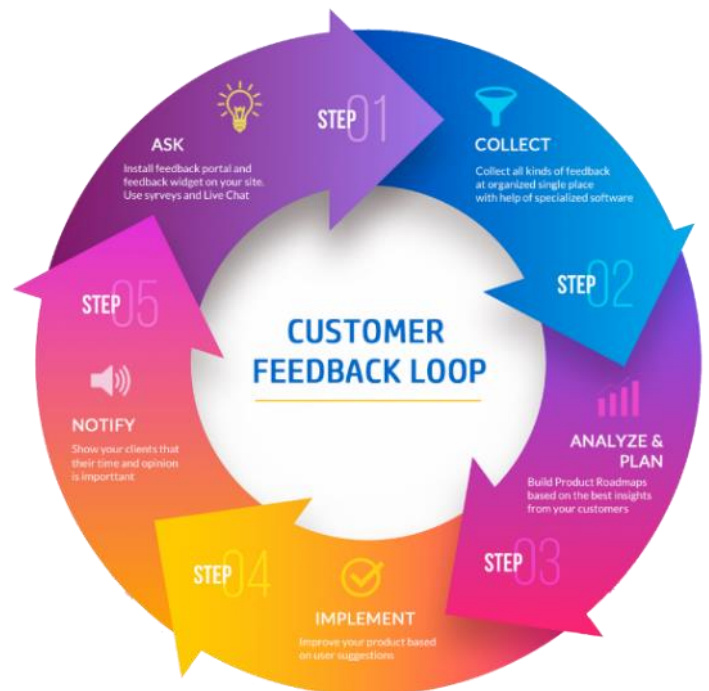
Stage 2: Determine Acceptable Evidence

It's now time to create the assessments you will use to measure the outcome of the learning objectives. How will you know students have arrived at the intended destination? Using assessments that align with (and directly measure) your learning objectives will help you know if your students have arrived. Creating multiple opportunities to assess the students throughout the course will help you know if your students are on the right track to that destination.

> *"Flexible hours and scheduling assignments on weekends." – DSU Student*

Designed purposefully, online assessment becomes a teaching tool and not strictly an evaluation mechanism. Strategically, assessments should be designed as part of the learning cycle process.

Types of Assessment

Learning is often a cumulative process. Punctuating your course with multiple assessment opportunities with feedback provides you the ability to gauge your students' learning progression and students with opportunities for re-learning and re-applying, building toward proficiency in the learning objectives. An optimal strategy is to build a variety of assessment techniques.

Formative assessments provide the educator and students with regular feedback on proficiency of course module objectives. As an educator, you can use the results to refine your instruction – intervene and redirect learning as appropriate. Students can use the results to identify areas for further study. These assessments are generally "lower-stakes," such as *discussion posts, reflections, quizzes, simulations, and short answer questions, self, and peer evaluations*.

Summative assessments provide results that can be used to assign grades and make summary conclusions about course-level objective proficiency. The goal is not diagnostic feedback, such as with formative assessments, but accountability. These assessments are generally "higher-stakes" and occur at the end of a learning unit. Examples include *midterm and final exams, essays, research papers, simulations, projects, portfolios, presentations, case studies*.
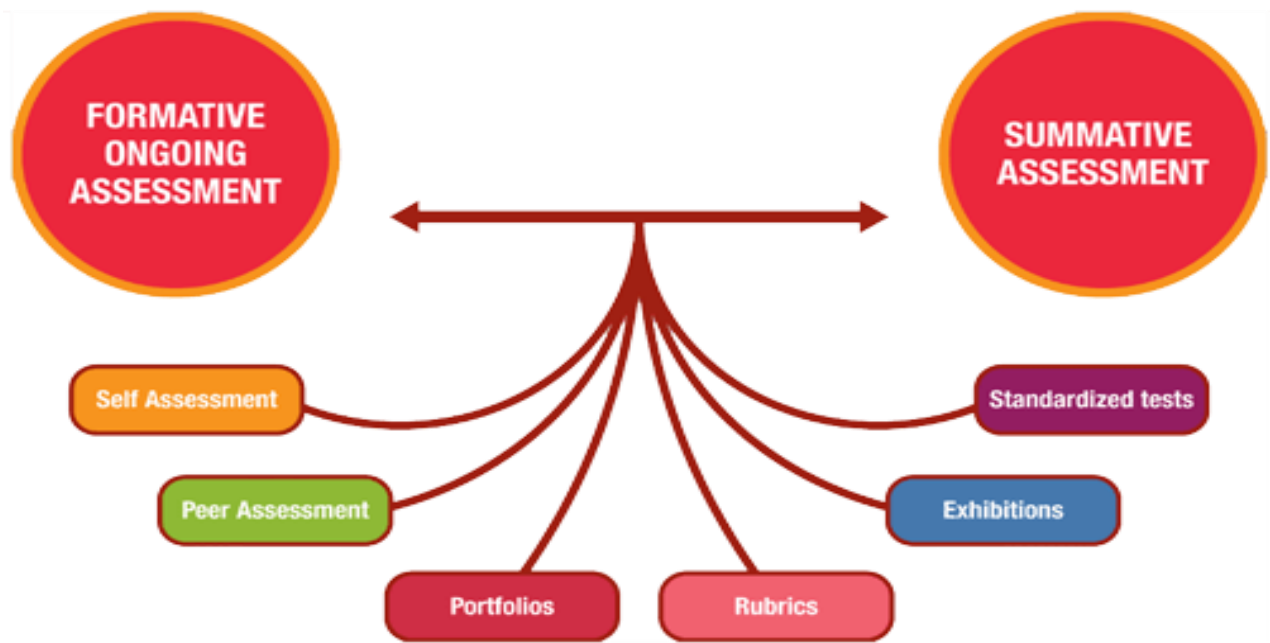
Source: Structural learning https://www.structural-learning.com/post/formative-and-summative-assessments-a-teachers-guide

It is often helpful to *benchmark* larger projects or research type assessments throughout the course. Having various components due at regular intervals during the course helps keep students on track time and content-wise. This also provides peer-review opportunities for students.

> *"I do like whenever they post rubrics to follow, post resources to help us learn the material, and are quick to respond whenever we have a question." – DSU Student*

Fixed-choice assessments where students select answer options or recall information can be helpful to test knowledge and lower-order skills and reinforce basic concepts. This may include multiple-choice, true-false, fill-in-the-blank, and matching type activities. They can enable students to evaluate their own progress through the course materials but should serve as a small component of your overall assessment strategy. You may even consider incorporating some of these as optional, practice opportunities. In this model, quizzes, become more of a learning opportunity rather than students viewing them as a punitive measure.

If you choose to incorporate fixed-choice assessments into your formative or summative assessments, there are several things to keep in mind:

- Consider these online quizzes as an open book. Unless you intend to proctor the exam, it is difficult to prevent students from opening their text or another browser window to look up answers.
- If you have a timed test, keep the window of time the quiz is open narrow enough that students do not have time to look up every answer.
- If the assessment is to be summative, design the questions so they must apply the knowledge to select the correct answer.
- If possible, have the quiz open over the period of two or three days to allow schedule flexibility – one of the most attractive qualities of an online course.

- You can create a large pool of questions and draw randomly from that pool so that not all students are asked the exact same questions, in the exact same order. (Answer options can also be randomized.)
- Some textbook publishers have ready-made test banks that can be imported directly into Canvas.

Rubrics

Rubrics can be used to outline criteria for discussions, case studies, essays, course projects, and other assignments and activities. Rubrics help educators determine if students are achieving the objectives associated with your assessments. Rubrics also assist you, as the educator, acting as a scoring guide when evaluating papers or projects - you will know implicitly what makes a good final product, and why, and thus how to 'grade' each student's assignment in a consistent manner. When students receive the rubric before beginning an assignment, they understand how they will be evaluated and can prepare accordingly. The rubric can then provide scaffolding to improve the quality of the student's work.

Advantages to using rubrics:

- Educators can increase the quality of their direct instruction by providing focus, emphasis, and attention to details as a model for students.
- Students have explicit guidelines regarding educator expectations. Explicit directions and clear expectations are especially necessary in an online class.
- Students can use rubrics as a tool to develop their abilities.
- Educators can reuse rubrics for various activities. Once a rubric is created, it can be used for a variety of activities and across courses. An established rubric can be used or slightly modified and applied to many diverse types of assignments.

"I do enjoy when they give us the week to complete the work. I enjoy having the option to talk to the professors whether it is by email or Canvas.
– DSU Student

Sample rubrics are available for your reference at the FCTL Resource Portal via Canvas; feel free to use and modify. Online rubric-making tools and video tutorials are also available.

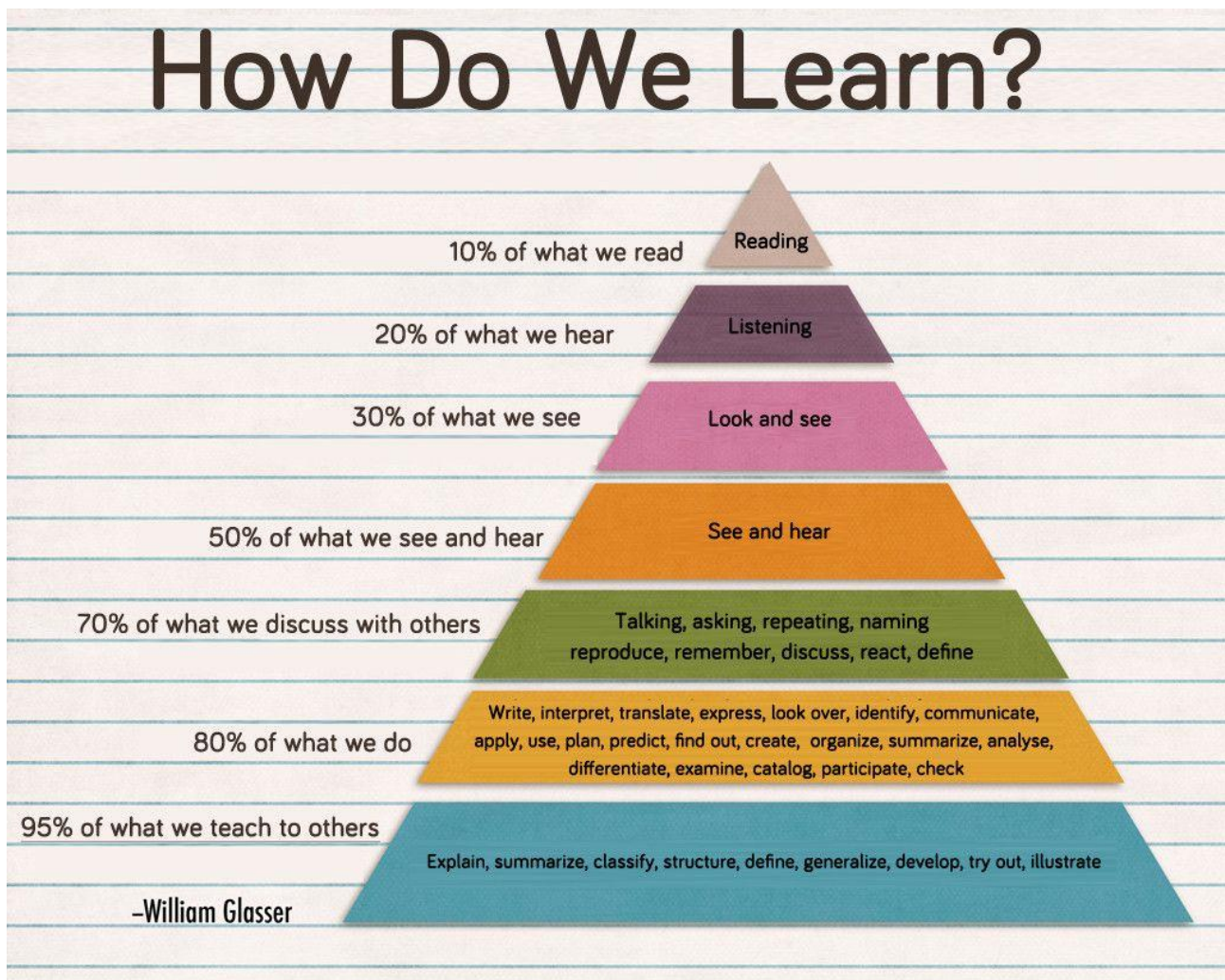## Stage 3: Plan the Learning Experiences and Instruction

It's now time to design, create, and compile the materials and activities for the students in your course. How can you help your students achieve enduring understanding of the course subject? What are the maps, tools, and interactions students will need to successfully navigate through the assessments? What "modes of transportation" or learning activities makes most sense to get students to the desired destination?

The activities and learning materials in your course should help students build a framework for understanding the course concepts. Ultimately, they ensure students will be successful in the course assessments. If you have already defined the learning objectives and created assessments to measure those objectives, the activities and materials are the resources students use to work through those assessments and achieve the objectives.

Often online courses are heavily text-based. What does this diagram mean for how we should approach online course design in terms of the learning materials and activities?

The research findings of William Glasser suggest that we remember:

How Do We Learn?

10% of what we read — Reading

20% of what we hear — Listening

30% of what we see — Look and see

50% of what we see and hear — See and hear

70% of what we discuss with others — Talking, asking, repeating, naming reproduce, remember, discuss, react, define

80% of what we do — Write, interpret, translate, express, look over, identify, communicate, apply, use, plan, predict, find out, create, organize, summarize, analyse, differentiate, examine, catalog, participate, check

95% of what we teach to others — Explain, summarize, classify, structure, define, generalize, develop, try out, illustrate
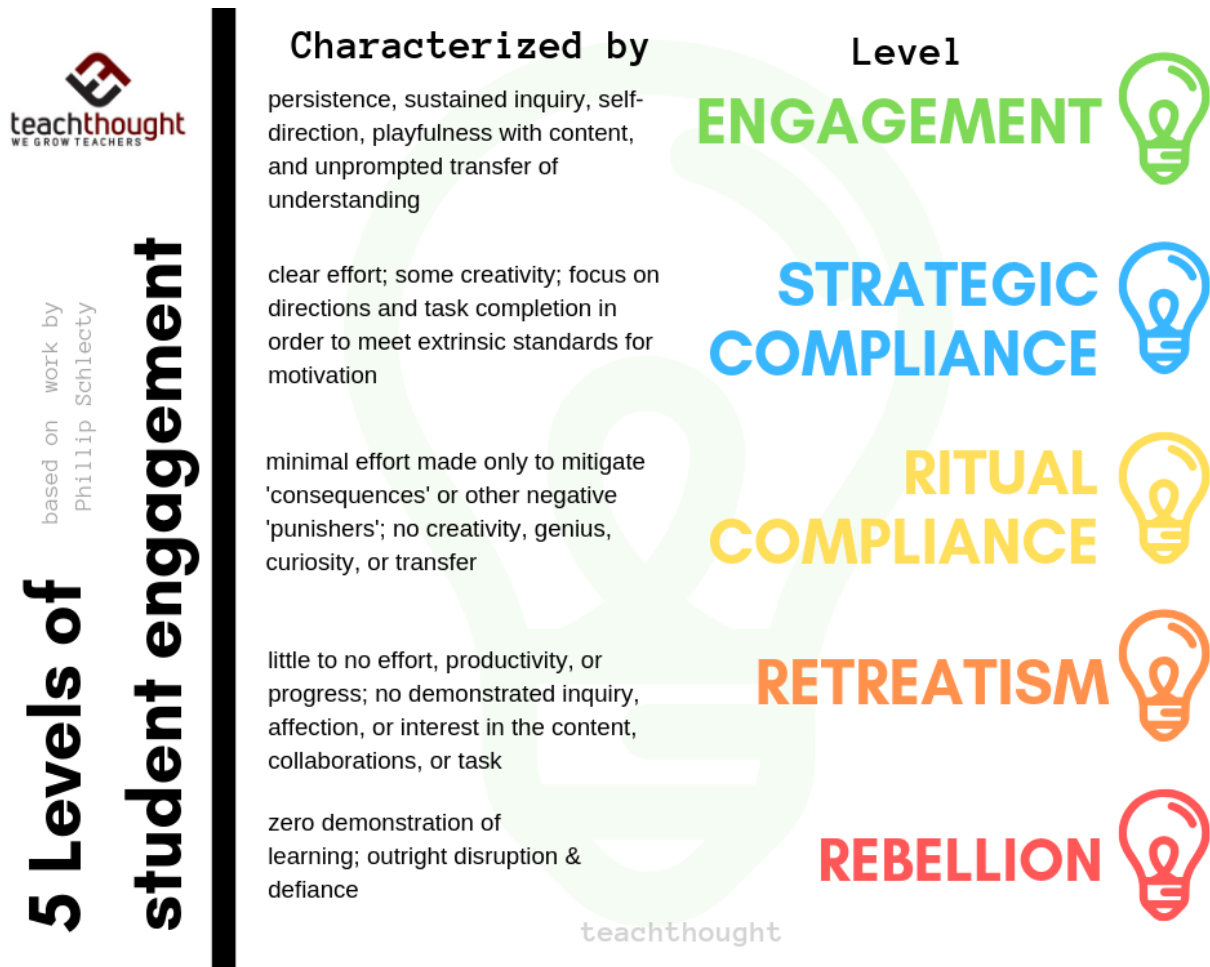
–William Glasser

You may choose to write or record your own course materials. You may choose to incorporate the works of others (videos, articles, texts, webpages, guest experts). Much of the course material you select may be text- based or perhaps you will incorporate a lot of multimedia, such as video. The type and variety of material is important, but what you have your students do with that material is paramount. Will they simply read/watch, or will they also reflect? Will they discuss? Will they experiment? Will they analyze? They must engage.

"I like it when they truly engage with their students and give personal feedback, not mass response to an assignment. I like knowing what I could have done better." – DSU Student

Student Engagement

Ultimately, how much students take away from the course will depend upon how much they have engaged in the course. While they must be motivated to take on the learning challenges presented to them, it is also incumbent upon you, as the course designer, to create an environment of engagement. There are three main capacities for student engagement in the course. The degree to which students participate in each of the three capacities varies from course to course, but each should be considered in your course design.

5 Levels of student engagement

based on work by Phillip Schlecty

Characterized by

persistence, sustained inquiry, self-direction, playfulness with content, and unprompted transfer of understanding

clear effort; some creativity; focus on directions and task completion in order to meet extrinsic standards for motivation

minimal effort made only to mitigate 'consequences' or other negative 'punishers'; no creativity, genius, curiosity, or transfer

little to no effort, productivity, or progress; no demonstrated inquiry, affection, or interest in the content, collaborations, or task

zero demonstration of learning; outright disruption & defiance

Level

ENGAGEMENT

STRATEGIC COMPLIANCE

RITUAL COMPLIANCE

RETREATISM

REBELLION

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UDL: Universal Design for Learning

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a framework for guiding the development of flexible learning environments to accommodate differences in individual learning. The intention of UDL is to increase access to learning by reducing physical, cognitive, intellectual, and organizational barriers to learning. UDL is related to Accessibility in that they share the goal of expanding access to learning for all. While accessibility is concerned mostly with providing fair and equal access to education no matter the physical differences in learners, UDL goes further by also addressing variability in learning of all learners.

UDL calls for courses to be developed using three core principles:

1. ***Provide multiple means of representation*** to give learners several ways of acquiring information and knowledge. Provide multiple, varied examples to your students.

   (Supports recognition learning.)

2. ***Provide multiple means of expression*** to offer learners more than one way to demonstrate what they know. Use more than one form of assessment and allow opportunities for practice and feedback.

   (Supports strategic learning.)

3. ***Provide multiple means of engagement*** to tap into learners' interests, challenge them appropriately, and motivate them to learn. Present the course concepts in more than one way.
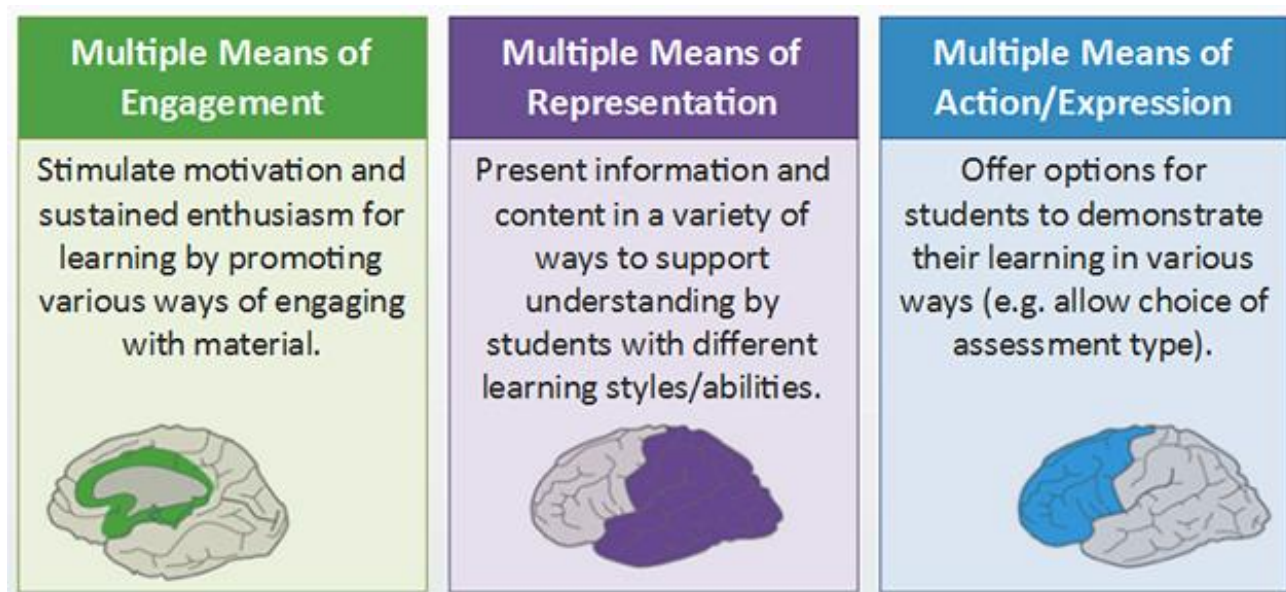
   (Supports affective learning.)

> *"I like that my assignments are due every Sunday instead of having due dates throughout the week."*
> *– DSU Student*

As you create the learning activities for your course, consider presenting course concepts and assessments in varied ways to reach learners who process and express information in diverse ways. Efforts made toward following UDL principles often reinforce efforts for making courses accessible.

Learning Materials (Student-Content Engagement)

In a sense, in the online classroom, you are a curator of content for your subject matter. You must find the best sources of information related to your course and make that available to your students. The result is often a combination of external sources of information (such as field experts, textbook publishers, researchers, organizations) and internal sources (you). The delivery of the course concepts can be done using multiple mechanisms: textbooks, documents, articles, videos, audio clips, links to web pages, PowerPoint presentations, etc.

Multiple Means of Engagement	Multiple Means of Representation	Multiple Means of Action/Expression
Stimulate motivation and sustained enthusiasm for learning by promoting various ways of engaging with material.	Present information and content in a variety of ways to support understanding by students with different learning styles/abilities.	Offer options for students to demonstrate their learning in various ways (e.g. allow choice of assessment type).

Educator Created Content – Educator Commentary

As a subject matter expert, you may deem it appropriate to create some of your own resources to include in the course. An effective way is through *educator commentary* – this can be done by text, audio/video, or a combination of the two. Used effectively, the educator commentary is not just a rehash or summarization of what students have already read in the assigned text (or other readings), but the value-added piece you bring as the expert. This is your opportunity to bring context to the content, drawing upon real-world examples (some may even be from your own experiences) and illustrating what the concepts being covered in a particular unit mean.

"The other professor prerecorded all lectures and gave detailed work of what she wanted from us as students." -DSU Student

The educator commentary can be presented to students via text through such tools as HTML documents, PDF, Word documents, PowerPoint, SoftChalk, or a combination of these. While the choice of which matter that depends on the time and tools you have available to you, there are advantages and disadvantages to each. Consult with FCTL if you have questions about the assorted options.

Using HTML documents in CANVAS can be advantageous as they are editable directly within CANVAS and are generally readable across all browsers and devices.

No matter what form of text you choose to use, you will want to make sure it is fully accessible as you create it. This would include using headings in your document (pre-build headings are built into MS Word, CANVAS's HTML editor, and SoftChalk), adding *alt text* to any images, and transcripts for any videos you have included.

Transcripts are necessary if *closed-captioning* is not available on the video - having both is even better! Most publisher-created videos are closed-captioned, or transcripts are made available, and many YouTube videos are also scripted or captioned. Should you choose to create your own videos for your course, the same expectations apply.

Short (5-10 minute) videos created by you are effective ways to deliver targeted content to your students – adding variety to a course that may already require a lot of reading. Educator-created videos also add a human element and educator presence to the course. Many video creation options exist. Our current campus-supported software is Canvas Studio, which allows you options of combining video with screen capture and/or presentation capture (i.e., PowerPoint or Keynote). You may be tempted to replicate 30-60 minute in-class lectures in a video for your online course. However, to keep video instruction effective, it is considered best practice to keep them short (5-10 minutes) and targeted to a few main points. Canvas has an entire community dedicated to Canvas Studio.

Links to Existing Web Content

The Internet is a wealth of information, and a great deal of existing content may exist to which you can link directly from within your course. Text publishers may also have pre-packaged learning modules you can import into your course or link to from their web site. An excellent resource for existing learning materials is MERLOT (Multimedia Educational Resource for Learning and Online Teaching) – a free, peer-reviewed collection of learning materials. Here you may find materials you wish to use in your course or develop ideas for materials you would like to create yourself.

Videos, podcasts, web pages, simulations, and articles can be shared with your students as part of their required course activities. Keep in mind that web content changes and links break so you will need to make a practice of checking your links each term before your course is offered. It is also helpful to provide students with an introduction to external content – set the stage for them: Why are they watching or reading the material? How does it relate to a unit or learning objective? Are there particular things you want them to look for while reading/watching?

You will need to keep copyright and fair use in mind if you are linking to content made by someone else. Make sure that you are free to use the materials for your purpose and that you attribute sources where appropriate. Also, just as any material you create needs to be accessible, so do any materials to which you link that have been created by others.

"Having module layouts and assignment due dates as well as when an instructor has all of the assignment available and opened." – DSU Student

Articles

Including journal articles as part of your course readings is an effective way to present students recently published pieces or seminal works in your field. Before posting a PDF copy of an article directly in your CANVAS course, first check to see if the article is freely available online or in the library database. Providing a link to the article, rather than posting the article directly in the course, is advantageous for multiple reasons. If the article is in the library's database or you are linked to the original source (i.e., The Wall Street Journal) you do not have to worry that you are violating the publisher's copyright. Also, many database articles are available for students to choose from either HTML or PDF format, so they can access whichever format is easier for them to use on their device.

If you cannot find an online or database version of the article, nor can you link to the original source online and only have a hard copy available, you can scan your article as a PDF and upload it into your course. You will need to be sure to scan the document as text, and not as an image, to

ensure it is accessible for a screen reader or other assistive technologies. Questions about how your off-campus students can access the library's database, or copyright concerns, should be directed to the DSU librarians at https://www.deltastate.edu/library/.

Learning Activities (Student-Student & Student-Educator Engagement)

The degree to which students will be expected to engage with each other in the course may vary depending on the course topics. The level at which students organically engage with each other will also vary depending on the mix of personalities, as well as age and experience of the group. Structuring student-student interactions into the course builds a *community* of learners within your online classroom. This also helps to build a *human element* to your course, which, along with *educator presence*, is often considered paramount to the success of the course and satisfaction of the student. Students can interact with each other in many ways – discussion boards, collaborative projects, and wikis.

"Some professors reply in a timely manner and will reach out if they notice lack on the student's behalf." – DSU Student

In addition, live, synchronous web conferencing for class events, such as Q&A sessions, group discussion, guest speakers, and student presentations provides an opportunity for both student-student and student- educator interaction. To keep true to the flexible spirit of online learning, it may behoove you to make any synchronous sessions optional (or provide multiple opportunities to fit varied schedules) as not all students may be able to adjust their schedules to attend a live session. However, recording these sessions allows students who may not be able to attend to view them later.

Part of what some educators (and even some students) fear gets lost in an online course is the direct contact between student and educator. While it may be expressed differently, that contact does not have to be sacrificed. As the educator, you can still interact with your students and show your presence in the course through regular News postings, in the discussion board, feedback provided on assignments and assessments, via email, and by offering online office hours. Much of your presence will be made known while you are facilitating the course but should be built into the course as you plan and design it.

Online Discussions

Discussions provide a direct means for student-student and student-educator interaction, and often become the heart of an online course. In addition to graded discussion activities, the discussion tool can be used as a means for students to ask course-related questions and have informal exchanges

with their classmates. A bit of strategy and special consideration is required for designing and working with graded discussion activities in online courses.

Discussion Design and Logistics

Most online discussions are designed to mimic what happens in a face-to-face discussion. This approach is not always the most appropriate for meeting the desired learning objectives related to the activity. In the classroom, a full-class discussion happens in real-time and follows one idea before moving on to another. In online discussion, many ideas can emerge at the same time and can overwhelm students, not to mention the educator too. It's critical that the design of the discussion activity be appropriate for the online environment to maximize student learning.

Design Considerations

A "traditional" discussion that mimics the face-to-face discussion can work in the online environment, with a few strategic modifications.

- o Ask open-ended questions as the basis of the discussion activity.

The question must be open enough to sustain original ideas and contributions from all students involved in the discussion. You can also list "probing" questions out as well in the discussion assignment. If you chose to list the probing questions up front, make it clear if the students only must focus on one, some, or all the questions in their post.

- o Do not always require each student to start a new thread.

In classroom discussions, we generally don't ask each student to make a comment before we start responding to one another. So why should we do it that way online? Instead, at times, it may be appropriate to ask students to either start a new thread *OR* respond to another person by a specific date. This approach will reduce the number of single posts without any responses as well as the number of threads happening simultaneously that are focusing on the same topic. Instead, you can bring those duplicate threads together into a richer discussion.

- o Assign staggered deadlines.

Instead of asking students to post all their messages to the discussion assignment by one specific date, ask them to post by two separate dates: one due date for their first post, and a second due date later in the week for their subsequent post(s). This helps reduce the number of students who wait until the last minute to complete the assignment, allowing for discussion to happen. A true dialog cannot emerge unless students are posting messages at various times and have posts from their classmates to which they can respond.

> *"I like weekly quizzes to test my knowledge before any larger exams. I also really enjoy study guides that will be beneficial to the tests." – DSU Student*

- o Consider breaking the students into smaller groups so they are not overwhelmed by multiple posts from each student in the class.

We need to face the facts: If there are 200+ discussion posts in each topic, most students aren't reading all the messages. While some of the breadth may be lost by breaking students up into smaller groups, the potential depth they will achieve can make up for it. As the educator, you can share ideas that have emerged in the small group discussions such as announcements or in the various group discussion topics. You could also ask students to summarize their small group's discussion to share with the large group.

- o Provide suggestions for responses to avoid the "agreement" syndrome.

Below is a list of diverse ways the educator can encourage students to respond to each other in traditional discussion assignments. Depending on the nature of the discussion question and the learning objectives associated with the assignment, some of these response strategies may be more appropriate than others:

- **Reflection about meaning**: Describe thoughtfully what something means or new insights it provides or raise a question as a seed for clarification or further discussion.
- **Analysis**: Discuss relevant themes, concepts, main ideas, components, or relationships among ideas. Or identify hidden assumptions or fallacies in reasoning.

- **Elaboration**: Build on ideas of others or ideas found in the readings by adding details, examples, a different viewpoint, or other relevant information.
- **Application**: Provide examples of how principles or concepts can be applied to actual situations or discuss the implications of theory for practice.
- **Synthesis**: Integrate multiple views to provide a summary, a new perspective, or a creative refashioning of ideas.
- **Evaluation**: Assess the accuracy, reasonableness, or quality of ideas.
- **PQP**: Praise, Question, Polish. Students can first point out something positive in a classmate's post, then pose a question about something in or related to the post, then offer suggestions to expand upon the idea in the post.

o Provide an alternative format for the discussion assignment, as appropriate.

There are several ways that discussions can be formatted besides the traditional format, including debates, fishbowls, jigsaw, show-and-tell, and peer evaluations. By providing alternative formats in the discussion assignments, you might be able to better meet the assignment's learning objectives while also offering some variety for your students.

- **Debates**

  Instead of discussing a question openly, students can either pick a side to support or can be assigned to a specific side. Be sure to remind students to be professional in their messages and direct their comments at messages, not individuals, to avoid flaming.

- **Fishbowls**

  In this discussion design the class is divided in half. One half of the class starts the discussion while the other half observes. Then the groups switch, and the other half of the class completes the discussion activity. It's critical to provide clear expectations for student participation up front for this format to work.

  > *"The collaborative nature of online learning a nurturing additional technological resources such as Slack." – DSU Student*

- **Jigsaw**

  Some discussion assignments may require students to focus on multiple topics as part of the discussion. A jigsaw is a wonderful way to make such assignments manageable. For this discussion format, you first enroll students in homogenous groups where each group is assigned a different topic to focus on. In part two, you split the groups up and form new groups that contain at least one person from each of the homogenous groups to form heterogeneous groups. In their new groups, they might work together to provide a "big-picture" recommendation based on the individual topics they researched. Once again, it's critical to provide clear expectations so students understand what their individual role is in each discussion group for this format to work.

- **Group Consensus**

  Students work in small groups to come to agreement on a question or problem. Groups must be small; four is the ideal size. Students should also be responsible for posting their own thoughts first and then go on to work on agreement to avoid freeloaders. Finally, extra time should be given for discussions that require consensus due to the amount of time it takes to achieve this in an asynchronous environment.
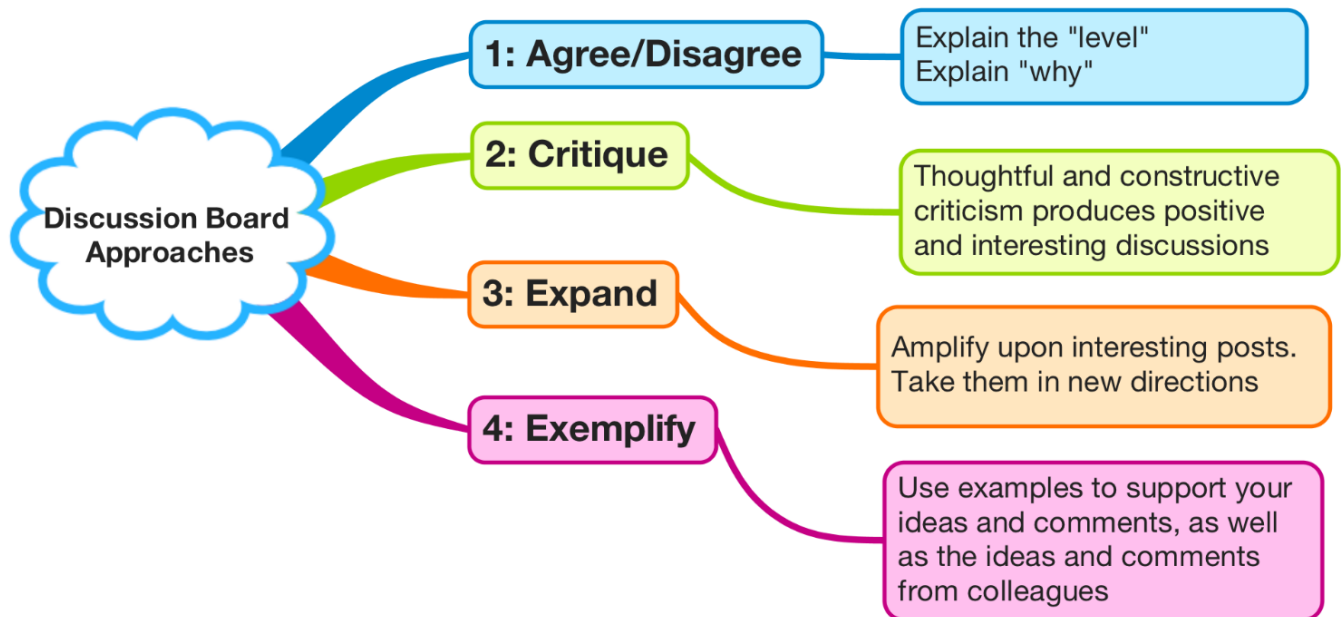
- **Show-and-Tell**

  While the Show-and-Tell discussion format doesn't evolve into a true dialog, it's a fantastic opportunity to facilitate sharing among your students. Ask students to find articles, videos, or other resources related to a particular topic and share with the class, along with a brief annotation, to generate a bibliography for a specific topic or unit in the course.

- **Peer Feedback**

  A common response to course evaluations is the request for more feedback. While it's important for educators to provide feedback, students can also provide feedback for each other. Formatting a discussion to generate peer feedback can be an extremely valuable learning tool for students giving as well as receiving feedback. When creating such discussions, it's important to ensure that all students receive quality feedback. Having students work in small groups of 3-4, where they provide feedback to everyone in the group seems to work best. The educator must also provide guidelines for how the feedback should be focused.

"Offer virtual office hours, online courses sometimes need a real-time interaction for better understanding of concepts." – DSU Student

Discussion Board Approaches

1: Agree/Disagree — Explain the "level" Explain "why"

2: Critique — Thoughtful and constructive criticism produces positive and interesting discussions

3: Expand — Amplify upon interesting posts. Take them in new directions

4: Exemplify — Use examples to support your ideas and comments, as well as the ideas and comments from colleagues

Source: Columbia University - https://veterans.columbia.edu/news/discussion-etiquette

Group Sizes

- Avoid assigning discussions for an entire class to complete in a large group if you have a large class size.
- Assign students to smaller groups whenever possible for discussion assignments – sometimes groups of 8-10 work, sometimes smaller groups work better. This may take some experimenting to find the right number for your activity.
- Use groups of around four students when the assignment requires group consensus.
- Use the CANVAS Groups tool to enroll your students into small groups. You can also restrict discussion topic access based on group enrollment.

Educator Roles

Make sure students know you are paying attention to what they are saying in the discussion area. You can make timely references to their posts in your announcements, or you can respond directly in the discussion area.

Do not dominate discussions. The fastest way to shut down a discussion is to post too often. When you do get involved in the discussion, post innovative ideas or probing questions to redirect the conversation if it's not focused on the learning objectives, correct any false information that is posted, or be a "cheerleader" and recognize great discussion messages to encourage more.

"Able to take quizzes online, gives you more time to complete assignments, provide supplementary reading for topics."
– DSU Student

Student Roles

Assigning roles to students can help encourage them to take ownership of their learning. Students can rotate roles during discussion assignments to make it a more successful learning experience for everyone. Some examples of roles that could be assigned to students in discussion assignments include:

- **Facilitator**

  For each discussion assignment, one student takes the turn of facilitating the discussion. This student encourages others to post in a timely manner, keeps the conversation on topic, encourages "quieter" students to get involved in the discussion, and summarizes the discussion to wrap up the assignment.

- **Reporter**

  To bring a discussion to a close, there can be summarization activity. The educator may provide the summary, or each student can take a turn being the reporter and summarizing the discussion and sharing with the rest of the class.

- **Fact Checker**

  Students take turns double checking the accuracy of facts that are shared in discussions. They also encourage academic honesty by discouraging plagiarism and ensure that information is correctly cited with the appropriate style.

Grading Strategies

o Use a rubric to provide grading criteria up front and to provide feedback and rationale when you grade student posts.
o Be as consistent as possible in the grading criteria you use in each discussion, so students establish a pattern. Participation will be easier for them, and grading will be easier for you.
o Provide more feedback early in the course to help students succeed at discussions during the rest of the course.

Group Work – it can be done online!

Discussions are the most traditional form of online group work. But other forms of group work can also be successfully conducted in an online course. The collaboration and coordination skills learned through these activities can make for a rich learning experience.

Examples of Group Activities

Online group work can come in many forms from weekly group discussions of content topics to semester- long presentations. The following table describes some types of group work activities that can be used online.

Type	Description
Guest Interview	Groups prepare for and interview a guest expert on a previously chosen topic in the guest's field of expertise; interview may be via synchronous chat or asynchronous e- mail exchange; at the completion, groups may analyze, de-brief, etc. (Guest may be sent questions in advance.)
Brainstorm	Creative thinking around a given problem. Judgment suspended during first phase--idea generation. Second phase, editing and evaluation should result in a final product.
Peer teaching	Groups are assigned to conduct a short lesson on a given topic. Requires planning and coordination with educator.
Written (or audio/ video clip) scenario	A brief (approx. one paragraph written or less than 5-minute audio/video). Description of a real or fabricated situation is presented for analysis by groups. Include presentation or specified product at end of discussion.
Complete case study	Real world description of problem with all accompanying data. Groups are asked to resolve the problem and make recommendations for presentation to class.
Create mini-case study	Groups construct their own scenario based on targeted concepts.
Practice with discussion	Provide an opportunity for learners to practice skills in an activity done to a specific timeframe (e.g., labeling, rank ordering, multiple choice, true/false, completion); follow with feedback and discussion in small groups.
Brief readings	Read a short article, paper, or section of a longer work, break into small discussion groups to discuss topic (Educator may provide question starters for discussion or require reporting out on some aspect).
Role Play	Learners are given a situation and a role to play; without practice, they dialog through the events of the situation (situation could provide a broad outline or a detailed confrontational practice). Peer or Educator feedback provided after discussion.
Simulation	Presents cases, problems, scenarios, etc. in which discussants take on a character or perspective and maintain that throughout the activity. A critical situation is discussed and analyzed, and group decisions made about how to resolve the situation.

Faculty Resources: https://deltastate.instructure.com/courses/33107
Gertude C. Ford Center for Teaching and Learning (FCTL): https://www.deltastate.edu/fordctl/

Trigger audio or video	Noticeably short (approx. 1 minute) scenario presented; small groups of learners are asked to identify the problem, different courses of action, and then make a recommendation. After the recommendations are presented, a follow-up audio or a video is presented showing the course of action taken by a professional.
Critical incidents	Variation on the case method; learners are given a description of an incident that happened but with too little information to decide. Additional information is revealed if groups ask appropriate questions. May also be used in reverse--with an explanation of a situation presented and learning groups are asked to generate critical incidents (e.g., "What is a good supervisor?" Learners explore the topic and report out their results to class).
Debate	Organized and formal civil argument.
Quality circles	Learners work in groups for peer support of understanding of class concepts. Periodically they report to educator on areas that need further coverage.
Snowball group	Given a problem, students first work alone, then in pairs, and finally in foursomes during which time they compare, refine, and revise their conclusions and recommendations (originated with British Open University).

Considerations and Practical Tips for Online Group Work

- Consider waiting to form groups until the second week of class to allow for early drops to minimize any necessary rearrangement of groups.

- Determine the group enrollment.
  - Size of group depends on purpose of group. Usually, 3-10?
    - 4-6 best for a project
    - 5-10 for discussions
    - You can set up groups as auto-enroll, self-enroll, or you can enroll students yourself
  - Restrict so students can only see their group's space

- Encourage the use of collaboration tools within CANVAS.
  - Chat
  - Discussions
  - Email

- Consider the use of collaboration tools external to CANVAS.
  - Video chat (i.e., Google+ Hangout, Skype, Zoom, Microsoft Teams)
  - Wikis (i.e., DSU WikiSpaces, Google Drive, etc.)

"Absolutely love when professors post videos of them explaining or working out examples in full depth/detail. I do better when I see what's going on while hearing it spoken out at the same time. I also like this because I am able to go back and review." – DSU Student

- Clearly define the parameters and expectations of the group work, whether it is a project, presentation, or discussion.
  - Post clear directions in the course content
  - Set up the workspaces needed within the course
  - Use a rubric(s) to lay out criteria you will use to evaluate project, discussions, etc.
  - For major projects, consider having students complete a team contract and/or project charter (provide them with example documents)

- Use Peer Evaluations for large projects/presentations to help alleviate student concerns over non- contributing group members.

"Sometimes it is difficult to find certain assignments because they are, say, only found in modules or only found in the calendar." – DSU Student

The Syllabus

A syllabus is an essential element for any course, but a detailed syllabus for an online course is absolutely critical. Your online students are not able to ask questions of you in the same manner as your students in the face-to-face classroom. Clarity and explicit directions are important for the course activities but are also just as important for the class policies and support information presented in the Syllabus. A detailed syllabus can eliminate many questions and many frustrations.

Elements of an Online Syllabus

The following table identifies elements critical for the online syllabus. While comprehensive, there may be elements not identified here that you find you will want to include based on the specific needs of your course. We encourage all educators to view DSU's syllabus policy at Office of Academic Affairs for additional information that may be required.

Recommended Elements	Criteria
Educator Information	- List your name, title, department, email, phone. - Optional: List Skype or Google+, Zoom, Microsoft Teams account information.
Course Description	- The official course description from the course catalog should be included. - You may want to add additional details to further describe what the course will cover. - List credit hours and prerequisites.

Course Logistics	This is where you explain course organization that will make the class run smoothly. For example: • When does the class week start? Will your weekly schedule run from Monday through Sunday? • When are homework assignments due? For example, all homework assignments are due at noon on Mondays. If you are concerned about students in different time zones having different deadlines, indicate the Central time zone as being the deadline. • Indicate a naming convention for assignment filenames if you wish. For example, a homework file must be appended by the student's username, such as homework1-username.docx. This may make it easier for you to manage assignment files you download to your computer. • If you require students to submit assignments written in a particular style (i.e., APA or Chicago Manual style), mention it here.
Course Communications	Outline your communication policies, practices, and expectations here. • When should students post to the "Raise Your Hand/Ask the Class" Discussion board? When should students' email? Should students call? • What will be your turnaround time on responding to emails? Discussion board questions? • When will you host online office hours? • Etiquette or professional conduct expectations should be clearly stated in the course. Some examples: • Students should access their DSU email and the course site on CANVAS daily for class related updates and announcements. • Email is regarded as a professional means of communication. Proper sentence structure, capitalization, and punctuation are required. Proper information must be included within each email: include the course name in each subject line and identify your name at the bottom of each email. • For all online communication, proper "netiquette" is expected: correct spelling & grammar, proper formatting (avoid all caps), courtesy, respectful language. • The FCTL recommends as a best practice that emails are answered within 24 to 48 hours and within 72 hours on weekends or official holidays. • Some educators communicate the following to their courses. • "Although, in most cases, I will answer you even before. If I am out of town without internet access, I will post a note on CANVAS." • "Students are expected to check CANVAS for notices, reminders, and messages regularly (preferably daily). By simply logging in to CANVAS, you will see reminders and messages to help you succeed in this course."

Course Learning Objectives	• List your course learning objectives.
Grading Policy	• Provide a breakdown of the graded elements with points and/or percentage toward the final grade. • Provide your grading scale indicating how final grades are assigned. For example, 90-100% = A. • Explain your late work policy and try to be consistent. We recommend that you treat all students fairly. Word will travel if you accept late work from one party and not another. • Explain your extra credit policy.

Participation Expectations	• State your participation expectations and policies for the Discussion boards. For example, you should indicate the following:
	    ○ Whether or not discussion postings are required and graded.
	    ○ The number of original postings and follow-up postings students are expected to make.
	    ○ Deadlines for posting, as well as a suggested schedule for reading and posting questions (i.e., post an original posting by Wednesday and two follow-up postings by Saturday).
	• If discussions are graded, how will points be given? For example, to get full credit, follow-up postings must add value to the discussion by building on the ideas of others, challenging the position of others, or incorporating firsthand experiences that provide a unique perspective to the posting of another student.
	• Use a Discussion Rubric – indicate that one is provided in the course and where it is located. A "best practice" that we have discovered is to set the deadlines for Monday nights.

General Course Outline with Assignment Details	• Give students a general breakdown of the course timeline, indicating what topics will be covered each week or module. • Let students know what they will be graded on to assess their achievement of the learning objectives for each module and the criteria that will be used in determining those grades. Alternatively, this can be included with each Module in Content. If you choose to put this detailed information in Content, it is helpful to have a note in your Syllabus telling students that the information is provided within each Module. • Students should be aware of due dates for each activity/assignment course schedule, syllabus, or module itself
Group Work Policy	• If group work is to be completed during the course, list any expectations or special details.

Academic Honesty Policy	• Share your expectations for academic honesty in the class *and* link to the university's policy: The DSU Academic Honesty Policy can be found in the Student Handbook.
Accessibility Statement	• Include a statement about the course's accessibility and how students who need accommodation can get assistance. The boiler plate DSU statement is available online. • It may be helpful to your students if you expound upon the standard statement.
Technology Requirements	• Include a statement about the technology requirements for your course. If your course requires basic word processing, Internet searching skills, and the ability to navigate the tools within CANVAS, let students know that. • If more in-depth skills and software are required, make clear to students what those requirements are, where they can get the software (if needed), and what type of support is available. **Technical Requirements** • As part of your online learning experience, you can expect to utilize a variety of technology mediums as part of your curriculum. You must have the following technical abilities: - Navigating CANVAS (Student Tutorials) - Communicating via email including sending and receiving attachments - Navigating the Internet using a web browser - Use of office applications to create documents and/or presentations - Communicating using a discussion board - Ability to upload and submit assignments to the course website **Internet Browsers and Computer Software Requirements** • For CANVAS to function properly on your computer, you must be using a compatible operating system and browser and software. You can perform a system check to make sure you have the proper system set-up: System Check.

Learner Support	• Include links to various student support options.
	• A "Resources" and "Library" links appears in each course on the Campus Resources and Policies page in CANVAS. You can direct students to these links. It may be helpful to also list important resources directly in your syllabus.
	• The Academic Support Center has resources to assist you with Advising, Registration, Academic Support and Tutoring, and Academic Enhancement. Visit their website for a list of services Academic Support Center or call 662.846.4899.
	
	DSU is here to help you with a variety of student services such as
	  o Writing Center
	  o Tutor.com Online Tutoring via CANVAS
	
	Technical Support
	
	• The IT Help Desk, is available for technical assistance: 662.846.4444 or
	• You can submit a request through our "Zendesk" answering system.

Course Calendar vs. Schedule

It is imperative that all due dates a student will be expected to meet are clearly listed in your course when the course begins. While there may need to be some flexibility within that schedule, having this information will be helpful to your busy students; they appreciate knowing what is coming up so they can plan around other classes, work, and other family and social commitments.

"I like that my professors show video demonstrations for all of the project that we do so we can have the video as a guide as awe do our project." – DSU Student

A Calendar app is available in CANVAS. The Calendar app appears on the CANVAS home page. We encourage educators to place the due dates of their assessments in this app. Students can view the Calendar for each course in which they are enrolled. You can link other course tools to the Calendar, such as Discussions, Quizzes, Surveys, Dropboxes, and Content.

An alternative option to using the Calendar tool is to create a document with specified due dates and place in an area of prominence on the course home page. This document could be in list or table format, citing all required readings, activities, assignments, and their respective due dates. Preparing this chronological list and posting it in on the home page gives students a single reference point to help them stay on task.

Section III: Building the Course in CANVAS

SECTION III: Building the Course in CANVAS

Contemplations Before You Start

Before you start building your course in CANVAS, consider these points from **Six Ways to Prepare Your Online Course**, by Rob Kelly, Editor, *Online Classroom*.

Careful preparation is essential to the success of an online course "to provide a positive experience for the students and to be able to maximize your time with students so that you're not spending time on reworking things that weren't clear up front," says Ann Millacci, associate professor of education at the University of Cincinnati. In an interview with Online Classroom, she offered the following advice on preparing your course for your learners:

1. **Be clear, concise, and comprehensive.** "Everything has to be there. You cannot walk in as an educator with your yellow pad and ad lib the session like you might in the face-to-face classroom. You must have everything laid out. It must be highly organized. And the students must have the material as soon as the course goes online."

   The logical flow of the course is important as well, and Millacci recommends having a colleague check the course for ease of navigation, clear instructions, and accurate placement of content. "You don't want students to be frustrated because things aren't where they're supposed to be."

   > *"I love how they interact and give examples when we do not understand. They make me feel comfortable asking questions and that is important. – DSU Student*

2. **Provide a manageable amount of content.** Because online courses often operate on a compressed schedule, it's important to consider how much work is reasonable to expect of students while at the same time ensuring you're covering the necessary content.

3. **Provide a variety- of learning activities.** Consider which types of activities are appropriate for the goals of the course and how you might offer several types of assignments to make the course more interesting and engaging for the students. The educational leadership program in which Millacci prepares educators to become principals include field interviews, case studies, discussion boards, and collaborative assignments.

4. **Avoid making last-minute changes.** Making changes in an online course can have unintended consequences such as inconsistent information. This can create confusion for the students. It is best to make changes when you have time to check that the changes didn't create any problems with the accuracy or flow of the course. One of the most common feedback items we receive from students is their dislike for midsemester changes.

5. **Provide resources to help students succeed in the online classroom.** Don't assume that your students have all the knowledge and expertise to succeed in an online course format. While it's unrealistic to teach students what they need to know about the learning environment, you can provide them with links to resources that can help.

6. **Test the course in different browsers and on different computers.** Sometimes what works on one computer doesn't work on another. Fixing any problems before the course goes live will help avoid student frustration and the need for you to scramble to help them access the

course. This "testing period is particularly important for when you come across Lock Down Browser issues. The most effective way in which to resolve these issues is to place a ticket in DSU's Zendesk portal.

A Note about Accessibility

Ensuring your course is accessible is necessary because *it is the law,* and *it is simply the right thing to do*. It may seem daunting, but if you are willing to learn and try, we can take baby steps together, as a campus, to provide fully accessible online courses. FCTL has an array of resources available for you to use as you design your course, including an [Accessibility Checklist](#). While we may not be able to anticipate every need and accommodation a student may need in a course, the law requires we show a good faith effort. Planning to anticipate where accommodation may be needed is easier than trying to retrofit a course after it has been built.

Time to Build!

The FCTL homepage has many components that you need to build a successful course. The FCTL team recommends that a course should be fully constructed before the course begins – building the boat while sailing is not fair for you or on your students. You will want to save the time while your course is running to focus on engaging with your students and grading assessments. The Ford Center for Teaching and Learning has a plethora of resources to make your online course the best it can be by accessing our FCTL homepage.

A. Content

   a. Create a chronological outline of your course
   b. Create direct links to course activities
   c. Upload relevant documents (please be mindful that students do not view unrequired material)

B. Grades and Rubrics

   a. Start by linking assessments directly to the gradebook
   b. Make sure that you have a rubric for each assessment
   c. Post each rubric in CANVAS or as a handout for easy reference

C. Course Activities

   a. Make sure that you connect your assessments to your learning outcomes

"Respond to emails and answers the phone or call back ASAP/Reminders/I like all that my professors do compared to my previous school; they are awesome."
– DSU Student

As you add course components to CANVAS you will find methods that work best for you. If you are new to building courses in CANVAS, it may be best to start with the method described here, using the storyboard and materials you created earlier.

Sample Content Structure

The Course Homepage – Announcements

The Course Homepage is the first thing students see every time they enter your course. The FCTL team suggests that you create "unchangeable" content on this page so students are constantly reminded about your expectations. A welcome note and video should be posted in announcements for students to see the very first time they access the course. This item should welcome them and let them know where and how to get started on the course.

Creating announcements with pertinent course communications should be added on an almost daily basis. Use this space to communicate impending deadlines, introduce or recap a unit, summarize a discussion, or highlight salient points covered. This is also a great space to encourage students through a particularly difficult part of the course, post links to current events coverage related to the course, or even post a fun item.

3. Find x.

Here it is
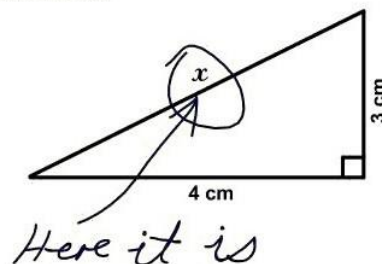
Section IV: Course Facilitation

SECTION IV: Course Facilitation

While an educator plays many roles when moderating and facilitating an online course, four prominent roles tend to emerge:

- **Pedagogical** (intellectual)
    - Contribute special knowledge and insights
    - Question and probe to stimulate students' critical thinking of concepts and skills

- **Social**
    - Create a safe, friendly environment where students are comfortable
    - Promote group cohesiveness

"I enjoy the corporate class discussions my professors as us to participate in." – DSU Student

- **Managerial** (organizational, procedural, administrative)
    - Set up due dates
    - Set objectives
    - Provide directions and expectations up front
    - Manage flow of large projects with benchmarks throughout the term
    - Manage flow and direction of discussions - check in on them!
    - Check in on groups informally, check for laggards

- **Technical**
    - Make sure students are comfortable with technology options for collaborating
    - Provide directions where applicable

Whatever role you are playing at a particular time in your course, the importance of *communication* cannot be over-emphasized. Online students are more successful and more satisfied with even the most challenging of courses if they are given clear directions, receive ample feedback, and feel there are open lines of communication between them and their educator.

Online office hours are an excellent way to keep the lines of communication open between you and your students. Just like traditional office hours, students feel reassured when they know there is a time, they can count on reaching out to you and know you will be there on the other end. You can host these office hours in multiple ways: as simply as telling students you are available M, W, F from 2-3 and 6-7 via phone, email, or chat. Or you can host an interactive session via web-conferencing tools such as Skype, WebEx, Google+ Hangouts, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, or an online whiteboard. Whatever option you choose, make sure students know this mentoring/tutoring time is available to them, and remind them on a regular basis. Consult with FCTL if you have questions about setting up your online office hours.

Before the course even begins

- You will want to communicate with them. Sending a *Welcome Letter* via email with textbook information and other details about your course starts many students off on the right track. It may also be helpful to ***send students a copy of the course syllabus and schedule*** so they can begin to prepare for the time commitment involved in your course. Some educators choose to ***open their course a few days or even a week early*** so that students can get comfortable with the layout of the course before the work begins. Before the course begins…

- When appropriate, verify the textbook regarding edition changes to the last time the course was offered.
- Edit and proofread all course materials.
- Revise and update deadlines on course schedule.
- Set any start and/or end dates on any materials that should have availability restrictions or release conditions.
- Confirm all links work.

> *"I do enjoy when professors give multiple attempts for tests or allow you to view the questions you got wrong when you're done." – DSU Student*

- Email a "Welcome Letter" (link to sample Welcome Letter found on this page) to students enrolled in the course. The welcome letter should be clear about the structure of your course and outline the technology requirements.
- Post a "Welcome to Class" announcement to introduce you, engage the students, and provide them with a sense of direction for how to get started in the class.
- Many of these guidelines are presented in DSU Course Template in the Faculty Resource Page.

While the course is running…

- Communicate, communicate, communicate.
- Remind students how and when to communicate with you.
  - Provide contact information.
  - Include a schedule of online office hours or chat times.
  - Indicate which types of communication should take place over which channels.

- Provide a friendly atmosphere.
  - Introduce yourself at the beginning of the course – including your academic and professional background is important, but including a personal bit gives students the sense that you are approachable. Include a picture of yourself.
  - Don't be afraid to show your personality in Discussion posts, announcements, and emails.
  - Humor is great but be careful as it can be difficult to convey online.
  - Personalize communication with students; use students' names when responding.
  - Any necessary negative feedback for an individual should be communicated privately to the student.

- At the beginning of the course, include an introduction activity in Discussions that helps students get to know each other and gives students practice in using the discussions tool.

- Establish educator presence by posting announcements on a regular basis.

- During the M-F workweek, respond to questions in the "Raise Your Hand/Ask the Class" discussion forum (or in email) within 24 hours.

- Return graded assignments to students within a reasonable amount of time after submission (shorter courses necessitate faster turnaround). One week is a common timeframe. Let students know how soon they can expect feedback and stick to that timeframe as much as possible.

- Communicate exceptions to the norm as soon as you are aware of them (i.e., if you will be unable to communicate with the students for three days, if turnaround time on an assignment will be more than a week, etc.).

- Provide thorough *timely* feedback (within 24 – 48 Hours) and insight into grades.
  - Typically, a letter grade or % is not sufficient, nor is a "excellent job"; rather we suggest that you take the time to give brief but specific feedback on grades
  - Some overall comment to the class may be appropriate (not necessary on every assignment).
  - Personalized feedback to individuals is vital to student learning.

- Reward excellence publicly.
  - Use past students' projects and papers as examples for students to refer to.
  - Tell students in your current class that you hope to use their excellent work as examples for future students.

- Contact students directly (either via email or by phone) who:
  - Are not active in the course within the first 48 hours (about 2 days) of the course start date.
  - Fall significantly behind on submission of coursework or in performance.
  - You suspect are involved in any academic misconduct (cheating, plagiarism, etc.).

> *"I like when the professor does a video lecture for each chapter." – DSU Student*

- Maintain a presence in the Discussions.
  - Posting occasionally lets students know you are reading their posts.
  - Be mindful not to post too often as too frequent educator postings tends to minimize student contributions.
  - Take advantage of the opportunity to model what you consider a good post –making your post constructive and building upon ideas.

- Consider offering a simple Mid-Term Evaluation for courses running eight weeks or longer. This offers you a chance at formative assessment of student perception of the course, with enough time to adjust before the end of the course.

- Troubleshooting technical issues will often start with you. But for issues you cannot easily resolve, forward your students to the DSU IT Homepage (Submitting a request, 662.846.4444).

- Take notes about what is / is not working in the course so you can make improvements for the next offering.

Near the end of the course and after…
- Offer students a Course Evaluation.

- Download and save a copy of course grades by exporting the gradebook.

- Make edits to the course while the ideas are still fresh in your mind.
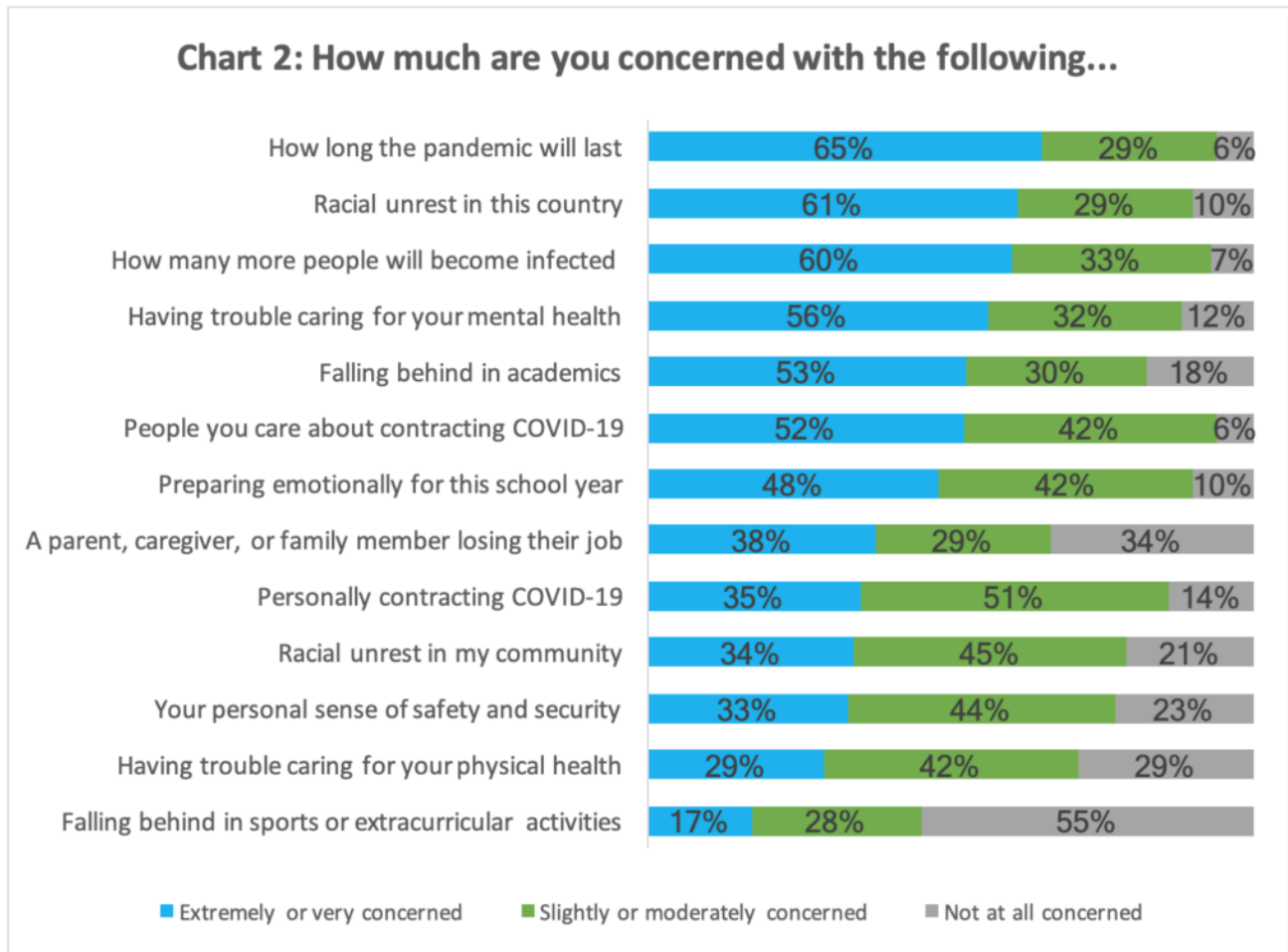
Section V: Student Well Being

SECTION V: Student Well Being

Being Mindful and Supportive Of Student Well Being

The upheaval of the pandemic, the war in Ukraine, inflation, student loan crisis and other sociocultural dilemmas has placed an undue amount of on today's student body. Below is a diagram to underscore this unfortunate phenomenon.

Chart 2: How much are you concerned with the following...

	Extremely or very concerned	Slightly or moderately concerned	Not at all concerned
How long the pandemic will last	65%	29%	6%
Racial unrest in this country	61%	29%	10%
How many more people will become infected	60%	33%	7%
Having trouble caring for your mental health	56%	32%	12%
Falling behind in academics	53%	30%	18%
People you care about contracting COVID-19	52%	42%	6%
Preparing emotionally for this school year	48%	42%	10%
A parent, caregiver, or family member losing their job	38%	29%	34%
Personally contracting COVID-19	35%	51%	14%
Racial unrest in my community	34%	45%	21%
Your personal sense of safety and security	33%	44%	23%
Having trouble caring for your physical health	29%	42%	29%
Falling behind in sports or extracurricular activities	17%	28%	55%

It is the hope of the FCTL team to legitimize and support our students through these modern, turbulent times. Educators can play a key role in minimizing these effects. Here are some recommendations

1. Formulate mental health check-ins on your students (ask them about their personal well-being in an anonymous, online method – i.e., Microsoft Form or Google Survey).
2. Understand and appreciate that their college experience is different than yours.
3. Think twice about your policies concerning late submission, attendance, and participation requirements.
4. Gently guide students to student health professionals on campus early if you see signs of significant stress – Supporting Student Wellness Canvas Course
5. Try to incorporate fun, lighthearted activities into the curriculum.
6. Try NOT to backload your semester with deadlines, finals, and presentations.

7. Limit the amount of significant associated with group work (more stress involved in group projects)

Section VI: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusions

SECTION VI: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusions

Enhancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusiveness

It is incumbent on today's higher education institutions to be mindful of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion or (DEI) Initiatives. The FCTL team would like to provide you with a better understanding and appreciate for DEI. First, lets talk about the definitions surrounding DEI.

EXCLUSION　　SEGREGATION　　INTEGRATION　　INCLUSION　　UNIFIED
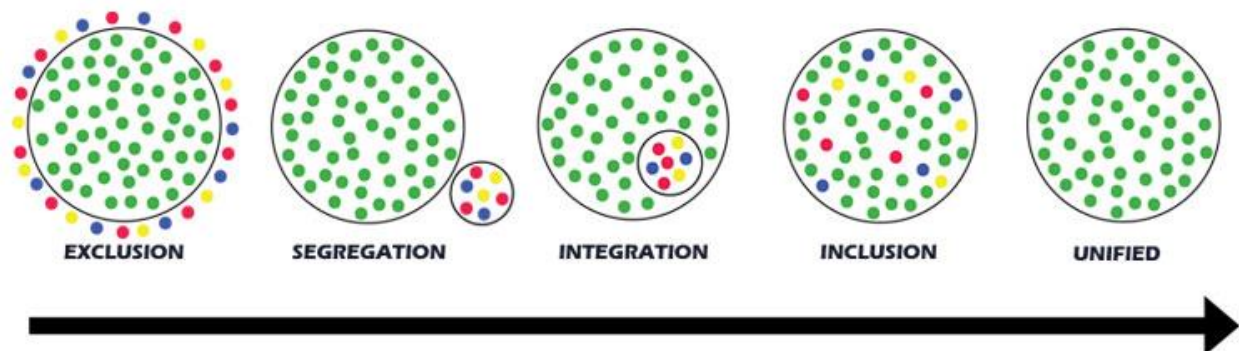
Source – AMLE.org (Association for Middle Level Education)

This diagram shows the difference between the various terms used for DEI. Our hope is that this diagram gives you a better understanding of how terms like exclusion and inclusion differ and how they might impact a person's experience.

Here are some questions that educators should ask themselves concerning DEI.

1. How do you recognize and value DEI?
2. How will you monitor and elicit feedback from students?
3. What aspects of my curriculum promotes inclusivity?
4. What aspects are barriers to inclusivity?

Best practices according Point Park University Center for Inclusive Excellence

1. Make office hours as convenient as possible for all groups – not just standard times (Example: In person Tues/Thursday 10 to 11 AM)
2. Be mindful of economic and time demands relates to assignments
3. Add gender neutral terms
4. Present a clear, specific, and static course schedule
5. Include a variety of "voices" in texts, discussion, and examples
6. Try not to discuss topics without thinking about the social, political, and cultural ramifications

"Sometimes it is difficult to find certain assignments because they are, say, only found in modules or only found in the calendar." – DSU Student

Example of diversity statement – Source- DSU's Ford Center for Teaching and Learning

"The Gertrude C. Ford Center for Teaching and Learning (FCTL) highly values faculty from diverse backgrounds and incorporates these perspectives into all aspects of our activities. We view faculty's diversity as a resource, strength, and benefit to Delta State University and its partners.

The FCTL Team is mindful to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity, gender, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, and culture. The suggestions,

recommendations, and initiatives of all DSU faculty are encouraged and appreciated. We encourage all parties to notify the FCTL team of ways to improve the effectiveness of this center for you personally or for other faculty and faculty groups."

Section VII: Resources

SECTION VII: Resources

FCTL Resource Portal

The FCTL Resource Portal is your one-stop shop for practical, plug and play features that can enhance any course, online and face-to-face. Here are just some of the items at your disposal

1. Required Trainings
2. Access to the FCTL Newsletters
3. Professional development opportunities
   a. ACUE
   b. QM
   c. Various accreditation procedures
4. FCTL Workshop Series and Brown Bag Recordings
   a. Topics that relate to developments in the classroom
5. Previous Student Engagement Award Recipient's Interviews sharing best practices

> *"Answers her emails in a timely manner, offers her time, does not mind meeting in person". – DSU Student*

Additionally, the **Ford Center for Teaching and Learning website** has multiple resources for you to improve your pedagogy such as

1. Brief overview of the team as well as their scope of services and support that FCTL provides to DSU
2. Instructional "Stations" – Creative and collaborative spaces for Wellness, Gaming, Makerspace and Educational design (TV Studio and Newly renovated Computer Lab)
3. Provost's Blog – Current updates on DSU commitment to teaching excellence from an administrative level
4. Consults – Opportunities for individual and group-based appointments for direct guidance from the instructional design team
5. Resource Page – direct link to the Canvas course provided by FCTL.

Articles and Web Sites for Further Study
Must Reads – Short, Practical, Helpful Articles

- Top 10 Rules for Developing Your First Online Course:
  http://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/online- education/top-10-rules-developing-first-online-course/

- Seven Guidelines for Designing Effective Course Pages for the Online Classroom:
  http://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/instructional-design/seven-guidelines-for-designing-effective- course-pages-for-the-online-classroom/

- Why Demand Originality from Students in Online Discussion Forums?
  http://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/asynchronous-learning-and-trends/why-demand-originality- from-students-in-online-discussion- forums/?utm_source=cheetah&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=2013.12.16%20Faculty%20Foc us%20Update

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Backward Design

- Backward Design – Vanderbilt University
  http://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub- pages/understanding-by-design/

- EduTech Wiki: http://edutechwiki.unige.ch/en/Backwards_design

- The Chronicle of Higher Education: http://chronicle.com/blogs/profhacker/planning-a-class-with- backward-design/33625

- *Understanding by Design*, by Grand Wiggins and Jay McTighe:
  https://www.amazon.com/Understanding-Design-Grant-Wiggins/dp/1416600353

- Why Backward Design works:
  https://moodle.swarthmore.edu/pluginfile.php/84029/mod_resource/content/0/Lesson_planning_-_Backward_design.pdf

- About the Quality Matters Program. Retrieved February 25, 2014,
  https://www.qualitymatters.org/higher-education-program

- Higher Ed Program Rubric, Quality Matters Program. Retrieved February 25, 2014,
  https://www.qualitymatters.org/rubric

- 4 What is Alignment? Quality Matters Program. Retrieved February 10, 2014,
  http://www.qmprogram.org/rubric

Verb Lists for Writing Objectives

- Kansas State University – How to Write Student Learning Outcomes:
  http://www.k- state.edu/assessment/slo/how.htm

- Park University – Writing Quality Learning Objectives:
  http://www.park.edu/cetl/quicktips/writinglearning j.html

- Purdue University – FCTL recommendation:
  https://guides.lib.purdue.edu/c.php?g=1118684&p=8158177

- University of Northern Iowa – Bloom's Taxonomy "Revised" – key words:
  http://www.uni.edu/stdteach/TWS/BloomRevisedTaxonomy_KeyWords-1-1.pdf

- Old Dominion University – Bloom's Taxonomy:
  http://www.odu.edu/educ/roverbau/Bloom/blooms_taxonomy.htm

- Taxonomies of Learning Domains: http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/hrd/bloom.html

Bloom's Taxonomy – Digital Taxonomy

- Bloom's Taxonomy – Original, Revised, and Why:
  http://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub- pages/blooms-taxonomy/

- Bloom's Taxonomy Action Verbs:
  https://www.apu.edu/live_data/files/333/blooms_taxonomy_action_verbs.pdf

- The Analog Teacher's Guide to Bloom's Digital Taxonomy:
  https://www.innovativeteachingideas.com/blog/a-teachers-guide-to-blooms-taxonomy

- A Wheel on SAMR and Bloom's Digital Taxonomy:
  http://www.educatorstechnology.com/2013/05/a- new-wonderful-wheel-on-samr-and.html

- How the Best Web Tools Fit into Bloom's Digital Taxonomy:
  https://www.educatorstechnology.com/2018/06/blooms-digital-taxonomy-web-edition.html

UDL (Universal Design for Learning)

- Postsecondary Education & Universal Design for Learning Online Module:
  https://www.marshall.edu/udl/files/2021/12/UDLinPostsecondaryEducation.pdf

- The connection between Universal Design and Accessibility.https://www.boisestate.edu/accessibility/faculty/online-workshops-about-udl-and-accessibility/

Assessment & Activities

- Online Assessment Resources – Authentic Assessment: https://ctl.wiley.com/authentic-assessment-in-the-online-classroom/

- Arizona State's Podcast on creating rubrics: https://teachonline.asu.edu/2019/02/best-practices-for-designing-effective-rubrics/

- MERLOT (Multimedia Educational Resource for Learning and Online Teaching):
  http://www.merlot.org/merlot/index.htm

Online Discussions

- Understanding the Educator's Role in Facilitating Online Discussions:
  http://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/asynchronous-learning-and-trends/understanding-the- educators-role-in-facilitating-online-discussions/

"I like when assignments or specific problems are shown worked out in video tutorials. – DSU Student

- How to get students to participate in Online Discussions: http://onlinelearninginsights.wordpress.com/2012/06/22/how-to-get-students-to-participate-in- online-discussions/

- How-to Facilitate Robust Online Discussions: http://onlinelearninginsights.wordpress.com/2012/06/25/how-to-create-robust-discussions-online/

- The Methods and Means to grading Student Participation in Online Discussions: http://onlinelearninginsights.wordpress.com/2012/06/28/the-methods-and-means-to-grading- student-participation-in-online-discussions/

- Evaluating Online Discussion: https://collaborativemomentum.com/2020/04/15/evaluating-online-discussions/

Online Group Work

- Five Elements that Promote Learner Collaboration and Group Work in Online Courses: http://onlinelearninginsights.wordpress.com/2014/02/10/five-elements-that-promote-learner- collaboration-and-group-work-in-online-courses/

- Five Essential Skills Educators Need to Facilitate Online Group Work & Collaboration: http://onlinelearninginsights.wordpress.com/2014/02/17/five-vital-skills-educators-need-to- facilitate-online-group-work-collaboration/

- Student Perceptions of Online Group Work: What They Really Think and How to Make it Work: http://onlinelearninginsights.wordpress.com/2014/02/25/student-perceptions-of-online-group- work-what-they-really-think-and-how-to-make-it-work/

- Why we need group work in Online Learning: http://onlinelearninginsights.wordpress.com/2012/03/24/why-we-need-group-work-in-online- learning/

- Strategies for effective group work in the Online Class: http://onlinelearninginsights.wordpress.com/2012/03/27/strategies-for-effective-group-work-in- the-online-class/

- Making peer evaluations work in Online Learning: http://onlinelearninginsights.wordpress.com/2012/03/30/making-peer-evaluations-work-in-online- learning/

- Working in Groups: A Note to Faculty and a Quick Guide for Students: https://bokcenter.harvard.edu/group-work

- How to Design Effective Online Group Work Activities: http://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/online- education/how-to-design-effective-online-group-work-activities/

- Using Wikis for Collaborative Learning: https://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/online-%20education/using-wikis-for-collaborative-learning/

- Fostering Collaboration in the Online Classroom: https://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/online-education/fostering-collaboration-in-the-online-classroom/

- How to Survive Virtual Group Work: https://www.elearners.com/education-resources/online-learning/how-to-survive-virtual-group-work/#:~:text=Simplify%20the%20tasks%20and%20break,three%20steps%2C%20rather%20than%20dozens

- Group Work: Should Your Top Students Work Together? http://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/instructional-design/group-work-should-your-top-students- work-together/

- Group Work: Are Student-Selected Groups More Effective? http://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/teaching-and-learning/group-work-are-student-selected- groups-more-effective/

- Online Student don't have to do their work alone - https://www.insidehighered.com/digital-learning/article/2018/04/25/group-projects-online-classes-create-connections-and-challenge

> *"Enjoyable readings or videos, collaborative work."* - *DSU Student*

Distance Education Process
Sample Rubrics

Included here are example rubrics for discussions and a variety of writing assignments. You may use any of the rubrics as-is or adapt to your needs and to meet your course's specifications. Keep in mind CANVAS has a Rubrics tool which you may choose to use. Otherwise, you may choose to post your rubric as an HTML, PDF, or Word document.

"I've had online professors that are awesome! They have any and all information that would be needed for any assignments and quizzes. In example the use of study guides, lecture videos and power points." – DSU Student

Discussion Rubrics
Exhibit 1: Discussion Rubric

Category	1 pt	2 pts	3 pts	4 pts
Promptness	Did not post all required components of the assignment in a timely manner	Posted one of the required components in a timely manner	Posted most of the required components in a timely manner	Posted all the required components in a timely manner
Grammar, spelling, and format	Did not perform spell check; contains grammar errors; no formatting	Contains some spelling and grammar errors, some attempt at formatting the assignment	Few spelling and grammar errors; assignment is formatted with little room for improvement	No spelling or grammar errors; assignment is well formatted.
Content of assignment	Assignment does not apply to any of the course concepts, nor does it reference any readings	Assignment contains course concepts but are not applied appropriately, little or no reference to course readings	Assignment contains course concepts that are applied correctly for the most part; few references to course readings	Consistently contains references to course readings, resources student found independently, and course concepts are applied correctly
Peer Evaluation	Did not provide any feedback	Provided feedback but of minimal or no substance (e.g., "Good job")	Provided some positive feedback and constructive feedback	Provided both positive and constructive feedback

Writing Assignment Rubrics

Criteria	0 points	2 points	8 points	10 points
Building Relationships Section	Relationships not discussed or discussed without any specificity	Strong or weak relationships are identified, no plans for making stronger relationships provided	Strong and weak relationships are identified, vague plans for making stronger relationships provided	Strong and weak relationships are identified, clear and actionable plans for making stronger relationships provided
Identify Section	No summary of burnout levels and suggestions from colleagues	Summary of burnout levels OR suggestions from colleagues	Vague summary of burnout levels and suggestions from colleagues	Clear summary of burnout levels and suggestions from colleagues
Design, try it, Evaluate Section	No major intervention described	One major intervention described in detail, intervention plan provided, or evaluation plan vaguely described	One major intervention described, detailed intervention plan provided, evaluation plan provided	One major intervention described in detail, incredibly detailed intervention plan provided, clear evaluation plan with benchmarks
Sustain Section	Section missing	Section provided, but not about sustaining change	One to two vague paragraphs with plans for sustaining changes	One to two detailed paragraphs with plans for sustaining changes

Criteria	0 points	2 points	6 points	10 points
Professionally Presented	Numerous spelling and grammar errors	Errors that make presentation of material difficult to follow	Minor errors that are distracting to reader, but content is not diminished	Presented without errors of writing

Exhibit 3: Reflection Assignment Grading Rubric

Criteria	Pass	Fail
Spelling & Grammar	Writing is well-organized with few or no spelling and grammatical errors.	Writing lacks organization and contains many spelling and grammatical errors.
Content & Writing	Ideas within the writing are clearly articulated and well developed. Reflections contain applications to readings, experiences, and other examples.	Ideas within the writing are not communicated clearly nor are they well developed. The reflections contain little or no application to readings, experiences, and other examples.
Timeliness	Assignments are submitted before or on deadlines.	Assignment is submitted late.

Exhibit 4: Essay Rubric

Criteria	Full points	Partial points	Partial - zero points
Introduction	There is an introductory paragraph that clearly identifies the critical issue under examination.	Introduction does not clearly identify the critical issue under examination.	Introduction is poorly written or missing.
Body	The body of the essay clearly identifies and explains well supported perspectives regarding the critical issue under examination. Perspectives are evaluated based on clarity, supporting evidence, ethics, and reasonableness.	The body of the essay identifies perspectives that are not clearly explained or are lacking supporting evidence. Relevant components of the evaluation are missing, unclear or lack comprehensiveness.	The body of the essay is missing well supported perspectives, or they are identified with little or no explanation. Evaluation of perspectives is superficial, illogical, or missing.
Conclusion	Conclusion is powerful, pulling key points from the body of the essay together.	Conclusion does not synthesize major points made in the essay, or it contains latest information that should have been presented in the body of the essay.	Conclusion is poorly written or missing.

Format and grammar	The essay is free of grammatical and spelling errors. It meets the following criteria: Double spaced, 1" margins, size 12 Arial or Roman font, page numbers, appropriately referenced throughout and accompanied by a reference list.	A few grammatical errors are present and/or the format does not meet all the criteria.	Several grammatical errors are present and/or the format does not meet several of the criteria.

Essay adapted from: Marquette University, College of Professional Studies, PRST 010

Exhibit 5: Case Analysis Business Problem Solving

Criteria	Achieved all points for criteria when this column is checked.	One to three points deducted per criteria when this column checked.	Four or more points deducted per criteria when this column checked.
Snapshot of current state of affairs	Description of pertinent current events given in the case.	Description presents, but some major points missing.	Description either missing or very incomplete.
Purpose statement	Clear and concise statement of the intent of your analysis i. e., "What are you trying to persuade us to believe?"	Purpose statement unclear.	Purpose statement missing.
Root cause analysis	One root cause is clearly identified and well substantiated with facts from the case.	Root cause identified, but not well substantiated.	Root cause either unclear or missing.
Major plausible strategies	Three major plausible strategies clearly identified, including identification of strengths and weaknesses of each major strategy, which are aligned with the	Less than two strategies, or strengths/weaknesses incomplete, or strategies not aligned with the environment.	Strategies unclear or missing.

	internal and external environment.		
Recommended strategy (ies)	Recommended major strategy (or at most two) is clearly stated. Models and theories discussed in class are applied appropriately.	Recommended strategy is not clearly stated and/or models/theories discussed in class are not applied or are inappropriately applied.	Recommended strategy is missing or incomplete. Model/theory application is missing.
Implementation plan	Major components of the implementation plan are addressed, particularly those that address the weaknesses of the recommended strategy.	Major components of the implementation plan are not fully addressed.	Major components of the implementation plan are missing.
Multidisciplinary Perspective	Multidisciplinary perspective (finance, HR, marketing, etc.) is fully addressed in the implementation plan.	Multidisciplinary perspective is not well addressed in the implementation plan.	Multidisciplinary perspective is missing from the implementation plan.
Conclusion	Conclusion is powerful, pulling the analysis together and emphasizing points already made. This is NOT the place to bring in added information.	Conclusion does not synthesize major points in the analysis and/or adds added information that should have been addressed in the case.	Conclusion is poorly presented or missing.
Visuals	Visuals are free of grammatical errors; content illustrates major points made. Design is complementary versus distracting to the presentation.	A few grammatical errors are present; visual content at times unaligned with major points.	Several grammatical errors are present and/or content is poorly displayed.

Adapted from Marquette University, College of Business Administration, BUAD 262

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Angelo State University Accessibility Checklist https://www.angelo.edu/faculty-and-staff/instructional-design/accessibility-checklist.php

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Center for Faculty Excellence: https://cfe.unc.edu/

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Wiggins, G., & McTighe, J. *Understanding by Design* (2nd ed.). (2005). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Design.

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Make sure everyone is participating. - Student Quote