

BEST PRACTICES FOR ONLINE COURSE DESIGN

COURSE INFORMATION

start here folder includes:

- Up-to-date instructor photo
- Welcome video OR message that introduces instructor and explains course layout/ format
- Instructor contact information and "office hours" are provided
- Course syllabus, including all of the information in the SouthArk master syllabus, is provided
- Contains a review of required prerequisites and technical competencies needed for the course
- Contains instructions on how to access course resources, tools, and/ or technology
- Contains course calendar with recommended dates for completing learning modules, units, or weekly activities
- Contains information regarding **relevant** institutional policies and student success resources (i.e., technical helpdesk, accessibility, plagiarism, Learning Center, library, Testing Center, etc.)

COURSE DESIGN

- Content is structured and sequenced in an organized, logical format
- Course content is described for purpose and/or course objective alignment
- Instructional delivery methods accommodate multiple learning styles (i.e., visual, kinesthetic, interpersonal, logical, etc.)
- Course has no broken links
- Image, audio, and/or video files are good quality and the file size is manageable by the user
- Course abides by copyright law

ACCESSIBILITY

- All course content has Ally scores within the HIGH range (66%-99%).
- Course content and activities are aligned with core principles of UDL (i.e., multiple means of representation, action/ expression, and engagement.)

COURSE CONTENT

- Learning objectives are outlined clearly for the course overall, as well as, for each learning unit or module.
- Learning objectives are measurable and sequenced.
- Instructor explains how learning activities align with learning goals and provide guidance on how to complete activities.
- Instructor offers multiple options for activities, allowing students to practice and build on skills and demonstrate mastery of course objectives in their preferred way (part of UDL).

COMMUNICATION

- The course contains various resources or activities intended to build a sense of community, support, communication, and establish trust. (i.e. separate discussion forums for community building and introductions, peer review activities, and/or feedback)
- Communications and activities foster care and connection among students and with the instructor.
- Instructor sends course announcements and reminders at least once a week.
- In course announcements, the instructor reminds students of what they should be working on and of upcoming assignment deadlines, exams, and newly posted documents, as well as, shares connections with students between the subject matter and the world outside the classroom. (i.e. current events or topics in pop culture) The instructor incorporates actionable suggestions for improving subsequent performance and learning.
- Students are provided with some opportunities to give feedback throughout the course.
- Instructor-preferred communication modes are explained with expected response timelines. Instructor communication, responses, and feedback model good practices for students.
- Instructor-to-student interaction is regular, substantive, and initiated by both instructor and student.

COLLABORATION

- Discussion boards are organized.
- The instructor's role in discussion activities is defined for students.
- Instructor creates collaborative activities that enable students to learn with/ from each other and to build a learning community, such as problem-center projects, course-content-related discussion forum participation, or formative peer feedback on assignments.
- Instructor actively participates in and navigates student collaborative activities by monitoring the process, responding to questions, and providing timely advice.

FEEDBACK & GRADES

- The course grading policy, including grading scale and weights (if applicable), is provided.
- A grade book provides timely, accurate grade information.
- Feedback and grades are provided to students before subsequent assignments are due.
- The instructor provides some opportunities for students to evaluate and reflect on their performance.
- The instructor reaches out to struggling students regarding their performance.
- Feedback provided to students is relevant and supports learning.

ASSESSMENTS

- Assessment of student learning is aligned with course goals.
- Assessment is conducted throughout the duration of the course, not only at the end.
- Instructor uses multiple methods of assessment to promote student achievement of outcomes.
- Date, time, and instructions for assessments and evaluations are provided.
- Respondus exams include detailed instructions, including webcam requirements.
- A rubric or grading rationale is provided for each graded assignment.