Teaching Your Online Course

The Teach module examined the central role of an online instructor in setting expectations, managing time, and engaging students.

Starting Off

Your students experience at least three different dimensions of interaction in your course: learner-to-learner, instructor-to-learner, learner-to-content. As the instructor, you have a key role to play in setting up and facilitating all three types of interaction. To set the tone for your online course and ensure students know what they need to do to be successful, consider these steps to start off the class:

- Introduce yourself, whether it’s a recorded video, discussion board post, written bio, or live intro during a class.
- Post a syllabus which details course policies, including late work, grading, and student support services.
- Encourage students to introduce themselves. Class community is important to the learning process.
- Set clear expectations for how students should communicate with one another and with you.
- Support students by stating what required readings, equipment, skills, and technologies will help them succeed in the course; also state accessibility and privacy policies for technologies and how to obtain them and get help.
- Use Starfish, UNCG’s early alert and student success software, to connect students to support services when they need it most and to encourage students who are excelling.

Managing Your Time and Communicating with Students

Find the plan that works for you to set aside time to review assignments and stick to your stated grading turnaround time. Make the most of your time by using various types of communication methods: announcements to go to the whole class, email to individual students, videoconferences with the whole class or smaller student groups, and discussion board for the whole class.

Your Role as an Online Instructor

Consider the pedagogical, social, managerial, and technical aspects of your role as an online instructor. Remember, being "high touch is more important than high tech." Just as in the face-to-face classroom, you play a central role in guiding students’ learning and challenging them to engage more deeply.

Preparing and Responding to Academic Dishonesty

Promoting academic integrity in face-to-face and online classes requires intention and clear communication of expectations to achieve. To reduce the pressure to cheat, help students feel prepared for each assessment by communicating expectations clearly, discussing why this assessment matters and how it connects to the learning objectives, providing support and low-stakes practice opportunities leading up to high-stakes assessments, and building assessments where students construct knowledge, not only recall.

- If you suspect an incident of academic dishonesty, you can use the Academic Integrity Notification Template available from the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities’ website to initiate the Academic Integrity process and schedule a Faculty-Student Joint Conference.

Learn more at ReadytoTeach.uncg.edu, a UNC Greensboro website. This document was last updated December 2020.