How to Teach Better Online

by Karen Spiers, the Teaching & Learning Centre

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The past six months has seen an enormous push across Seneca for faculty to adapt their course content to an online format. The Teaching & Learning Centre has responded to this push by developing a variety of supports for online teaching. From webinars and workshops to the intensive three-week *Fundamentals of Online Course Design and Delivery* course, there are a great many resources to help faculty prepare for a successful online learning experience. Now that we're at the beginning of the fall semester, and with the winter semester around the corner, here is a recap of some tips and best practices to keep in mind as courses start.

Learner Experience: Do students have all the information they need to be successful in your course? Is the course organized in a logical way that makes it easy for a student to navigate through the materials? Plan with the learner in mind and make sure they can easily access instructional content and assignments and that they know what they need to do each week. Consider creating a video overview of the course for your students to show them where to find things and how to get started.

Establish a presence: Post your contact information and a short bio about your teaching background and industry experience. Let your students get to know you! Communicate regularly throughout the course with your students using email or discussion boards and make sure to provide ongoing and meaningful feedback.

Build a learning community: Use collaboration tools, discussion boards, and email to engage your students and foster a sense of community. Use tools like Mentimeter and

Padlet to create synchronous or asynchronous online activities to help students feel more connected by interacting with each other, the content, and you.

Consider assessment strategies: How will you know if your students are learning what you intended? Consider alternative and authentic assessments methods to help you gather evidence of understanding. Some examples of alternative assessments are case studies, projects, and presentations.

Be flexible: Many of you and your students are still adjusting to online teaching and learning. Remember that students may not be in the same time zone, so think carefully around planning communication and assessment activities with that in mind. Some students will be new to online and will need extra time to find their way around.

The *Fundamentals of Online Course Design and Delivery* and *Introduction to Teaching Hybrid and Online* courses will both run again this semester. Both of these courses are designed to increase your knowledge and skills in online course design and teaching practice.

Fundamentals of Online Course Design and Delivery begins on September 28, 2020. This three-week course focuses solely on fully-online delivery – student-centered design and learning; how to create and maintain ongoing engagement and participation when there is no classroom or face-to-face component. Online formative and summative assessment planning and delivery are also discussed. There are no marked activities for faculty, but they will have the opportunity to receive feedback.

Introduction to Teaching Hybrid and Online begins on October 5, 2020. This course is delivered asynchronously over six weeks and faculty can earn a micro-credential based on their participation and completion of prescribed assessments. It focuses primarily on hybrid course design and development (the blend of both online and out-of-class experiences that work together).

Registration for both courses is open in MyPD.

View the September 2020 issue of the Academic Newsletter.

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