10 Teaching Tips to Launch Your Online Course!

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1. **Send an introductory email prior to the start of the course** – Introduce yourself and the course and share information about how to access the course, where to start, and how to contact you.

2. **Put a face to your name** – Make a great first impression and humanize the learning experience for your online students by posting your photo or introducing yourself with a short video. Let them know that you want to get to know each student and that you care about them and their learning.

3. **Showcase the Blackboard course site** – Create a screencast video or post a document that demonstrates how to navigate the course and where to find course information, course content, and assignments.

4. **Open communication channels** – Let students know how you will be communicating with them throughout the course, how they can contact you, and how they can connect with each other.

5. **Establish course expectations** – Clearly communicate expectations for participation and help students become aware of their responsibilities. Let them know what they can expect from you.

6. **Post the course schedule** – Help your students stay on track by creating an outline of the asynchronous and synchronous learning activities they will need to complete each week. Include all assignments and due dates in the schedule.

7. **Model the practices that you want, right from the start** – Help your students learn online etiquette by modelling good practices. Be respectful and professional in your posts and comments. Be on time for virtual office hours and respond to students within a designated time frame. Check copyright permissions and include proper references for your course resources.

8. **Use an icebreaker** – Let everyone get to know each other on a more personal level, interact, and set the tone for the class. Set up a discussion forum in the main course

menu and invite students to introduce themselves.

9. **Get them actively engaged from the start** – Decide on the engagement tool that you will be using throughout the course. Create a simple activity in the first lesson that requires students to ask or answer a question, or share an idea using this tool.

10. **Make connections and set the context for the course content** – Post an introduction to the course that includes the learning outcomes and key content topics. Discuss how the outcomes and topics relate to each other, to other courses, the program, and the relevance to your students' career.

Want more great ideas for an excellent start to the semester? Visit the Teaching & Learning Centre website and check out Teaching Ideas: senecacollege.ca/teaching.

View the September 2020 issue of the Academic Newsletter.

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