

## **Online Teaching and Learning: Creating Content for the Online Course**

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### **Background**

Creating online course content is an ominous task. Faculty members are often faced with the task of writing and developing an online course without the support of an instructional support team (instructional designers, developers, editors, graphic artists, audio specialists, video specialists, learning management specialists, test designers and reviewers). In 1995, I estimated that it would take a faculty member about 600 hours to write and complete a quality course without the support of a team. With the availability of higher quality learning management systems, the time that it takes to write and develop a course has been reduced---but it is not significantly different from 1995. Today, the rule of thumb is 10 hours of work for every hour of instruction. Thus, if the course is a 3 credit-hour course resulting in 45 contact hours, the course will take 450 hours to write and prepare. This time is adjusted according the institution's decision to add or subtract from the number of contact hours needed for the learner.

In any case, a substantial amount of time is needed to write and prepare an online course. One must allow adequate time for preparing the course syllabus which may include the following.

1. Course Description
2. Learning Objectives and Outcomes
3. Assignments
4. Due Dates for Assignments
5. Late Policy for Assignments
6. Grading Policy/Rubrics
7. Institution Class Policies for Academic Honesty
8. Course Resources (Glossary, References, WebLinks and FAQs)
9. Instructor Contact Information
10. Policies that Instructor will follow (email response time, cyber office hours, instructor feedback and communication)
11. Textbooks or Supplemental Texts
12. Library Links and Passwords

13. Information about potential technology problems (back-up plans for students and instructor)
14. Course and Instructor Evaluation

Writers must take into account that learning is both social and private and experimental (Alley and Jansak, 2001). They must consider that higher order learning requires reflection and knowledge construction. Writers prepare online course content and teach online course content from the perspective of student-led instruction as opposed to faculty-led instruction. The faculty member takes on the roles of enabler, encourager, supporter, teacher, facilitator, communicator and manager. The student reflects and learns from multiple interactions and experiences with the faculty member and with other learners.

The cost for writing, creating and producing an online course is estimated to be between \$25,000.00 and \$45,000.00.

## **Quality Online Courses**

**Quality online courses reflect a pedagogical richness that includes:**

1. Well-defined objectives
2. Engaged and motivated learning
3. Learning styles
4. Use of media
5. Interactivity with quality content
6. Testing
7. Feedback
8. Collaboration
9. Accessibility and student support

### **Learning House Model**

Learning House concentrates on teaming with content writers (faculty members) to write and prepare online courses. A course outline is prepared through the use of the course syllabus. Following is a typical course syllabus.

1. Description
2. Learning Objectives
3. Outcomes
4. Assignments
5. Due Dates for Assignments
6. Late Policy for Assignments
7. Grading Policy/Rubrics
8. Institution Class Policies for Academic Honesty
9. Course Resources (Glossary, References, WebLinks and FAQs)
10. Instructor Contact Information

11. Policies that Instructor will follow (email response time, cyber office hours, instructor feedback and communication)
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## **Course Lessons (Course Chapters)**

Once the course syllabus has been prepared, the author follows the template in writing the lessons for the course. Each lesson must relate to the course theme and objectives. Each lesson has its own learning objectives, and the content reflects these objectives. Each lesson has a related set of discussion questions, assignments, glossary items, references, Web sites, FAQs and test questions.

Many times, the course writer will insert graphics and audio or PowerPoint presentations with voice into the content. These items are inserted to further elaborate and explain the information to the student. This example PowerPoint presentation uses Breeze software to deliver the instruction (<http://breeze.elearnportal.com/p71211414/>).

As many lessons can be created as desired by the content writer and/or instructor. After the content is written, it is assigned to an editor. The editor edits the content and returns it to the content writer for revision. After the revisions have been made, the content is submitted to the instructional designer for final work. After the instructional designer finishes her/his work, he/she submitted it to the production team member or instructional developer. The instructional developer hangs the course in the learning management system. The quality control personnel then review the course before it is launched.

## **Suggestions for Writing**

1. Talk with the instructional designer before starting.
2. Know your audience.
3. Get an editor or reviewer.
4. Find blocks of time for writing.
5. Find a quiet and comfortable space.
6. Always write from an outline.
7. Identify and cross check references.
8. Get copyright approval on everything.
9. Know the learning management system.

## References

### Webliography

#### Cost of Online Course Development

**Boettcher, J.V. (2005, May 21).** Online course development: What does it cost? *Campus Technology*. Retrieved May 21, 2005 from <http://www.campus-technology.com/article.asp?id=9676>

**Milan, J. (n.d.).** *Cost analysis of online courses*. Retrieved May 21, 2005 from Association for Institutional Research Web site: <http://airweb.org/links/reports/costanalysis.html>

**Morgan, B.M. (2000).** *Determining the costs of online courses*. 125 pp. Retrieved May 21, 2005 from Marshall University Web site: <http://webpages.marshall.edu/~morgan16/onlinecosts/>

#### Effectiveness

**Alliance for Higher Education Competitiveness (A-HEC) Report**  
(published Feb. 1, 2005)

***Achieving Success in Internet-Supported Learning in Higher Education: Case Studies Illuminate Success Factors, Challenges, and Future.***

Retrieved from [http://www.a-hec.org/e-learning\\_study.html](http://www.a-hec.org/e-learning_study.html)

**Deubel, P. (2003).** Learning from Reflections - Issues in building quality online courses. *Journal of Distance Learning Administration*. 6(3).

Retrieved May 21, 2005 from University of West Georgia Web site:

<http://www.westga.edu/~distance/ojdl/fall63/deubel63.htm>

#### Growth

**Sloan-C Consortium Report** (published Nov. 12, 2004)

**Sloan Survey of Online Learning, *Entering the Mainstream: The Quality and Extent of Online Education in the U. S.*** Retrieved May 21, 2005 from

<http://www.sloan-c.org/resources/survey04.asp>

[http://www.sloan-c.org/resources/entering\\_mainstream.pdf](http://www.sloan-c.org/resources/entering_mainstream.pdf)

## General Web Sites

**Auvigne, S. Alive online: Active learning in virtual environments.**  
Retrieved May 21, 2005 from Northern Alberta Institute of Technology Web site:  
<http://www.nait.ab.ca/alive/>

**Enzer, M. (2005). *Glossary of internet terms.*** Retrieved May 21, 2005 from  
<http://www.matisse.net/files/glossary.html>

**Hoffman, B. (ed.) (2004). *Encyclopedia of Educational Technology.***  
Retrieved May 21, 2005 from San Diego State University Web site:  
<http://coe.sdsu.edu/eet/>

**Jansen, E. (2005). *Netlingo: a dictionary of Internet terms.*** Retrieved May  
21, 2005 from <http://www.netlingo.com/>

**MERLOT: Multimedia Educational Resource for Learning and Online  
Teaching.** Retrieved May 21, 2005 from <http://www.merlot.org/Home.po>

***Webopedia: Online computer dictionary for computer and Internet terms  
and definitions.*** Retrieved May 21, 2005 from <http://www.webopedia.com/>

***Welcome to the world of online instruction.*** Retrieved May 21, 2005 from  
Grant MacEwan College Web site:  
<http://www.imd.macewan.ca/imdgot/>



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**Electronic Campus best practices. (2004). *Distance Education Report, 8(9), 5.*** Retrieved from EBSCOhost Academic Search Premier database.

The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), which seeks to improve education in its 16 member states, operates the Electronic Campus, an "electronic marketplace" for courses, programs, and services. All courses and programs are offered by accredited colleges and universities in the SREB states, including Calhoun Community College. Member programs must meet the Principles of Good Practice developed by the Electronic Campus. These include guiding the development of electronically delivered courses and programs to ensure that characteristics of good teaching and learning are addressed.

**Teaming up with librarians. (2005, January). *Online Classroom, 1-5.*** Retrieved from EBSCOhost Academic Search Premier database.

This article focuses on the help that can be got by teaming up with librarians. Librarians have an amazing set of skills and are often waiting for educators to come forward and ask for their help. They are highly credentialed and are ready and willing to help educators develop their courses and become resources for them both during development and delivery. Librarians are content experts in different areas and in some cases they enroll in online courses where they can interact directly with the students inside the content management system.

**Teaching an existing online course. (2005, January). *Online Classroom, 6-8.*** Retrieved from EBSCOhost Academic Search Premier database.

This article presents information related to teaching an existing online course at the University of Central Florida (UCF). UCF instructors are required to take IDL6543, an award-winning, 70-hour faculty development course in order to develop an online course or modify an existing one. For these instructors it means teaching online courses developed by colleagues, a challenge for them and the instructional designers who guide them through the process. In ADL5000, instructors usually get the chance to meet with the person who originally designed the course to better understand his or her design decisions and to determine whether the course needs to be modified to suit the teaching style.

**What makes an exemplary course? (2003). *Distance Education Report, 7(20), 5-6.*** Retrieved from EBSCOhost Academic Search Premier database.

Discusses a multiple-case study on the characteristics of exemplary online courses, conducted by assistant professor Keith Hopper of Southern Polytechnic University in Marietta, Georgia. Common elements and attributes of exemplary Internet courses; Learning theory in course development; Views of Hopper on Internet-supported courses and fully online courses. INSET: Five Characteristics of Exemplary Online Courses.

**Alley, L.R. & Jansak, K.E. (2001). The ten keys to quality assurance and assessment in online learning. *Journal of Interactive Instruction Development*. 13(3), 3-18.**

A study examined quality in Web-based and Web-intensive learning. Elements of the study included research literature, LISTSERV postings and follow-up e-mails, online course sites, conference attendees, and interviews with individual experts. Results supported ten basic principles of teaching and learning: that knowledge is constructed, that learning is more effective if students take responsibility for their own learning, that student motivation is a strong determinant of the outcomes and success of learning, that higher order learning requires reflection, that learning is unique to the individual, that learning is experiential, that learning is both social and private, that inexorable epistemological presumptions can misdirect higher order learning, that learning is spiral, and that learning is "messy." Each of the principles is translated into practices effective in a Web-based environment, and an application method for each principle and practice is described.

**Ayres, R. (2003). IELTS online writing--A team approach to developing an online course. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 16(4), 351-366.** Retrieved from EBSCOhost Academic Search Premier database.

This article outlines the design and delivery of an online academic writing course ([www.ielts.ac.nz](http://www.ielts.ac.nz)). The course is specifically targeted at prospective candidates of the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) examination. It aims to develop both writing proficiency and awareness of the IELTS examination format and requirements. The project design involved the creation of a customized online course management shell incorporating HTML, Macromedia Flash and ColdFusion technologies. The process of scoping, validating, designing and delivering the course is discussed, along with the evaluation and user-testing process. The effectiveness of using a collaborative team approach is examined, and future development directions and possibilities for the course are presented.

**Carnevale, D. More professors teach by using other colleges' online courses. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 51(8), A.28.** Retrieved from ProQuest Research Library database.

Many colleges that want to offer more online courses are beginning to use online course materials developed by other institutions. Proponents say that sharing online materials can help colleges save thousands of dollars, while opponents argue that professors should take a more active role in developing the courses they teach.



## Appendix A

Table 9. Example Best Practices and Innovations Achieved (A-HEC Report, February 1, 2005)

Category	Best Practices Achieved	Innovations Achieved
Executive leadership and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Clear policies</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Importance of teaching and learning quality in raise and tenure</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Program focus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Revenue sharing to fund centralized support resources</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Cooperation through a consortium</li> </ul>
Faculty and academic leadership commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Incentives for faculty participation</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Protection of faculty intellectual property</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 100% full time faculty involvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Annual conference free for all participants</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Teaching scholar academy</li> </ul>
Student service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Program advising</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 24x7 help desk support</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Web-based enrollment and financing</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Faculty role in early term retention</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Dedicated staff to support distance learners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Full student support 24x7</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 24x7 learning lab environment</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Wide range of online student services</li> </ul>
Technology infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Highly reliable 24/7 infrastructure</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Use of technologies to match pedagogy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Strategic partnerships</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide lower cost and higher access alternative to full video</li> </ul>

<p>Course/instructional quality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Integration of enquiry-based and team activities</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Content management</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Student/faculty interaction</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Standard course structure/course standards</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Faculty led regional cohort meetings</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Live lab demos of equipment</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Lecture archiving, review, and feedback</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Cohort model to better track student performance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 24x7 learning lab environment</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Serve multiple learning styles</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Use of advanced software by students at home</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Facilitator groups of 15-20</li> </ul>
<p>Financial resources and plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Sufficient financial resources and seed funds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Implementation throughout a consortium</li> </ul>
<p>Training</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Mentoring of faculty</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> One-on-one support from curriculum designers</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Reduced time involved in creating e-lectures</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Required faculty training and/or orientation</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Web based training for the faculty</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Peer tutors</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Emphasis on trained, certified faculty</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Faculty required to have been an online student</li> </ul>
<p>Marketing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Marketing and retention plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Strategic partnerships</li> </ul>