

Best Practices Online Instructors Checklist



1. Show that you care through student-instructor interaction.

- ✓ Call students during the first and fourth weeks, introduce yourself and pray with them (2x).
- ✓ Email students encouragement each Monday (8x).
- ✓ Provide a new announcement each Saturday to praise students and encourage interaction (8x).
- ✓ Include personal, family, and ministry information, photos, and stories in Faculty Information.
- ✓ Publicly praise the most helpful positive feedback in Discussion Board each week (8x).
- ✓ Privately deal with the most negative, hypercritical feedback in the course in email or exams.
- ✓ Show and demand respect in all communication.
- ✓ Model servant leadership by enthusiastically serving your students.

2. Develop real-life team-leadership skills through peer interaction.

- Involve students in real-life team leadership through
- ✓ Discussions
 - ✓ Group projects
 - ✓ Peer review
 - ✓ Conflict resolution
 - ✓ Lifestyle assignments involving encouraging others.

3. Involve students in active learning activities by going beyond memorization to meditation and application.

- ✓ Require *journals* that focus on reflection, articulation, discussion, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.
- ✓ Incorporate *essays* that encourage next level critical thinking skills graded according to rubrics, in addition to true/false and multiple choice.
- ✓ Utilize *project-based learning*, action plans, real-life situations, case studies, and reports, rather than extensive lecture notes.

4. Demonstrate respect for students by providing prompt feedback.

- ✓ Check email, Discussion Board, and exams each morning (Mon-Fri) (40x).
- ✓ Post helpful replies and recommendations to each student in Discussion Board (8x).
- ✓ Respond to emails within 24 hours (Mon-Fri) (40x).
- ✓ Grade exams within 24 hours (8x).

5. Time on Task. Time + Focus = Learning

- ✓ Students need to go online three times a week for eight weeks (24x). Students should expect to spend between 10 and 15 hours per week per course (80 hours rather than the traditional 120 hours) in focused study for maximum learning.
- ✓ Instructors should expect to spend between 6 and 8 hours per week for eight weeks (48 to 64 hours) in facilitating the online course.
- ✓ Course developers creating a “best practices” course should expect to spend 150-200 hours—about the same amount of time as a student who takes the course.

6. Expect the best from students.

- ✓ Encourage students to go from *Good to Great*. Provide samples of each assignment you require from students (e.g., exemplary essays, papers, action plans, projects from previous courses).
- ✓ Provide students with *samples* of A, B, and C essays and the *rubrics* you use in grading assignments so they know what to expect and what is important to you as the instructor.
- ✓ Assist students in achieving *excellence* in thinking, writing, and learning. Do not ignore or overlook poor grammar, misspellings, and mediocre writing practices.

7. Make learning visually rich, fun, memorable, and real-life.

- ✓ Students learn in eight ways; therefore, learning is enhanced when we teach in eight ways.
- ✓ Provide a visually rich learning environment. Whenever appropriate include PowerPoint, humor, personal stories, jokes, crossword puzzles, charts, audio, video, cartoons, color illustrations, acrostics, alliteration, quotes, devotionals, mindmaps, glossaries, music, lifestyle assignments, etc.
- ✓ Instructors are experts in their fields and can provide real-life experiences and solutions.

Responsibilities of the Course Designer

1. To make the course go from good to great!
2. To work with the instructor in the selection of quality textbooks.
3. To create the online syllabus for the course so the instructor can focus on connecting with students in their areas of expertise.
4. To provide a model online course.
5. To guide the instructor in designing the course using “best practices,” i.e., announcements, assignments, multimedia, study notes, Discussion Board, external links, and exams in Blackboard—and show the instructor how these can be modified as needed.
6. To ensure consistency of online courses so that students know what to expect and can concentrate on learning and applying content rather than having to adapt to each new instructor’s approach to Blackboard.
7. To guide the Instructor in incorporating the best online teaching methods since online teaching is very different from campus teaching.

Responsibilities of the Instructor

1. To relax—the course designer will make the course “look great” so that you can focus on connecting with the students.
2. To collaborate with the course designer in the selection of quality textbooks.
3. To provide any additional materials, charts, video, audio, or study guides desired.
4. To interact with and encourage students in Discussion Board.
5. To comment on and grade essays in Exams.
6. To comment on and grade action plans for applying material to life.
7. To monitor student progress and provide encouragement and guidance.
8. To connect with students by praying over the phone at the beginning and middle of the course and by weekly emails.
9. To provide rubrics and samples of A, B, and C essays and action plans so students know what is required of them.
10. To provide 8 announcements with opening prayers.*
11. To provide assignments for 8 sessions.*
12. To provide a summary sentence, mathematical formula, illustrative photo or graphic, joke and/or personal story for each session/chapter.*
13. To provide study note highlights of each chapter.*
14. To provide exams for each of the 8 sessions.
15. To assist students in developing their research and writing skills through rough drafts.*