Best**Practices**

A practical guide for converting your traditional classroom into a distance learning classroom

1. Pre-planning Strategies

"The instructional environment should be viewed as a system, a relationship among and between all the components of that system—the instructor, the learners, the material, and the technology." (Simonson, p. 128)

Course Format - What type of eLearning format makes sense for your scenario?

Asynchronous: Instructor and student interaction is not immediate. Interactions happen in different times of the day or week.

Synchronous: All students are participating at the same time and are communicating directly with each other.

Hybrid/Blended: Learning that includes asynchronous, synchronous and face-to-face learning. (Pappas, 2012)

Choose an Instructional Design Model - Choosing an instructional design model will act as guide as you build your program. It will also ensure that it meets industry standards, is safe, and ensures learning expectations. (Pappas, 2012)

Instructional Design Model Examples:

ADDIE - Analyze, Design, Develop, Implement, Evaluate

Bloom's Taxonomy (rev. 2001) - Create, Evaluate, Analyze, Apply, Understand, Remember (Armstrong, n.d.)

Educational Technology - Choose which technologies will be best for each learning format.

Student to Student - Examples: Text, Discussion Forums, Blogs

Student to Instructor - Examples: Assignments, Discussions, Projects, Email, Assessments

Student to Content- RSS, YouTube, Flashcards (Pappas, 2012)

Technology/Equipment: Are your learners equipped with adequate technology and tools to efficiently engage in the coursework? Is the environment for learning prepared and accessible?

2. Program Enhancements

It is important students interact with the instructor and other student to enhance student learning. Online resources can also enhance the learning process. (Simonson, 2015)

Enhancements:

- Multimedia presentations
- Supplemental videos
- Audio
- Instructional materials

STUDENTS

Robert Mayer's (2001) multimedia principle explains people learn better from words and pictures than from words alone. With this concept in mind, it is important to understand design principles when creating multimedia presentations and supplemental instructional materials such as infographics, charts, web pages, etc.
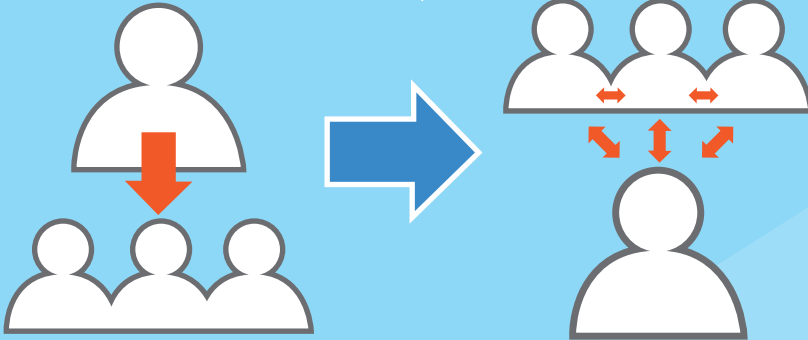
3. Role Changes

From Teacher Centered → **To Student Centered**

Teacher-centered models of instruction usually are optimal for face-to-face instruction and also in synchronous, online classrooms such as those distributed via live video.

However, student centered, online and asynchronous classrooms promote an active learning environment and give students control over how they learn and interact with instructors and other students (Simonson, 2015).

An instructors role changes from being the provider and deliver of instruction to being the facilitator of instruction. Instead of students competing with each other, they are collaborating with each other. Coursework can change from traditional textbooks to course-customized materials. In student centered learning, powerful learning environments are created by student interaction and discussion (Simonson, 2015).

4. Student Communication

Student communication promotes active learning and is paramount to the success of the course.

Steps to encourage communication:

1. Provide a clear understanding of student responsibilities
2. Create a syllabus – primary communication tool with students
    a. Helps students understand their role
    b. What to do for technical and personal issues
    c. Contact information
3. Set goals, objectives, timelines for assignments
4. Be Flexible
5. Provide relevant and insightful feedback
6 Challenge student responses
7. Be timely in responses to students
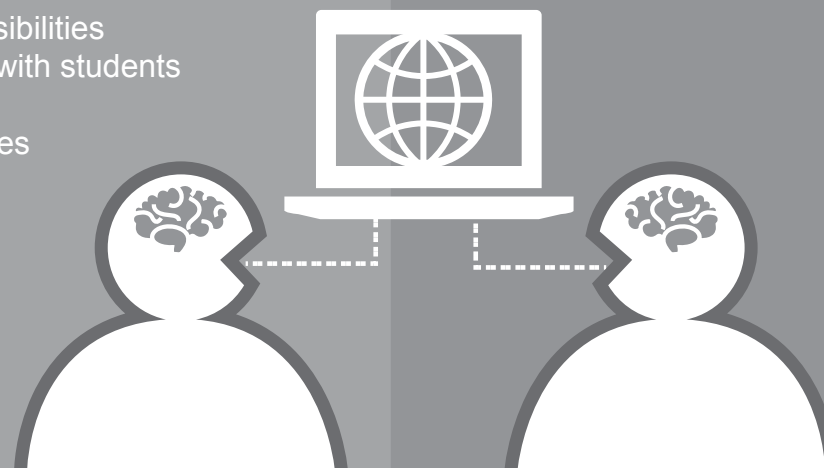
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