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JUNE 17-19, 2019 • ANAHEIM



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SHORT-TERM COURSE SOLUTIONS

Making Connections While Maintaining Rigor



“Do not procrastinate. Know that you are supported. Remember to breathe.”

Advice to Incoming Students from a Spring 2019 8-Week Advanced Composition Student

“Time on Task in Intensive Modes of Delivery” (Kuiper et al, 2015)

Effective short-term course instructors practice the following:

- Design courses with empathy
- Encourage student commitment
- Motivate students via course design
- Utilize thoughtful assignment sequencing & offer prompt feedback
- Use technology to streamline interactions
- Communicate often

AWARENESS. DIVERSITY. DESIGN.

OEI Rubric Section A: Content Presentation

Increasing Potential for Success

Kuiper et al (2015):

- The teachers' awareness of what it was like for the students to study at distance permeated their decisions about the design of the units of study.
- Their design strategies demonstrated awareness of the nature and diversity of the cohort, and the students' needs, particularly for flexibility in time use. (p. 234)

AWARENESS. DIVERSITY. DESIGN:

Practical Applications

- Offer opportunities for students to engage early.
- Design each unit according to unit SLOs.
- Limit deadlines throughout the week to 1-2 days.
- Opt for condensed textbook or use OER to wade through “the fluff.”
- Integrate multi-media content.
- Use a consistent design/organization for each unit.
- Consider a strict late-work policy.

MAKING CONNECTIONS: Communicate course design considerations to your students. Empathy humanizes your course.

ENGAGEMENT

OEI Rubric Section B: Interaction

Closing All Exits

“Because of the short time for learning, any student who falls behind can easily be discouraged and drop out” (Kuiper et al, 2015, p. 236).

- Encouraging student engagement early and often is key to success and community building.
- Engagement includes “regular and effective” contact between instructors and between students.
 - **Takeaway:** Engagement happens on several levels. Your job is to create opportunities for engagement; you are not responsible for personally engaging with each student so often that the quality of interaction is diluted.

ENGAGEMENT:

Practical Applications

Before the course begins . . .

- Email “Welcome Letter” (2-3 weeks before course start)
- Email syllabus (4 days-1 week before course start)

In the first week . . .

- Post instructor video introduction
- Create introductory discussion boards that encourage self-reflection and personalized responses

Throughout the course . . .

- Provide weekly instructor videos
- Provide prompt feedback that is personalized and supportive, yet honest. Use rubrics!

MAKING CONNECTIONS: Reaching out to students early and often (even as a group), helps students feel supported in their learning. Encouraging students to reflect on their personal experiences with course content allows for richer engagement overall.

Words of Wisdom

Advice to Incoming Students from a Former Student

My advice for anyone who plans on taking this class is to seriously practice time management. I feel like this is key in order to get all assignments completed and also to just produce the best work possible. This is very much harped on in the beginning of this class, but it cannot be stressed enough.

—Winter 2019 Advanced Composition Student

MOTIVATION

OEI Rubric Sections A, B, & C: Content Presentation, Interaction, and Assessment

Maximizing Growth

Kops (2012) notes the potential for short-term courses to coach students on time management to assist them to ‘keep pace’

Recommended strategies include:

- stressing the importance of beginning course work early
- alerting students to the intensity and faster pace
- warning students not to overextend themselves with too many outside activities.” (p. 54)

MOTIVATION:

Practical Applications

- Use advice from former students
- Offer low-stakes assignments to reflect on progress & manage time
- Create opportunities for peer-to-peer support
- Use course announcements and unit introductions as pep talks

MAKING CONNECTIONS: “We are all in this challenge together.” Students who feel supported are more likely to be motivated. Design your course with opportunities to support students individually and collectively, and offer peer-to-peer assignments that encourage supportive collaborations.

ASSIGNMENT SEQUENCING

OEI Rubric Sections A & C: Content Presentation and Assessment

Optimizing Limited Time

Lee and Horsfall (2010) concluded that timing of assessments was a “major factor” affecting student experiences. The study found that assessments should not “overlap” or be “concentrated at the end of the term” (p. 199).

ASSIGNMENT SEQUENCING:

Practical Applications

- Scaffold assignments to help students manage time & make progress toward more extensive assignments
- Opt for short-answer assignments vs. essay assignments (when appropriate)
- Consider the time it will take you to grade as well as the time students will need to complete assignments

MAKING CONNECTIONS: Assignment sequencing that is student and instructor-friendly mitigates stress, and allows for higher quality submissions and more personalized feedback.

A Word on Assignment Sequencing

Kops (2012) . . . found that ‘high performing instructors did a number of things to allow students to complete assignments more readily without compromising the integrity of the course’ (p. 53):

- ‘deconstructing’ single longer assessments into frequent shorter assessments
- scheduling the first assessment early in the course
- rescheduling assessments to fit the ‘rhythm’ of the course, without compromising the integrity of expectations and standards in the course (Kops, pp. 53–54).



TECHNOLOGY

OEI Rubric Sections A & C: Content Presentation and Interaction

Utilizing Technology Wisely

Kuiper et al (2015):

Online programs can “encourage deep learning”, which may be partly because they can work at a time most suitable to their learning needs (Emerson & MacKay, Distance Education 239 2006, p. 2) by enabling students to work in their own time and at their own pace. (pp. 239-240)

TECHNOLOGY:

Practical Applications

- Integrate instructional videos to allow students to review content as often as they like and humanize the course
- Include videos, podcasts, images, etc. to help engage various learning styles
- Encourage collaboration through synchronous meetings that take the place of asynchronous assignments

A Word on Technology

Streamline Use of Techie Tools

- Avoid requiring the use of technology that sends students outside the class, particularly technology that requires students to create accounts.
 - Students do not have time to learn new technology, and you don't have time to provide tech support.

MAKING CONNECTIONS: Use technology as a catalyst for communicating in a variety of easy-to-access formats that engage learners and humanize the experience.

Avoid technology that is cumbersome or requires students to take additional steps to access information.



Words of Wisdom

Advice to Incoming Students from a Former Student

Manage your time wisely, pay close attention to what the assignment is asking, and when in doubt--watch (instructional videos) and ask (send questions to the professor) it out. The professor is there to help, as your success is her success. Good Luck!

--Winter 2019 Advanced Composition Student

COMMUNICATION

OEI Rubric Section B: Interaction

Communicating Often, in a Variety of Ways

Kuiper et al (2015):

Students highly valued communication in order to help build a positive learning environment and a sense of community within the class. Ramsay (2011) discusses the value of the teacher creating and maintaining a 'sense of community' within the class through activities such as 'group exercises, social events and individual introductions at the beginning of each subject' (p. 98).

COMMUNICATION:

Practical Application

- Clarify and maximize your availability for communication
- Invest time into creating clear instructions and logical course organization
- Create weekly videos and/or course announcements
- Respond promptly to students' questions. Advertise your response time (i.e., M-F; within 24 hours)
- Create peer-to-peer assignments that encourage communication and/or collaboration
- Communicate when feedback will be provided, what it will consist of, and how it can be accessed
- Respond to similar course questions through a single course announcement
- Clarify what types of tech support you are able to provide

MAKING CONNECTIONS: When appropriate (which is most of the time), offer support in your communication. Remind students that they are not alone in meeting the challenges of the course.

Success is Possible!

“Despite significant restraints of time as well as distance, expert teaching in intensive courses can encourage student engagement, enhance student use of learning time and result in satisfying student learning experiences” (Kuiper et al, 2015, p. 243).

WORDS OF WISDOM

“Would You Recommend this Course to a Friend?”

Thoughts from Spring 2019 8-Week Advanced Composition Students

I dig the course. Simple and clean, fast pace, and almost no fluff. For someone who really wants to tackle the subject and get to the meat. That is the selling point for me.

I liked that the course was very organized and laid out in a way that you can understand all the tasks you need to complete. I would recommend this course to a friend as I found the pacing of it to actually be beneficial to my work load compared to other classes I take.

I probably would not recommend this class to someone who is not good at time management and is not motivated to do schoolwork.

I would recommend this course to a friend, it was not as crazy and frantic as I thought it was going to be. This was a happy surprise for me. One aspect that was effective about this course was due to not being overloaded with essays and assignments, it was taken at a fast but even pace.

WORDS OF WISDOM

“Would You Recommend this Course to a Friend?”

. . . More from Spring 2019 8-Week Advanced Composition Students

I would definitely recommend this course to a friend because you become a better writer in a shorter amount of time than a normal English class would take. One aspect of this class I found effective was the deadlines given throughout the week and the way that we were constantly preparing for our research paper instead of having it creep up on us.

I would recommend this as an amazing course to take. The teacher is very good at guiding you along and making sure you know how to complete the course and assignments.

I would definitely recommend this course to a friend; I felt comfortable with the assignments and processes because of the way the material was presented to us and this definitely contributed to my success. The most effective aspect of this course for me was the videos at the beginning of each week explaining what was going on in that particular week because it made the work seem less daunting.

A FINAL TAKEAWAY

THE POWER OF ACKNOWLEDGING THE CHALLENGE

When you acknowledge the challenge of your short-term course, you are saying to your students: the anxiety you are feeling regarding this course is natural. It's okay.

When you reach out to your students early and often, you assure them that you are thinking about them, and they feel supported. They know that they are part of a community who is facing a challenge together. They are not alone, and neither are you.



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Presentation Materials

Available in Canvas Course Commons

“OTC 2019 PRESENTATION MATERIALS: SHORT-TERM COURSE SOLUTIONS-MAKING CONNECTIONS WHILE MAINTAINING RIGOR”

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