Teaching Online Courses at Baker University (SPGS)

Baker University is committed to developing and delivering quality adult learning experiences. All instructors should communicate high expectations for student learning and achievement. Furthermore, developing a strong sense of community among our online learners should be a priority and a guiding principle throughout each course. This document provides a framework for understanding the university’s expectations regarding the instructor’s role in providing a quality academic experience for online learning.

Each Module (week) should be set up to include the following four pillars. For examples of how this process can be followed, please see the Best Practice / Standards Rubric which is located at: http://www.bakeru.edu/instructor-resources.

1) Pillar One
   a. INTRODUCE/OVERVIEW (Mini-Lecture):
      i. Should be used to motivate students, explain what is to be learned, and recall previous knowledge. This section should tell the student what they can expect.
         1. Tools/Strategies to use for this Pillar: 3-7 minute video (Panopto), Forums that allows students to ask questions, notes that clarify the weekly/course learning objectives, ice-breaker

2) Pillar Two
   a. INSTRUCT/WEEKLY MATERIALS (Mini-Lecture):
      i. Should be used to present the weekly material to be learned, provide guidance for learning. This section should provide students with depth.
         1. Tools/Strategies to use for this Pillar: videos (Panopto), relevant articles (preferably within the last 5 years), PowerPoints (preferably with voice using Panopto), reading assignments that align with course syllabus, concept map

3) Pillar Three
   a. APPLY/ASSIGMENTS/DISCUSSION (Forums):
      i. Should use the content from the instruct pillar to apply or discuss the course content and share resources with one another.
         1. Tools/Strategies to use for this Pillar: Forums to create, problem solve, and/or collaborate, wiki’s, chat rooms, blogs, glossary

4) Pillar Four
   a. ASSESS/FORMATIVE and SUMMATIVE:
      i. This is where the instructor assesses student learning and understanding.
         1. Tools/Strategies to use for this Pillar: papers, presentations, weekly reflections, exams, quizzes, case studies, pro/con wiki, muddiest point, group notes, summary sentence, common assessments, student generated test questions
Online Faculty Standards (Modified from the Faculty Manual)

Preparation and Engagement:

- Make the online class come to life. Stay focused on the goal of engaging students and creating a virtual learning environment. Take every effort to create a learning environment that encourages students to take risks, discuss meaningful ideas in depth, and sustain their engagement throughout the course. When implementing quality instructional strategies, it is important to remember to construct knowledge rather than transmit it. Get comfortable with new technologies and challenge yourself to create courses that are not entirely text-based, but are courses in which the pedagogy leads the technology.

- Provide ongoing feedback to students about their progress and assignments, papers, projects, and presentations. Read, review, and critique (in writing). Return assignments/tests/etc. within one week.

- All online faculty members are required to facilitate a minimum of one week of instructional time (Monday 12:00 am—Sunday 11:59 pm) for each of the approved, scheduled sessions through the Baker University learning management system.

- Return final assignments to the students through Moodle.

- Post grades within eight days of the end of the course via the Faculty Portal.

- Maintain a pleasant, supportive, and professional tone. Use correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Take advantage of the same resources that are available to students (e.g., spell check).

- Communicate high expectations. Most learners will meet your expectations. Challenge them intellectually and provide them with timely and quality feedback.

- Log in to your online course a minimum of 4 times (4 different days) per week. The minimum “4 times” rule is recognized as a standard to achieve. By logging into the course, you provide a presence and personalize the online experience for students. Plan to distribute the time throughout the week so that learners have a sense of rhythm and participation. This will help create a “digital footprint” that further illustrates a presence in the class.

- Respond to learner inquiries within 24 (preferred) / 48 hours. Responding to student questions quickly has a direct correlation to reducing their anxiety level about furthering their education. The 24/48-hour limit applies to weekends as well. The accelerated format of our courses make it difficult to expect a student to wait more than 24/48 hours for a response that may have implications for timely completion of an assignment.

- Post a minimum of one announcement per week. Students see the announcements via email so it provides an excellent way to stay engaged. Ideally, this announcement will be posted at the beginning of each week and can (and should) vary greatly (summary of course, reminders of upcoming deadlines, current events relative to the course, encouragements, etc.)

- Engage with each student at least once a week. Students can feel like they are on an island and all alone when taking online courses. Regular and timely communication is key to quality online learning experience.

- Notify students of unavailable times outside the normal routine. If it is not possible to maintain the normal login/email/response routine, be sure to let the students know ahead of time.

- If delivering a class within the scheduled class session is impossible, contact the Instructional Specialist or Wichita Executive Director and the class representative, if applicable. Arrangements for a substitute instructor are handled by SPGS staff. Please notify the appropriate contact as soon as possible and appropriate arrangements will be made.
Virtual Classroom Management

- Create a strong community of learners by building an atmosphere of support and engagement. The time spent with students should be focused on the three R’s: Rigor, Relevance, and Relationship building.
- Encourage respect for diversity and the value of personal experience. Your online classroom will be filled with a diverse student population. This diversity will add richness to the discussion threads that should be embraced, fostered, and respected.
- Provide quality and timely feedback on discussion posts (especially in the beginning of each course). Timely responses to their posts and timely assigning of points are critical for helping students feel comfortable in an online classroom. (Refer to the Online Course Development section in the Instructional Design Handbook for more information.)
- Post assignment scores and feedback in the Moodle classroom. All scores for assignments and assessments must be recorded using the Moodle Grade Book.
- Represent Baker University as a professional.

Following is a link to the webinars that expand on specific Moodle tools / strategies that can be used to implement the pillars: introduce, instruct, apply and assess.

http://bakeru.hosted.panopto.com/Panopto/Pages/Sessions/List.aspx#folderSets=7&folderID=%2266c71152-d64c-48de-91ec-4339efaafbff%22

If you would like to schedule a time for assistance with your course design, either in person or remotely, please click here and fill out the form.