Teaching at a Distance: Top Ten Online Best Practices

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1. Check the official start date of your class. http://www.framingham.edu/dgce
2. **Contact your students by email or phone before the semester begins.** Include in your message, directions to build a home page or directions to participate in an orientation discussion board. This begins the process of building an online learning environment. **Forward all bounced emails to** **academicsonline@frc.mass.edu****.** Lisa Sydney will contact your students and help them correct their contact information on Blackboard.
3. **Make the course site available before your class begins.** This gives students an opportunity to view your syllabus, know which text book to buy, and begin to become familiar with your course requirements and layout.
4. **Post a message on the announcement page.** This is most important. Students need to see that you are ready for the start of class and understand how to get started.
5. **Update your staff information on your site.** Just as you ask your students to create a homepage it is important that you present information about yourself when you teach online. Every Blackboard course site comes with tools to build a very simple web page. If you are teaching online we recommend, as part of this process, that you also include a digital photo. If you do not have one, it’s not a problem. Contact ATDE and we will arrange to take your picture for your course site.
6. **Add all content to your site, before the first day of class. Hide any content you do not want to** share with your students - this is done by making a content area, folder or individual document unavailable to a student view.
* Review your content for the online environment. Does it include interactive activities that support your learning objectives and help build your online community? Does it pull in resources from external sources including; web sites, video and articles? Are you engaging students through a variety of tools including the Discussion board, Virtual Classroom, email and group tools?
* Review your syllabus for all required information as outlined in the DGCE handbook. Does it take advantage of the online environment and include relative links to your content, library resources and the internet?
* Include your “Rules of Engagement” - Does the student know how to reach you? How often you will respond to them? How much to write on the discussion board? What are your expectations? Follow these steps to copy content from a previous semester. If you need assistance contact us at 508 626-4927.
* Follow these steps to copy course material from a previous semester. Begin in the Control Panel of the original (previous semester) course site:
1. Select Course Copy (Lower Left - Course options Box)
2. Select Copy Course Materials into an Existing Course
3. Click Browse to find your new course
4. Click Select to choose the course
5. Check the content you want to copy
6. Click Submit to save your changes

* Review the TEACH Act Policy and post this copyright statement in your site. Contact ATDE if you need to learn more.
1. **Become familiar with college resources including; eTutoring, Whittemore Library Services and Blackboard** third party Web 2.0 tools.
2. **Become familiar with the services available to students**. The document attached was prepared for an orientation session for online students. It is also posted on the Online Student Center area of Blackboard. If you have not visited the Organization site or the Student Center tab I encourage you to take a look and share your feedback.
3. **Visit the Online Faculty site on Blackboard.** This site was created as a resource for you to use during the semester. Check out the handouts from the recent Professional Development Workshop, review the posted resources, and participate in the Online Faculty Discussion Board forums.
4. **Do not hesitate to call or email me with any questions** regarding your class. Technical assistance is also available 24/7 for both you and your students by calling 866.361.8970 toll free. Share this information with your students as well.

@Pencils ready? Let the fun begin

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[www.framingham.edu/dgce/](http://www.framingham.edu/dgce/)

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