

# Teaching Online: The Tutorial

May 2011

## Office of Distance Learning

Tel. 301-846-2401  
kcarr@frederick.edu

### What do you need to complete this Tutorial?

1. You need to have completed your Basic and Advanced Blackboard training.
2. You need to be enrolled (as instructor) in an online Blackboard course that you are either going to teach or that you could teach in your discipline.
3. The assumption for this Tutorial is that you are in front of the Blackboard website for that particular course, including instructional materials, tests, assignments etc. If you do not have access to such a course, contact the Office of Distance Learning and we will create one for you.
4. Depending on prior experience, you will need some hours to complete the Tutorial.

**This Tutorial is also available on your course website in General Information>Faculty Resources.**

### How to complete this Tutorial?

There is a team of three faculty mentors in the Office of Distance Learning to assist you with this Tutorial. Please contact the office to get the help you need.

If you have experience teaching in the Online Classroom, you may want to go through the Tutorial by yourself and contact us with any questions you may have.

1. If you prefer, you can schedule a session in person or on the phone with a mentor to get you started.
2. If you are new to teaching in the Online Classroom, you should schedule an extended session with a faculty mentor to guide you through the whole tutorial.

### What will you have accomplished after completing this tutorial?

1. You will have become acquainted with most of the important quality standards for the design of online courses.
2. You will have become acquainted with the routines and procedures of successfully teaching an online course at Frederick Community College.
3. You will have gotten the course ready for a formal QM Peer Review
4. You can start teaching your online course.

### How is the Tutorial organized?

Following a general introduction, the Tutorial is divided into three parts:

Part (1) is about Teaching Online

Part (2) covers the standards for a quality course design from Quality Matter (QM),

Part (3) covers the routines and requirements for teaching the course online.

Each part lists a number of items that you can mark 'completed' on your NOTES page on the left. You should have your course website open in Blackboard while working on the Tutorial.

## About Quality Matters (QM)

*Quality Matters* (QM) is a nationally recognized Peer Review Protocol with a rubric of some 40 quality standards. The protocol calls for a review team of three peer faculty, two of whom come from other colleges around the country. When a course has successfully passed the formal review process it is assigned a "QM" logo. Frederick Community College has adopted the standards of *Quality Matters* to create and monitor the design of its online and hybrid courses. Familiarity with those standards is essential to teaching in the Online Classroom. More information, including the text of the latest edition of the rubric, can be found at <http://www.qmprogram.org/>

## Part (1) About Teaching Online

Teaching online comes in two formats:

1. you teach only in one classroom and that is the Online Classroom;
2. you teach in two classrooms, the Online Classroom and the on-campus classroom.

This tutorial focuses on teaching in the Online Classroom.

### Is teaching online different to teaching face-to-face?

Yes..and no. Researchers and practitioners tend to agree that the essential principles of good teaching do not change from face-to-face to online teaching, but that online instructors' roles are different. What works in an on-campus classroom does not often work so well in an online learning environment. Teaching Online requires you to organize student learning, and that is a lot more demanding and perhaps more difficult, than delivering an exciting lecture.

How different the online teaching role is for you very much depends on your own personal teaching philosophy and teaching style. If you are used to being the "sage on the stage" seeing your role as predominantly delivering content to students through lectures, you will experience a greater shift in your teaching role as you move online than a "guide on the side" colleague who already uses collaborative, learner-centered, constructivist approaches to facilitating learning. Of course, like on-campus teaching, there is no one way to teach well online, but there are some good "best practices" that have emerged from the last couple of decades' research into online teaching.

### Four Distinct Roles for Online Instructors:

- Pedagogy – **subject-matter expert, educational facilitator, assessor** through engaging students with content, each other, and the instructor
- Management – **course administrator** through providing leadership and direction to organize logistics such as rules of engagement, norms, due dates, objectives, coordination of group work, pacing etc.
- Social issues – **group leader** responsible for setting a collegial, friendly learning environment in which students feel comfortable collaborating
- Technology – **technical mentor**, but not necessarily technical expert, able to help students feel comfortable in the online learning environment and knowledgeable about student support services to refer students who experience problems with technology.

(Credit: Collins and Berge, 1996)

**Advice from Experienced Online Instructors:**

- Be prepared to commit time on a daily basis to your course – instructors need to be “present” in their course, so their students do not feel that they are posting into a void. Let your students know if you will be “absent” for a few days.
- Be very organized – teaching online means you need to prepare your course before the course starts and have clear instructions for students on what is expected of them on a weekly basis.
- Use “push and pull” communication strategies – be aware that students may be nervous novice online students who need to be explicitly directed to resources and activities that seem obvious to you.
- Practice respect and establish inclusion – instructors obviously also do this on-campus too, but the online environment requires extra sensitivity in the way words are used as there is no body language or smile to help get the message across. Students who “go missing” or never show up at the start of the course need to be contacted one-on-one – sometimes it just takes a quick phone call to set everything right for a student.

(Credit: Conrad, 2007)

**Advantages in Using an Online Classroom.**

1. Flexibility: Online learning includes ample opportunities for students to pursue coursework at any time that fits into their busy lives.
2. Highly interactive discussions: In online discussion, every student in the class is expected to respond, respond intelligently, and respond several times. Asynchronous discussions frequently last for a week and include 100 or more student postings.
3. Enriched course materials: For example, well-constructed, creative online courses can take anthropology students to cultures all over the world, archaeology students to active digs, art students to the finest museum collections, and business students to corporations large and small. World-class resources can be accessed, viewed, and studied 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
4. On-demand interaction and support services: Help is only a click away in an online course. Online courses can include many types of interactive learning aids such as flash cards, immediate feedback tests, and PowerPoint presentations, contact with the instructor and classmates, e-mail, chat rooms, discussion boards and a whole host of campus services, including registration, academic advising, financial aid information and forms, services for students with disabilities, 24/7 libraries, and online tutoring.
5. Immediate feedback: Online students generally have greater access to instructors. Online tests and quizzes with automatic grading can provide immediate feedback and references to text and class notes with explanations.

(Credit: Mark Kassop 2003)

## Part (2) Course Design

The 23 design components listed in this part of the Tutorial are derived from the QM Rubric and are essential to teaching your course smoothly and successfully. Assuming that you are looking at a BB course website,

- (a) identify each item,
- (b) if it needs change or update, modify it,
- (c) if it does not exist, create it

### 1. Identify, modify or create 8 basic navigation buttons: 'Announcements', 'About this Course', 'Faculty', 'Assignments', 'General Information', 'My Grades', 'Email', and 'Discussion Board'.

#### More.....

The majority of online students at FCC take several courses in the Blackboard environment. The 8 navigation buttons are suggested to assure a family resemblance among FCC online courses. Depending on your particular course, you may end up with more buttons, such as 'Course Documents' or 'External Links' etc. Be sure not to have too many so that your navigation panel does not exceed the heights of the screen.

### 2. Select the "General Information" button to see that FCC's General Information template is loaded.

#### More.....

General Information should display at least 11 items, such as Instructor Resources (not visible to the student), Edit Personal Information, Syllabus, Study Tips for the Course, Blackboard Student Tutorial, Problems, Netiquette, Student Support Services, Academic Support Services, Disability Services, etc. For missing items contact the Office of Distance Learning.

### 3. Check, modify or create a layout of your course that is intuitive and easy to navigate.

#### More.....

The basic layout of the course should be anchored in the answer to two student questions:

- (1) What am I supposed to do now? Answer: Look under "Assignments" for each week/unit!
- (2) Where do I find information about....? Answer: Look under "General Information"! Also, the principle of multiple access to items makes for good design. Example: you give access to tests in the respective week/unit they are taken. In addition, you also create a navigation button called "Tests" where you give access to all tests taken in this course.

### 4. Identify, modify or create instructions that make clear how the student gets started in the course and where to find various course components.

#### More.....

Instructions provide a general course overview, present the schedule for activities, guide the new student to explore the course website, and indicate what to do first, instead of listing detailed navigational instructions for the whole course. Instructors may choose to incorporate some of this information in the course syllabus. If so, students should be directed to the syllabus at the beginning of the course. A useful idea is an "About This Course" or "Start Here" button or icon on the course home page, linking students to start-up information.

Hybrid Courses: Instructions in the online classroom make it apparent to students that this is a hybrid course with both online and face-to-face components and activities. Specific instructions are given that indicate the requirements for participation in both the online and face-to-face portions of the course. The introductory information clearly states when and where students should participate each week, and a structured set of topics and schedule is provided for each face-to-face meeting.

Examples:

- A course "tour"
- A "scavenger hunt" assignment that leads students through an exploration of the different areas of the course areas
- A graphical table or diagram that depicts and explains the relationship between the online and face-to-face portions of a hybrid course

### 5. Identify, modify or create a statement that introduces the student to how learning is organized in this course.

#### More.....

The instructor's statement gives the new student an idea of how the learning process is structured, including schedule, communications modes, types of activities, and assessments. These features are often found in the course syllabus, but they may also be found in an introductory or welcome document.

Hybrid Courses: Instructors should explain the overall purpose of the online and face-to-face portions of the course, and how they work together and reinforce each other. The instructor indicates how and why both formats are important to the learning, and the value that each format brings to the students' learning experience.

**6. Identify, modify or create a statement that clearly explains etiquette expectations with regard to discussions, email, and other forms of communication in the class.**

**More.....**

In general terms a statement of online etiquette is provided as part of the General Information template. Check the statement to see whether you need more specific instructions for your discussion board. It is a good idea, for example, to require that all student documents are transmitted in 'rtf' format.

**7. Identify, modify or create a "Who is who" forum in the Discussion Board.**

**More.....**

The student introduction helps to create a supportive learning environment and a sense of community. Students are asked to introduce themselves and given guidance on where and how they should do so. Student introductions themselves are not evaluated.

Instructors may ask students to answer specific questions (such as why they are taking the course, what concerns they have, what they expect to learn, etc.) or may choose to let the student decide what to include. Instructors may provide an example of an introduction and/or start the process by introducing themselves.

Hybrid Courses: The opportunity for introductions should be available electronically for students who may have missed the opportunity during early face-to-face meetings.

**8. Identify, modify or create a statement that describes clearly minimum student skills, and, if applicable, prerequisite knowledge in the discipline.**

**More.....**

The College requires that you check whether your students have actually met the prerequisite requirements for this class. You need a statement that articulates the requirements. You can provide this statement in the syllabus or separately on your course website.

**9. Identify, modify or create module/unit/chapter learning objectives and make sure that they describe outcomes that are measurable and consistent with the course-level objectives.**

**More.....**

Measurable module or unit-level learning objectives are important. They precisely describe the specific competencies, skills, and knowledge that students should be able to master and demonstrate at regular intervals throughout the course. They provide students with greater focus and clarity of learning expectations and outcomes on a weekly, modular, or unit basis. Module- or unit-level objectives may be written by the instructor or come from the textbook. *Regardless of origin, these objectives should be stated within the actual module/unit so that they are accessible to the student.*

Module/unit learning objectives guide instructors to accurately assess student accomplishment. Objectives should describe student performance in specific, observable terms. Note that at some institutions, learning objectives may be referred to as learning outcomes.

The module/unit-level objectives should be consistent with the course-level objectives. The module/unit objectives may either be implicitly or explicitly consistent with the course-level objectives. For example, the module/unit objective "*Students will write sentences that demonstrate correct usage of commas, semicolons, and periods.*" is implicitly consistent with the course objective "*Students will demonstrate correct writing skills.*"

**10. Identify, modify or create assessments that measure the stated learning outcomes and are consistent with course activities.**

**More.....**

Assessments and learning outcomes/objectives align in a clear and direct way. The assessment formats provide a reasonable way to measure the stated learning outcomes.

Examples of outcome/assessment alignment:

- A problem analysis evaluates critical thinking skills.
- A multiple choice quiz verifies vocabulary knowledge.
- A composition assesses writing skills.

Examples of inconsistent alignment between learning outcomes and assessment:

- The outcome is to be able to "write a persuasive essay" but the assessment is a multiple choice test.
- The outcome is to "demonstrate discipline-specific information literacy" and the assessment is a rubric-scored term paper, but students are not given any practice with information literacy skills on smaller assignments.

**11. Identify, modify or create the course grading policy and make sure it is stated clearly and all grade items appear in the grade center.**

**More.....**

A clear explanation indicates how the course grades are computed. The points, percentages, and weights for each component of the course grade are clearly stated. The relationship(s) between points, percentages, weights, and letter grades are explained. The instructor's policy on late submissions is clearly stated.

Review the clarity of the explanation and presentation to the student, not the simplicity or complexity of a given grading system itself. A relatively complex grading system can still be unambiguous and easy to understand.

Examples:

- A list of all activities, tests, etc. that will affect the students' grade
- An explanation of the relationship between the final course letter grade and the student's accumulated points and/or percentages
- If points and percentages are used, an explanation of the relationship between these two

**12. Identify, modify or create specific and descriptive criteria for the evaluation of students' work and participation.**

**More.....**

This description and/or statement of criteria provide students with clear guidance as to the expectations and required components of work and participation. These criteria give students a clear idea of how to strive for a particular grade on an assignment or activity.

You help the students by showing them your evaluation criteria in advance, but you also save time and make your own life easier when it comes to assessing students' work. For example, create a rubric for grading essay exams. Discussions are notoriously difficult to grade consistently; make a decision now how you will assess participation and save yourself future headaches.

**13. Identify, modify or create "self-check" or practice types of assignments for timely student feedback.**

**More.....**

Remember, both you and the student organize learning. Consequently, both you and the student need to assess what is learned and how it is learned. Practice exercises that the student can repeat to gauge success are a good way of accomplishing that. Students learn more effectively if they receive frequent, meaningful, and timely feedback. As a matter of incentives, you may want to consider awarding credit not for the results but for doing it.

Examples:

- Writing assignments that allow for the submission of a draft for instructor comment and suggestions for improvement
- Self-mastery tests and quizzes that include informative feedback with each answer choice
- Interactive games and simulations that have feedback built in
- Practice quizzes
- Practice written assignments
- Peer reviews
- Model papers or essays provided for students' viewing
- Sample answers or answer keys provided for students' viewing

**14. Identify, modify or create the instructional materials and explain to the student how they contribute to the achievement of the stated learning objectives and what to do with them.**

**More.....**

Course materials, resources, and learning objectives align in a clear and direct way. The course materials and resources provide a reasonable base to achieve the stated learning objectives. Most courses are based on a text book; some come with study guides, printed or on disks. Some courses use videos. The point is to identify them one by one for yourself and for the student just to be clear as to how they relate to the chapter/module/unit objectives. For example, you have students watch video segments, explain why they are watching them and what are they getting out of it in view of the learning objectives.

**15. Check the learning activities in your course and consider whether they foster appropriate levels of interactions (student-to-student, student-to-faculty, student-to-content).**

**More.....**

With few exceptions of self-paced courses, in most online course the active learner is best an inter-active learner. Having students watch a video is one thing, organizing a discussion around it is more engaging and students probably learn more and learn better.

**16. Check whether the instructional materials have sufficient breadth, depth, and currency for the student to learn the subject.**

**More.....**

Breadth: The course materials are robust and create a rich learning environment for students. Instructors should provide meaningful content in a variety of ways, including the textbook, PowerPoint presentations, websites, lecture notes, outlines, and multimedia.

Depth: The level of detail in supporting materials is appropriate for the level of the course, and provides sufficient depth for students to achieve the learning objectives. For example, an upper-level capstone course should include significantly deeper materials than those required for an introductory general education course.

Currency: The materials represent up-to-date thinking and practice in the discipline.

Also, when you inherit a course from a previous semester, you want to be sure that the textbook is current; sometimes the video materials are old and need updating; Internet links get corrupted and websites disappear. You want to be sure up-front that everything is working.

**17. Check all resources and materials used in the course and see whether they are appropriately cited.**

More.....

Materials from other sources should be distinctly identified. Text, images, graphic materials, tables, videos, audios, websites, and other forms of multimedia are appropriately referenced according to normal copyright standards.

Courses that use an e-pack or course cartridge may provide a blanket statement acknowledging that a significant portion of the course materials came from the publisher rather than include individual citations for each instance of publisher materials. Most supplementary resources come with the textbook and the permission to use them. However, it is good practice to identify the permission of the publisher in conjunction with sets of items such as additional lecture materials, glossaries or the like.

**18. Make sure that the tools and media used in your course support the learning objectives, guide the student to become a more active learner, and are appropriately chosen to deliver the content of the course.**

More.....

Tools and media used in the course support related learning objectives, and are contextually integrated with texts and lesson assignments. Students know how the tools and media support the assignments and how they support the learning objectives. Technology is not used simply for the sake of using technology. For example, a course might require viewing video materials, but it may not be clear how the video materials illustrate or support any learning objective.

Examples of tools include discussion boards, chat rooms, grade center, whiteboard, etc. Examples of media include video, audio, animations, simulations, etc.

Media are not required but, *if* media are used they should support the learning objectives and be contextually integrated.

**19. Make sure that technologies required for this course are either provided or easily downloadable.**

More.....

The term "technologies" covers a range of plug-ins such as Acrobat Reader, media players, etc. In addition, courses may require special software packages (spreadsheets, math calculators, etc.). Clear instructions list the required software and plug-ins, along with instructions for obtaining and installing these items.

**20. Identify, modify or create instructions that articulate or link to a clear description of the technical support offered for this course.**

More.....

Technical support includes information about such topics as how to log in, how to use the software, and how to upload files. It does not include help with course content, assignments, or academic or student support services.

Make sure that students have access to technical support services from within the course.

There should be a clear description of the services, including a link to BBassist's support website, a link to the myfcc email helpdesk.

**21. Identify, modify or create course pages and course materials to provide equivalent alternatives to auditory and visual content.**

More.....

Alternative means of access to course information are provided for the vision- or hearing-impaired student, such as, equivalent textual representations of images, audio, animations, and video in the course website. Presenting information in text format is generally acceptable because screen reader software (used by the vision-impaired) can read text.

This standard applies to the information and content provided *within* the course management system. It does not apply to external web sites to which the course links.

Examples:

- Audio lecture has a text transcript available.
- Video clip, image, or animation is accompanied by a text transcript.  
Video programs are close-captioned

## 22. Identify, modify or create course pages that have external links to ensure that they are self-describing and meaningful.

### More.....

The Internet links should include useful descriptions of what students will find at those sites. These descriptions enable the vision-impaired student to use screen reader software to understand links. In addition, instructors provide directions that clearly direct students to the appropriate sub-pages within an external web site. Make sure that the links actually work.

Examples:

- All file names and web hyperlinks have meaningful names. For instance, the link to take a quiz should say "Take Quiz 1," not "click here."
- Icons used as links should also have HTML tags or an accompanying text link.
- To facilitate access to Internet sites by screen readers, links are arranged in numeric or alphabetic order, rather than simple bulleted form.

## 23. Check all course pages for screen readability issues.

### More.....

Your course should employ appropriate font, color, and spacing to facilitate readability and minimize distractions for the student.

Examples of practices that facilitate readability and minimize distractions include:

- If using color coding, use additional means to communicate information, such as the additional use of bold or italics in conjunction with color coding.
- Sufficient contrast is used for the font and background colors
- Text size is consistent with typical View/Text Size settings.
- Course pages provide an alternate, non-color-coded format.
- Formatting and color coding are used to serve specific instructional purposes. For example, format and color are used purposefully to communicate key points, group like items, emphasize relevant relationships, etc.

## Part (3) Teaching the Course Online at FCC

In the previous part of the Tutorial you identified, modified, or created the design components of your course website. This part (2) provides you with a checklist of things to do before, during, and after the semester.

### A. To-do list before the semester:

#### 1. At the beginning of the registration period get your syllabus approved by the Department Chair and send it to the Office of Distance Learning.

### More.....

The syllabus is very important as it will be posted to the list of online courses at <http://courses.frederick.edu> so students have the information to decide whether to take the course. The syllabus also contains information about the textbook (including online E-versions of the text) and additional features (like streaming video or instructor availability) which the student might need ahead of time. The syllabus template can be found in the Faculty Resources folder in each online course.

#### 2. Office Hours: Make sure you have chosen and announced to your students how you plan to conduct your office hours.

### More.....

Of course, regular email traffic in an online class is the equivalent to office hours. However, you should be aware of the current FCC office hours policy. It re-affirms for online courses three purposes that were traditionally articulated for f-2-f classes on campus:

1. to give the student reasonable opportunity to consult with the instructor or designee in person
2. to give the Instructor the opportunity to direct student requests to designated blocks of time.
3. to publish these designated times at the beginning of the semester.

You can choose one of three modalities to conduct your Office Hours:

- (a) your office hours will be subsumed in the email traffic with your students, no designated times;
- (b) you conduct Office Hours at a designated time synchronously in a chat room;
- (c) you conduct Office Hours at a designated time asynchronously in a Discussion Board forum.

Make sure that students (upon request) are given the opportunity to meet face-to-face with you or a designated representative (the Director of Distance Learning, for example).

Any one of these options meets the required number of faculty Office Hours for this course in proportion to your total number of office hours for the current semester.



### 3. Copy the course content from a previous semester. (Appendix C)

#### More.....

You will receive email notification when the course shells for the coming semester have been created; an attachment will contain detailed instruction for the copy process. The no-frills basics can be found in APPENDIX C.

On your opening Blackboard screen identify the new course shell under "My Courses". After copying the material (except for "General Information")

- Open the new course.
- Check that all materials, including tests and Grade Center items, have been copied;
- Check that the link to your syllabus is working;
- If you encounter problems, have your "copy completed" confirmation email ready and contact [bbassist@frederick.edu](mailto:bbassist@frederick.edu).

### 4. Set up your faculty profile and introduce yourself in the Discussion Board.

#### More.....

The faculty profile includes the essentials, such as the instructor's name, title, field of expertise, email address, office hours and phone number. A photograph should be included.

The self introduction in the Discussion Board (Who-is-Who) helps students get to know the instructor and should extend beyond the essentials. It creates a sense of connection between the instructor and the students. It should present the instructor as professional as well as approachable. It could include

- Information on teaching philosophy
- Past experiences with teaching online classes
- Personal information such as hobbies, family, travel experiences, etc.

**Hybrid Courses:** The instructor's self-introduction should be available in Blackboard for students who missed early face-to-face meetings.

### 5. Set up the statistics feature for individual items in your BB website.

#### More.....

The statistics feature can be very helpful for monitoring learning activities results of which are not submitted or graded. Examples include self-test activities, supplemental reading, watching video, listening to audio segments, visiting an external website etc. Monitoring the user frequency or consistency may help you to make adjustments in required vs. non-required assignments or re-think the usefulness of a particular course feature.

### 6. Weeks and Dates Chronology

#### More.....

One of the basic design rules for an online class stipulates that there should be no actual dates in the website. The reason is that you don't want to copy dates from any previous semester into your current semester's course shell, this applies particularly to situations when you inherit a course website from someone else. Examples for possible exceptions to this rule are a broadcast schedule for videos or announcements. The internal course chronology (Thursday, Assignment Week 5) can be synchronized with the actual semester dates in a table called "Weeks and Dates". Tables for Spring and Fall can be copied from General Information>Instructor Resources>Copy Weeks and Dates. Post the table as a permanent announcement that the student will see each time the website is opened.

### 7. Welcome email/Announcement (Appendix A)

#### More.....

Before or on the day you make the website available ((5-4 days before the start of the semester) you send out a welcome email with all the information that the student needs to get started. This is a balancing act between giving as much detailed information as possible and keeping it as short as possible so students might actually read it. The text should be posted as an Announcement and go out as an email at the same time. Look at the Appendix and get an idea of what might go into your Announcement. Print your BB roster at that time so you can easily identify additional students and send them a copy of the Welcome email.

<p><b>8. Address Academic Honesty (Appendix B)</b></p> <p>More.....</p> <p>Academic Honesty in the online environment has been a much debated issue. The dust from the debate seems to settle slowly and three issues emerge clearly; (a) Academic Honesty as an issue of attitude and trust in the instructor-student relationship; (b) Academic Honesty as an issue of which methods and types of assessment are more or are less conducive (c) Academic Honesty as a practical issue of prevention. To begin with, you want to make sure that you and your students work from the same set of expectations. There is a pledge form available at <a href="http://courses.frederick.edu/utilities/regform.htm">http://courses.frederick.edu/utilities/regform.htm</a> which you could use. In the Appendix you will also find language that attempts to establish an understanding with the student and serve as a point of reference in case of a violation.</p>
<p><b>9. Call Attention to the Student's Schedule</b></p> <p>More.....</p> <p>Most students who fail in an Online Course do so because they do not have the time it takes to be successful. Tell your students approximately how many hours a week they will need for your course and ask them to create a weekly schedule with all the hours actually filled in. Use the tool <a href="http://www.frederick.edu/student_services/distancelearning/schedule_tool.htm">http://www.frederick.edu/student_services/distancelearning/schedule_tool.htm</a> for a reality check.</p>
<p><b>10. Make all unused folders, communication and tool links unavailable</b></p> <p>More.....</p> <p>There is nothing more annoying than clicking on dead links or opening empty folders on a website. Make sure that all your links work; in your website go a) the dropdown arrows next to any unused button to make it unavailable to students; (b) open any 'tool' and 'communication' item and make all features that you do not use unavailable.</p>
<p><b>11. Make all course content available at the beginning of the semester</b></p> <p>More.....</p> <p>The question whether all course content should be available to student at the beginning of the semester has been debated among practitioners for some time. There is a growing consensus on three points: (a) as a default, having all courses content available at the beginning of the course is considered good practice; (b) there are very legitimate reasons in certain types of classes not to follow the rule; (c) tests that are not made available in advance should appear as "unavailable" in a folder that indicates the nature, scope and deadline for the test.</p>
<p><b>12. Make the course available.</b></p> <p>More.....</p> <p>By default, all course shells are created "Unavailable". When you are ready, you must manually change the setting to "Available". There is a conflict of interest between the instructor and the student. The instructor wants as much time as possible to get the course ready before going live; most students, particularly first time online students, would like access to the website before the class starts to get acquainted with navigation and assignments. Here is the best compromise: the course website must be available no less than 4 days before the official beginning of the term.</p>
<p><b>B. To-do List during the semester</b></p>
<p><b>13. Monitor your class roster in BB</b></p> <p>More.....</p> <p>The class roster will be posted in your BB course shell for the current semester automatically about 3 weeks prior to the start of the course. The roster will be automatically updated three times a day. Students who drop the class prior to the end of the late registration period will not re-appear in the subsequent roster update. Students who withdraw ("W") from the class after the end of the late registration period will be retained but "x" marked in the subsequent roster update. Please report any discrepancies immediately. You need to monitor your class roster during the late registration period for new comers to receive your Welcome email.</p>
<p><b>14. Report Class Attendance</b></p> <p>More.....</p> <p>Both State and Federal Government require the College to report attendance for Financial Aid and State funding. During the first weeks of the semester you will receive an email from the Financial Aid Office telling you when to do that. Here is how you do that:</p>

- Sign into PeopleSoft as you normally do.
- In the left menu area click on Self Service, then Faculty Center.
- In the Faculty Center, lower right hand corner click on the link Class Attendance/Early Alert Roster
- Enter the code for the current term
- Click the Search button — this will produce a list of all courses you are teaching.
- Click on a course to open the roster for that course.
- Review your roster and check the "Present" box for all students who are currently attending the course.
- For those who either never attended or have stopped attending, select the appropriate option under the Reason column — i.e. "Never Attended," or "Stopped Attending"
- Click on the Save button at the bottom of the page.
- If you teach more than one course, use the Return to Search button to return to your list of courses. Complete this process for each course you teach.

## 15. Look up the Study Skills Report

More.....

If you want to have some idea of how prepared your students are academically, you may want to take a look at their own assessment of their study skills. Here is how you do that:

- Sign into PeopleSoft as you normally do.
- In the left menu area click on Self Service, then Faculty Center.
- In the Faculty Center, lower right hand corner click on the link Class Attendance/Early Alert Roster
- Enter the code for the current term
- Click the Search button — this will produce a list of all courses you are teaching.
- Click on a course to open the roster for that course.
- Select the Study Skills Results link on the right above the roster of students. You may notice that some students on your roster do not have a study skills result.
- In order to organize the list for a specific characteristic or the total column, click on the top of the column and it will group good, average, and poor placements in total aggregate or by individual study skills characteristic.
- Students can find relevant resource links located on the college website by going to: [www.frederick.edu](http://www.frederick.edu)\_ > Enroll & Register > First Year Students
- Instructors can find resource links to assist students by going to: [www.frederick.edu](http://www.frederick.edu)\_ > Faculty & Staff > Center for Teaching & Learning

## 16. Use the Early Alert System for Student Success

More.....

Beginning the third week of class identify those students who have not participated in any class activities or are falling behind on their first assignments. You can now send them an electronic Early Alert. Students receive Early Alerts through their MyFCC e-mail account and a paper copy is mailed to their home address. The Early Alert will inform the student of each concern that you have identified on the Early Alert form as well as each recommendation you select on the form. Here is how it works:

- Sign into PeopleSoft as you normally do.
- In the left menu area click on Self Service, then Faculty Center.
- In the Faculty Center, lower right hand corner click on the link Class Attendance/Early Alert Roster
- Enter the code for the current term
- Click the Search button — this will produce a list of all courses you are teaching.
- Click on a course to open the roster for that course.
- From your course roster, select the Early Alert link for any student you wish to send an Early Alert.
- Complete the Early Alert form identifying the basis of your concern, any recommended action the student should take and your recommendation if the student should remain in the course or consider withdrawing. NOTE — Once the deadline to withdraw from your course has passed you are not able to select the recommendation to withdraw.
- Click the SAVE button at the bottom of the page — this sends the Early Alert to the student's e-mail account.
- To return to your roster, click the Back to Attendance/Early Alert Roster link at the bottom of the page.
- When you send a student an Early Alert, it will be archived so that you can keep track of Early Alerts that you have sent. To view a previously sent Early Alert for a particular student, click on the Existing Early Alerts link next to the student's name. To return to your roster, click the Back to Attendance/Early Alert Roster link at the bottom of the page.
- If you teach more than one course, use the Return to Search button at the bottom of the page to return to your list of courses. Complete this process for each course you teach.

**17. Six week grade notification requirement**

More.....

The College requires that all students receive notification during the sixth week of classes about their grades in the class. The commonly used interpretation considers this requirement to be met if the student has received (and has knowledge of) one or two grades that indicate the student's academic standing in the class. If the student has not received a formal grade or if the formal grade received is not indicative of his academic standing, the student must receive formal written communication from the instructor.

**18. Establish your weekly contact schedule with students**

More.....

Regular and friendly contact with students is the foundation for success in teaching a well designed online class. College policy promises the online student a response to normal email inquiries within 24 to 36 hours unless the instructor has announced an exception to that pattern due to illness, travel or the like (adjust to accelerated formats). Generations of online instructors agree on one piece of advice: check your email daily and provide a slot in your daily work schedule to deal with student email in your course or courses. Many instructors have found a weekly "Monday Morning" email to the class helpful as a user-friendly, more personable reminder of what is coming up in the week ahead.

**19. Remind students of the dates for the proctored test components**

More.....

Students taking an online class can expect that all tests and exams are taken online and at least one of them in a proctored situation. However, at least one assessment component during the course should be placed in a proctored environment, either on the FCC campus or the Testing facility of another institution. To have the results of one assessment component unmistakably connected to the picture ID of the student is not only an institutional necessity, but serves to protect the instructor in cases of alleged cheating etc. For the proctored component the FCC Testing Center recommends a time frame from Thursday to the following Wednesday. Preferably the proctored exam should not be scheduled at the end of the semester as this would not leave any room for re-testing in case that the results from the proctored test are completely out of line with the non-proctored exams. The date of the proctored component for which the student has to come to the college must be published prominently in the syllabus or any other appropriate location in the website. Arrangements for exams to be proctored at other Colleges should be made as early as possible. Contact the Office of Distance Learning for help and advice.

**20. Mid-Semester Feedback (Appendix D)**

More.....

The College recommends that you ask students for feedback around the midpoint of the semester. Most Online Instructors welcome students' comments and responses to particular questions at that time to get confirmation on what works well and to consider possible adjustments in the course protocol. See Appendix D for sample questions.

**21. Inappropriate Student Behavior**

More.....

Use common sense to correct inappropriate language or violation of established online etiquette. If the problem persists contact the Director of Distance Learning. The guiding policy can be found in your Course Information>Faculty Resources.

**C. To-do list For the End of the Semester****22. Student Evaluations**

More.....

During the second part of the semester you will receive email notification indicating when and for how long the Course Evaluation button on your course navigation bar will be active. The student evaluation form is designed for the valuation of one instructor. If there are two instructors in the course and both need to be evaluated, please inform the Office of Distance Learning. Otherwise be sure to remove all other instructors (such as mentors or colleagues) before the evaluation period begins. When students click the activated button they will be able to submit the evaluation form. Students cannot access the form a second time. When you click the button you will be able to see the response rate at a given time. Please send 1-3 email reminders to the class emphasizing the importance of filling out the evaluation form. You will be able to see the aggregated results when you click the Course valuation button after the College's deadline for submitting grades. **Make sure to save the results for the current semester** as they will no longer be available when the following semester begins.

**23. Post Grades to PeopleSoft**

More.....

Towards the end of every semester you will receive notification from the Registrar's Office about the due dates for posting your final grades. Instructions for how to do that will be attached. When you get the notification, give it a quick trial run just to be sure that your password works and all your classes are loaded under your name.

**24. Download grades or print a hard copy.**

More.....

PeopleSoft records and keeps only the final grade. At the end of each semester you are **required** to keep the record of all grades on file for 1 year at a location other than Blackboard.

**25. Change Grade and Assign "I" Grade**

More.....

By default, two weeks after the semester end date your course website will become unavailable to students. If you have an "I" student, you need to manually override the default. Go >Control Panel>Customization>Properties>Set Course Duration to change the 'End Date' to less than 8 weeks (Spring Fall), 4 weeks (Summer) and 2 weeks (J-Term) after the last day of classes. If you want to change a student grade for any reason, the registrar's office requires that you complete and sign a form. The form is available online; here is what you do:

- (1) Log into PSoft>Self Service>Faculty Center
- (2) select 'Request Grade Change' low right of the screen
- (3) Save a copy of the form on your computer
- (4) Print, complete and sign the form
- (5a) Scan the completed form and email to [kfrawley@frederick.edu](mailto:kfrawley@frederick.edu) or
- (5b) Fax the completed form to Kathy Frawley

**APPENDIX A (Sample Welcome Email: Copy and Paste what you can use)**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to welcome you to the X session of class-online. Students have found the website easy to navigate and report that it is as easy/difficult as other classes they have taken on campus. You should be prepared to spend as much time as you have spent on the average in other on-campus classes. You will need something like 6x1 hour a week to deal with the material successfully. If you don't have the time now, consider taking the course next semester. Go to

[http://www.frederick.edu/student\\_services/distancelearning/schedule\\_tool.htm](http://www.frederick.edu/student_services/distancelearning/schedule_tool.htm) for a reality check on your schedule. Please go to and bookmark (favorites) our website <http://frederick.blackboard.com/>.

As a FCC student, your user ID is W followed by the 7-digit student ID number; your initial password is the last 4 digits of your student ID number.

Students from other Colleges taking this class use (*Instructor: Insert information from the Office of Distance Learning as to user ID and the initial password*).

Change the password when you get in and check your personal information, especially the email address. You are responsible for keeping your email address current on our course website.

Please get familiar with all the features of our website. Introduce yourself in our Who is Who.

Check whether you have the correct text book !!

**Videos!!!** This course includes supporting Video segments. You need Broadband Internet access to watch them.

**Organization:** The backbone for navigating this class is in 2 buttons located in the navigation panel of our course website:

1. "Assignments": If you want to know what to do next, you go to the assignment pages (one for each week or unit). Organize your work and your schedule week by week accordingly.
2. "General Information": If you want to find out about something in the course, what something is, where it is, etc you go there.

More about the organization of the course under "About the Course". For now Go to Class Forum / Who is Who and introduce yourself. Familiarize yourself with all the features of the website.

If you have any questions, please let me know. Except for grading assignments, I usually respond within 24 hours (15 week format) or 18 hours (8 week format) to email inquiries.

**!!!! IMPORTANT-IMPORTANT-IMPORTANT !!!!!**

Every one of your emails to me must have SO101on1 and your last name in the subject line; without either one of them I will not be able to read your email and respond.

All documents attached to your emails to me must be in RTF format.

Have a good start with our first reading and discussion in the first week of class.

**APPENDIX B****Academic Honesty****(Sample: Copy and Paste what you can use)**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This is our first week of classes and I am writing to ask that, if you have not done so, you sign Frederick Community College's Code of Academic Honesty. Go to <http://courses.frederick.edu/utilities/regform.htm> to complete and sign the form. Why is this important? In any true educational experience, academic integrity is a matter of mutual responsibility and trust. As a faculty member of this College I am committed to academic integrity and I would like to know that you share this commitment.

What difference does it make if you as a student or I as a faculty member violate the principles of academic integrity in a course, or even in only one particular course assignment?

For me, the answer is that integrity is important in this course precisely because integrity is important in all areas of life. If we don't have integrity in the small things, if we find it possible to justify plagiarism or cheating or shoddy work in things that may not seem important at the time, how will we resist doing the same in areas that we know do matter? Take an example, would you want to be operated on by a doctor who cheated his way through medical school? Or would you feel comfortable on a bridge designed by an engineer who cheated her way through engineering school. Would you trust your tax return to an accountant who copied his exam answers from his neighbor?

We live our lives in a web of interconnected rights and responsibilities that reflect our mutual dependence upon one another. Academic integrity is so important because the success of our individual efforts in this course depends to a good degree on the rest of us. And the failure of any of us--even just one of us--to do what is required will diminish, however slightly, the opportunity for the rest to achieve their goals. That is why it's essential for all of us in this class to practice academic integrity, in both senses of the word practice. For practice today will lay a solid foundation for practice tomorrow, and the day after that, and the day after that, so that through daily practice integrity will come to be woven throughout the fabric of our lives, and thus through at least a part of the fabric of society.

What does that involve for each of us in this course?

(1) Academic integrity basically requires the same things of me as a teacher, as it requires of you as a student.

(2) If you feel I've failed to live up to the standard, I trust that you will call me on it. If you fail to meet the standards, I have a responsibility to call you on it with respectful consideration.

(3) Here is my answer to the most difficult question with regard to academic integrity; what should you do, if you become aware of a fellow classmate who is not living up to the principles of academic integrity? My answer is that you should consider saying something to that student, and if that is not possible, you should tell me. In turn, I promise to be as considerate and respectful in treating the information as I can.

If you have any comments about this letter or its subject matter, please let me know. I am looking forward to a great semester.

**APPENDIX C****How to copy content from a BB source course to a new course shell?****(A)**

**On the opening Bboard screen identify the new course shell under "My Courses"**

1. Identify the new course shell according to the pattern "PH\_208\_Fallxx\_SecONLx\_Sess15"
2. Open the course shell. You will see only the 'Announcement' button and find no content. The class roster maybe loaded already or will be added later.
3. Close the course shell.

**(B)**

**On the opening Bboard screen identify the previous “source” course from which you copy the content into the new course shell. If you inherit the source course from another instructor, be sure to request ‘Instructor’ access to that course.**

1. Open the source course,
2. Go >Control Panel >Packages and Utilities>Course Copy >Copy Course Materials into an Existing Course

Under ‘Course Selection’: Browse to the Destination Course ID (new course shell identified under **(A)** above and ‘Select’;  
Under Course Materials check **ALL** fields (except for General Information), including those you don’t use;  
>Submit >Ok

**(C)**

**Bboard will need a little time to complete your ‘Copy’ request. Before opening the new shell you must wait until you receive an automated confirmation from [aramirez@frederick.edu](mailto:aramirez@frederick.edu) telling you that the copy process has been completed. Depending on the traffic volume on the Bboard server and the amount of material to be copied, it may take a while.**

**(D)**

**On the opening Bboard screen identify the new course shell under “My Courses”**

1. Open the new course.
2. Check that all materials, including tests and grade center items, have been copied;
3. If you encounter problems, have your confirmation email ready and contact [bbassist@frederick.edu](mailto:bbassist@frederick.edu).

**APPENDIX D****Mid-Semester Feedback**

***(Sample: Copy and Paste what you can use)***

Scale: Strongly Agree / Agree / Neither Agree nor Disagree / Disagree / Strongly Disagree / Not Applicable

- Posting to the Muddiest Point and responding to other students helps me to learn
- The pace of the class is NOT too fast
- The quality of the contact with the instructor is good
- The class discussions put me in touch with other students and I learn from them
- I watch the video segments every week and they help me learn better
- The instructor responds to my emails in a timely fashion
- The number and spacing of tests and exams is appropriate
- Reading, learning activities, and assignments fit together
- The course website is well organized and navigation is easy

## Open-ended Questions

- What feature(s) of the course are the most helpful to your ability to learn?
- What feature(s) of the course are least helpful to your ability to learn? How could it/they be improved?
- What do you like/ don’t you like about the textbook?