



Transforming the classroom-based model of learning to the Internet-based model can be difficult for instructors new to online learning. Before getting started with the hands-on activity of creating the course it is helpful to review some design considerations and do some preliminary planning and organization. The following sections will review some of the questions to ask and provide you with some things to think about when planning your online course. Space is provided to answer each question.

### **Prepare Yourself**

Educate yourself by reading articles about Web-based training, instructional design, technology education, and online learning. To find articles on these topics visit the DePaul University Library (<http://library.depaul.edu/>) and search some of the Library's online database for education (<http://library.depaul.edu/Find/databases.aspx>). You will also want to get practice using the software. Think about taking a training course (<http://www.itd.depaul.edu/website/faculty/Training/GroupClasses.asp>), completing an online tutorial (<http://www.itd.depaul.edu/website/faculty/default.asp>) or contact your IDD Consultant for a one-on-one training consultation about course design and set up at (<http://www.idd.depaul.edu/contactUs/index.aspx>).

### **Determine Your Course Information**

A Course may have a set of objectives, goals, and a syllabus that describes the purpose of the course and what the course is to cover. Gather these materials in a central location. Identify measurable course objectives. These objectives should incorporate materials delivered both in class and online. Determine what core competencies and knowledge students will need to meet these objectives.

*Question:* What type of information do you want to use to describe your course?

### **What are your Supporting Documents?**

Course handouts, lecture notes, or other visual aids may be used to guide students through the course. Gather these materials in a central location. Determine what formats your materials currently exist in.

Take note of items already in electronic formats such as word processed documents, spreadsheets, and slides. Documents not already in electronic form will need to be converted. Visit one of the faculty labs (<http://www.itd.depaul.edu/website/faculty/ITDServices/FacultyLabs.asp>) for assistance with this process. If you use the Lincoln Park lab, help is next door in the ITD offices in SAC 284.

*Question:* What supporting documents do you want students to use in your course?

**What Assignments do you want to give?**

Instructors have the flexibility of creating assignments, and making them available at a later date. When constructing and posting assignments, make sure that you provide comprehensive descriptions indicating the relevance to the classroom-based course component and corresponding materials.

In addition you can provide students cues that will direct them from a current assignment to related assignments, readings, web sites, library resources, or other course documents.

*Question:* Are there assignments that you want your students to complete online? If so what are they and when should they be available?

**What External Links do you want to provide?**

So much information is now available on the Web. Use external links to provide your students with links to recommended websites, required readings (electronic reserves), and DePaul Library databases. Your IDD Consultant (<http://www.idd.depaul.edu/contactUs/>) can help you make these links and your Library Liaison (<http://library.depaul.edu/About/reserves.aspx>) can help you identify library and Web resources appropriate for your class..

*Question:* Are there Websites or other external links that your students should access and review? If so what are they?

**Will you utilize the Discussion Board?**

The discussion board is useful for posting information for all students to view and respond to. The discussion board is also useful for facilitating ongoing discussions about various topics. In addition students with differing learning styles have the ability to participate on a more equal footing during discussion board interactions.

*Question:* Are there topics that could be facilitated by a discussion board? If so what are they?

**Will you utilize the Virtual Classroom?**

The virtual classroom allows you and your students to interact outside of the classroom in a synchronous (real time) environment. The virtual classroom can be used to conduct office hours, provide content, or for small groups to communicate.

*Question:* How might the virtual classroom be used in this course?

**Will you use Groups?**

Students can be organized into smaller project or study groups. The instructor has the option of giving each of these groups their own discussion board, virtual classroom, file exchange, and email functions. Use groups to encourage students to focus interactivity in smaller numbers or to work collaboratively on projects.

*Question: Do you want to organize students into groups?*

**What Assessments do you plan on doing?**

Quizzes, homework, and exams are just a few of the assessments that can be completed online. Blackboard now has over 17 different types of question formats. You can now randomize the order of the questions and also randomize their corresponding answers. When planning what assessment you will be having your students complete online, remember that the online environment is not as “secure” as the classroom environment for administering and taking exams. You can use the online questions for students to review and give them feedback about the correct answers.

You can create assessments from scratch using the assessment manager. If you already have quiz or exam questions in an electronic form, use Respondus (<http://www.itd.depaul.edu/website/faculty/TechnologyTools/Respondus.asp>) to convert your existing questions for use in Blackboard.

*Question: Are there assessments that can be completed online in this course?*

**Will you conduct a Class Survey?**

Surveys can be used to give students the opportunity to offer feedback about what worked well in a course and what may need improving. You can evaluate student use of your course by creating a student survey in the Assessment Manager. You can also check the Course Statistics in the Control Panel to see when and how often your students are accessing your course.

*Question: Do you want students to complete a survey of the course? If so what feedback would you like?*

**What are your Next Steps?**

Now that you have an idea of what you would like to include in the course you will need to actually start the creation process.