Course Overview and Introduction

Overview: The course is easy to use, provides clear information, saves time and frustration, connects the student with the instructor, and gives students a sense of the "big picture."

Course Overview and Introduction - Standard

Standard	Annotation	Example
The instructor starts the course with a welcome and review of the syllabus, course schedule and other important information for the course.	Use the syllabus to provide students a thorough outline of work that they will be doing. Include a welcome message to help students connect with their instructor as a human being.	Record a video message from the instructor. Require students to read a course syllabus that includes a course outline and UF policy.
The role that the online environment and technology will play in the course is clearly stated at the start of the course. Students are informed of appropriate resources for technical support.	Provide students with clear information regarding how technology will be used in the course (especially important for hybrid courses).	Specify what is necessary (programs, devices like video cameras, etc.) at the start of the course to give students time to determine if they have the necessary equipment or will need to purchase or borrow it. To reduce questions and confusion, provide clear instructions and FAQs for students.
In the course site, students are immediately presented with an obvious starting location and explanation on how to navigate the course.	A clear starting point saves time and frustration. Provide information on how to navigate through the course material to reduce the number of questions sent to the instructor.	A "Start Here" link or section provides a clear point of reference. Include a detailed tour of the course features to show students how to access the materials and outline tasks that must be done each week.
The syllabus, schedule and other important course documents are easily located.	Students should be easily able to locate the syllabus, course calendar, and any other documents they use regularly.	Place a list of the important documents, clearly named, on the course home page.
The syllabus contains all the relevant elements from the UF syllabus policy.	A complete syllabus provides clear answers to questions about course policies and procedures. Clear information in the syllabus and accompanying documents can reduce questions sent to the instructor.	Use the suggested online course syllabus template as a guide: http://teach.ufl.edu/resources/syllabus-templates/
All course deadlines are included in the course schedule.	Provide a comprehensive listing of course deadlines to help students see the "big picture" allow them to plan weekly work.	Provide a spreadsheet or table that includes due dates for the entire semester.
Synchronous and asynchronous requirements for participating in the course are clearly outlined.	Clearly state expectations for how students should participate in course activities. Determine how students will receive credit for participation and whether or not makeup opportunities are available.	Clearly communicate expectations for participation in activities and Discussion Boards (and their points/grade value) within the course and in the Due Dates document, particularly for synchronous requirements.

Instructions for course participation are clearly provided and easily found in the course site. The instructions define how students get started and where to find components of the course.	Instructions that outline how to access tools used for the course can help to reduce the numbers of questions sent to the instructor. If the tool is located outside of the course management system, provide a link to the tool along with tutorials explaining its use.	A course that uses VoiceThread might provide a link to an introductory VoiceThread that explains how the tool is going to be used in the class. The introductory VoiceThread could point out the tutorials that are shown on the user's MyVoicepage.
Students are provided with information explaining when feedback will be provided, the type of feedback, and mode of communication they should expect from the instructor.	Students are better able to manage their course participation if they know when faculty will provide grades and feedback for assignments and assessments. Provide this information to students early to reduce unrealistic expectations.	An instructor who teaches a writing course might let students know that assignments will be evaluated with a grading rubric within 3 days of assignment submission.
Students and instructors are provided with space to introduce themselves to each other.	Encourage interaction between students (and with instructors) to eliminate isolation in an online course.	A humanities course asks students to introduce themselves to their discussion group. The assignment asks them to post their major and what they hope to learn from the course.
Consistent terminology is used for tools referenced in the course management system.	Use the default names for tools that are part of the course management system. Consistent naming gives students a frame of reference from course to course and raises their comfort level.	Always refer to "Discussion Boards" as just that. Calling them "Discussion Forums" or "Discussion Area" interchangeably can confuse students.
Students are provided with primary contact information for the instructor. The instructor communicates a willingness to accommodate various accessibility needs.	Provide students with a method for contacting the instructor to reduce student anxiety.	List the instructor's email address on the course home page and the first page of the syllabus.
Online course netiquette is discussed early in the course.	Students need clarity on the expectations for their online behavior.	Provide links to resources on netiquette such as http://youtu.be/6dRoclqDJh0

Course Overview and Introduction - Exemplary

Exemplary	Annotation	Example
An introductory quiz provides students with an opportunity to check their understanding of the syllabus, course requirements, and required tools and technologies.	Students who complete a syllabus quiz have a better understanding of course policies than students who do not.	The first quiz in a chemistry class checks student knowledge of the course policies outlined in the syllabus. The students can take the quiz up to three times (this reduces e-mails asking for a re-set due to students who accidentally open the quiz when they are not ready to take it and encourages students to return to the syllabus until they know all policies).
Instructor monitors and welcomes students as they start the course.	Instructors actively welcome students and are available to them as the course launches.	Use an "Introductions" discussion board that is monitored by the instructor and TAs to help students feel welcome.
Students typically receive responses within 48 hours.	Students feel more connected with instructors when their questions are answered in a timely manner.	Monitor your email and discussions frequently and require students to post questions unrelated to grades to the discussion board to eliminate duplication.

A student survey during the course evaluates students' ease of navigation.	Seek student feedback about their experiences with the course site in time to make adjustments if needed.	Ask students to complete a survey to get a better understanding of their experiences with the course site. Assigning points (even bonus points) to the survey will ensure that they complete it.
Course materials and aesthetic design are visually pleasing and consistent throughout course, and promote clarity and continuity of course structure and information.	A consistent look and feel helps make a course site user-friendly and uncomplicated.	Use available resources at UF (Instructional Design Services) to help keep your site looking organized and professional.
Instructor facilitates student understanding of how to be a successful online learner.	Some students are completely new to learning online. Provide resources to educate them on the characteristics of a successful online student.	Have students discuss netiquette and expectations for online behavior on a discussion board.

Supporting Research

Raymark P. The Syllabus Quiz. Teaching Of Psychology [serial online]. November 2002;29(4):286-288. Available from: Professional Development Collection, Ipswich, MA. Accessed October 30, 2012.

Examining online teaching, cognitive, and social presence for adult students Fengfeng Ke, University of New Mexico, Organizational Learning and Instructional Technology, College of Education, MSC05-3040, Albuquerque, NM 87131, United States

Looney M. Using an Online Survey Tool to Enhance Teaching. Measurement In Physical Education & Exercise Science [serial online]. June 2008;12(2):113-121. Available from: SPORTDiscus with Full Text, Ipswich, MA

Interaction and Engagement

Overview: Instructor and course design help students to connect, interact with other students, engage with real-world materials and activities, and receive personal and timely attention.

Interaction and Engagement - Standard

Standard	Annotation	Example
Introductory video or text is provided on the course website to establish the instructor presence in the online course.	Help students get to know you with a welcome message. Students who "connect" with their instructor are more likely to log in and do the coursework.	Provide a video welcome message so students can see and hear you discuss the course (just as they would with a face-to-face course). This video can help students perceive their instructor as a real person.
Students are divided into appropriate-sized groups to encourage interaction and engagement.	Students work together and interact effectively in groups that are not too large or too small.	Group size may vary depending upon the activity. Set up groups that are small enough so that each person can make a significant contribution, but not so small that the group stagnates if one or two people do not contribute.
The course provides opportunities for students to engage with other students in a variety of communication and interaction experiences.	Student-student interactions can help students engage with the course material as well as each other.	Students can interact with each other through group discussions, small-group projects and peer review.
The course provides opportunities for students to engage with instructor in a variety of communication and interaction experiences.	Students appreciate personal attention from their instructor and/or teaching assistant(s).	Use a discussion board to answer (or have your TA answer) questions about the course content. Provide feedback to students about their coursework as frequently as possible.

Interaction and Engagement - Exemplary

Exemplary	Annotation	Example
Student background and experiences are valued and used as part of the course.	Students are more engaged in course material when they can relate it to personal experience.	Provide opportunities for students to share experiences through discussions. Allow students to choose a paper or project topic that relates to them personally.
Students participate in collaboration and evaluation.	Give students opportunities to practice the real-world skills of team-work and critique.	Include group collaboration activities, such as: discussions, small-group projects, problem-solving activities and role-playing. Incorporate peer review for group and solo work.
Students typically receive responses within 48 hours.	Feedback that is timely is most helpful to students, allowing them to learn what they did well and not so well in time for the next assignment.	When possible, grade student work quickly. In large classes, use self-tests that include detailed feedback to provide a quick turnaround. Offer video office hours to provide students with the opportunity to connect with you or a TA on a more individual level.

Supporting Research

Improving online social presence through asynchronous video. Jered Borup, Richard E. West, Charles R. Graham Department of Instructional Psychology and Technology Brigham

Authors: Schwartzman, Roy1 docroy@classicnet.netSource:*Journal of Instructional Psychology*; Mar2006, Vol. 33 Issue 1, p3-14, 12p

Student–instructor communication: The role of email Elkafi Hassini DeGroote School of Business, McMaster University,

Course Goals and Objectives

Overview: Course goals provide students with the "big picture" and appropriate, contextualized objectives to help students know what they are expected to be able to do when they complete the course.

Course Goals and Objectives - Standard

Standard	Annotation	Example
Overall course goals are clearly stated.	Use the course goals to give students the "big picture" regarding what they should get from the course.	Clearly state the goals in the syllabus so students can easily understand what they will learn in the course.
Course goals are relevant to the course purpose/level.	Ensure course goals are appropriate for the content that is to be covered and the academic level of the students who are expected to take the class.	A lower 1000 or 2000 level course will most likely require students to be familiar with a body of information. A higher level undergraduate or graduate course will most likely require students to perform tasks related to synthesis, analysis, and evaluation.
Learning objectives are measurable and can be utilized to measure student performance/success in the course.	Ensure the learning objectives state what students will be able to do when they complete a segment of learning. Measure these objects by assessments.	In an introductory astronomy class, many of the objectives use keywords such as, identify, list, summarize, discuss, and demonstrate.
Learning objectives align with the learning and assessment activities.	In order to measure student learning, design activities and assessments based on the objectives.	A sample objective in an introductory astronomy class might be: the student will identify 8 types of stars with 100% accuracy. You could measure such an objective through a quiz or test.

Course Goals and Objectives - Exemplary

Exemplary	Annotation	Example
Learning objectives are posted in the weekly overview or subsections of the course. These objectives also relate to the overall course goals.	Provide the learning objectives in the context of the module, chapter, or unit where they will be used.	The first week of instruction in an introductory astronomy course might list objectives that support a terminal objective for the module. Each successive week would build upon the knowledge and skills learned during the first week.
Assignments and assessments specify the learning objectives that are relevant to the task/assignment.	As part of the assignment instructions, include the learning objective that is supported by the assignment.	In an introductory astronomy class, students evaluate a model sun and its solar system for astronomical anomalies. Supporting objectives require students to: identify stars, outline physical properties of planets, and list current theories about the evolution and death of stars.

Supporting Research

MIT Teaching and Learning Laboratory. Learning Objectives. Retrieved from: http://web.mit.edu/tll/teaching-materials/learning-objectives/index-learning-objectives.html

Jones.J. Putting Learning Goals Into Your Syllabus. *The Chronicle of Higher Education.* August 2009. Retrieved from: http://chronicle.com/blogs/profhacker/put-learning- goals-into-your-syllabus/22614

Assessment and Measurement

Overview: Learning objectives align with measurable and authentic assessment activities that indicate what students should be able to do upon completion of course learning materials. Frequent and timely feedback, along with clear guidelines, will reduce student questions and confusion.

Assessment and Measurement - Standard

Standard	Annotation	Example
Assessments measure the stated learning objectives.	Incorporate performing verbs used in a learning objective that align with how that objective will be assessed.	An objective that requires the student to "identify" something might be matched with a quiz that uses images for identification questions.
Assessments are consistent with the course materials, activities, and resources.	Ensure that course material support the student learning of the objective and align with the assessment of that objective.	In a biology class, students receive flashcards with photos of different organisms to study. The exam to test this knowledge includes images in the questions.
Expectations and requirements for student performance are clearly provided (guidelines, rubrics, checklists).	Use guidelines, rubrics, and/or checklists to make expectations and requirements clear and reduce student questions.	In an art class that requires a final project, provide interim deadlines with specific elements due at those times. Have students peer review using a rubric before turning in the final project.
Assessments are given in an appropriate time period after the learning activities have taken place.	Develop assessments and learning activities that are related to each other and completed within a short time frame of each other.	In a math class, students learn about probability during the third week of the semester. They have a quiz on what they have learned the following week rather than waiting until the final exam.
Courses that have more than 50% of the grade from online quizzes and exams use appropriate online security measures.	Quizzes use randomized question pools and exams are proctored.	A geology course assigns 30% of the course grade based upon weekly quizzes, with the remaining 70% of the course grade divided between the proctored midterm and final.
Feedback about student performance is provided in a timely manner throughout the course as stated in the syllabus.	Provide frequent feedback throughout the course, not just at the end, and within a reasonable time of assignment completion.	An English instructor returns graded papers to students within seven days of assignment submission to provide students with the opportunity to improve their work for the next assignment. In a humanities class, instructors check and respond to discussion posts within 24-48 hours.

Assessment and Measurement - Exemplary

Exemplary	Annotation	Example
Ongoing, multiple assessment strategies are used to measure content knowledge, attitudes and skills.	Use different assessment methods throughout the course to measure student learning.	An anthropology course gives weekly low-stakes quizzes, a weekly discussion, 4 short papers, and a final project.
Assignments or project-based assessments encourage students to utilize critical thinking skills.	Use assignments and projects to provide students opportunities to understand content at a deeper level.	An engineering course requires students to create a proposal as a final project. A statistics course requires students to carry out a small quantitative study.

Student's achievement of stated learning outcomes is documented and provided to the student as feedback on their learning activities and assessments.	Provide feedback to students that directly addresses their understanding of learning outcomes.	In a German language course, the instructor meets with each student several times during the semester to review assignments and progress.

Supporting Research

American Association of Higher Ed. *Principles of Good Practice to Assess Student Learning.* Retrieved from: http://condor.depaul.edu/acafflpc/aahe.htm

Glenn, D. Online Courses Should Always Include Proctored Finals, Economist Warns. *The Chronicle of Higher Education.* Retrieved From: http://chronicle.com/blogs/wiredcampus/online-courses-should-always-include-proctored-finals-economist-warns/31287

Hattie, J. and Temperly, H. The Power of Feedback. *REVIEW OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH.* March 2007 vol. 77 no. 1 81-112

Instructional Materials

Overview: Learning materials for the course are current, relevant, and segmented. Students understand the expectations for their performance. Materials are provided in multiple formats.

Instructional Materials - Standard

Standard	Annotation	Example
Course materials are presented to students in manageable segments.	Use short segments, as long paragraphs of wordy text or lengthy videos are hard to retain.	Color coding, bullets, graphs and charts along with concise chunks of content allow students to more easily consume course materials.
The instructional materials and learning activities support achievement of the learning objectives and are appropriate to the knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes being learned.	Align course activities with learning objectives and avoid "busy work" and other activities that do not relate to assessments.	In an astronomy course, one objective is to identify the 7 types of stars. The learning activity asks them to visit a start chart website and categorize the different features. Students are not asked to find literary references to star types.
The instructional materials are current.	Ensure the textbook, journal articles, videos and any other course resources reflect the current thinking about the topic.	In an astronomy course, articles that reference Pluto indicate that it is no longer categorized as a planet.
All resources and materials in the course are appropriately cited.	Set a good example for your students by providing proper citations for any supporting materials.	Images of star charts come from the NASA website and are cited at the end of the PowerPoint presentation.
There is a clear distinction between required and optional materials.	Always make clear for your students which materials are mandatory or optional.	Students are required to review the starcharts on a specific website. Additional websites with more information about stars are also provided and labeled "optional."
Detailed instructions for student work are provided and clearly outline expectations and requirements (guidelines, rubrics, checklists).	Give students detailed information about an assignment to save them time and frustration and reduce the number of e-mails you receive.	A discussion about types of stars lists requirements for the initial post and two responses. Sample posts and a grading rubric are also provided.
Access to a wide range of resources supporting course content is clearly provided.	Learning is multifaceted. Provide your students with different view points and multiple formats to increase their ability to incorporate learning into their own knowledge.	The module on star types contains a video overview, a link to the NASA website on star identification, and a journal article detailing the identification process of a specific star.

Instructional Materials Exemplary

Exemplary	Annotation	Example
Students engage with course content in a variety of ways.	Remember that students learn content in different ways. Provide multiple formats to connections with different students.	To teach students about the different types of stars, students are provided a short video overview, a textbook reading, and an assignment to visit the NASA website.
Instructional materials and learning activities encourage critical thinking skills when appropriate.	Use instructional materials that are dynamic and can be expanded upon. Students will get more out of content if they have to do more than simply recall what they read.	Challenge students to use higher order thinking skills with the content and activities that are used in the course. Use Bloom's Taxonomy Action Verbs as a guide.

The instructor uses formal and informal student feedback on an ongoing basis to help plan instruction and assessment of student learning throughout the semester.	Students can provide valuable insight into ways to continue and enhance the success of the course.	A language course requires students to fill out 3 surveys during the course of the semester. Students meet with their instructor privately 3 times during the semester through Skype or other synchronous online meeting tool. Feedback from the surveys and meetings is used to update assignments and assessments for future terms.

Supporting Research

http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/implementation-support-unit/tech-assist/targeting-growth.pdf

http://teach.ufl.edu/resources/copyright/

Toward deep learning for adult students in online courses Fengfeng Kea, Kui Xieb, 1, a MSC05-3040, Organizational Learning and Instructional Technology, College of Education, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM, 87131, United States

Course Technology

Overview: Technology used in the course is accessible to students, aligned with course learning objectives, and students can expect a high quality experience using the technology. Instructions are clear and students know what to do in case of a technology failure or issue.

Course Technology - Standard		
Standard	**Annotation**	**Example**
Provisions are in place to allow for potential failures of technology, and are clearly expressed to students.	Ensure the syllabus includes clear instructions for technology use and information so students know what to do if there is a technology failure.	Direct students to document a failure in system availability with a screen capture and an immediate call to the helpdesk.
Navigation throughout the online components of the course is logical, consistent, and efficient.	Divide the course materials into modules and provide clear instructions to help students find what they need. A logical flow and/or clear online course progression outline is used.	Put the assignments in an order that allows students to easily find the correct assignment(s) for the correct module. Use a uniform naming scheme throughout course, perhaps with a reference course progression flow diagram.
The technology tools and media support the learning objectives of the course.	Ensure that the course activities use tools and media that directly align with activities that support student learning and that the selected technology aligns with learning objectives.	Align a learning objective about students being able to discuss course content with a learning activity that uses the discussion board. Student use of online teleconferencing tools for student groups to collaborate online is linked to a learning objective about team collaboration on projects.
The technology used in the course is readily accessible and available to students.	Perform a technology quality check of the course links and files prior to the course start will ensure that all components of the course are ready and available.	A few days before the course starts, request that a TA is enrolled into the course as a student to check that all materials are available. Provide extra credit in the first few days of class to the first student to find and inform professor about any broken links.
The tools and media are compatible with prevailing standards and formats.	Ensure students are able to access tools and media on a variety of devices. Course delivery and files are desktop, laptop, tablet, and mobile device compatible for most common devices.	Students are able to use the discussion tool on a computer or on mobile devices. File formats posted or linked do not depend on a specific computer or device type (no Flash, etc.).

Course Technology – Exemplary		
Exemplary	**Annotation**	**Example**
Faculty have opportunities to develop course content using technology.	Use technology to create course content that engages students and supports learning.	Camtasia can be used to record tutorials and demonstrations. Video recordings of field work or laboratory research can be added to supplement course materials. Faculty members can record podcasts of current items that relate to course content to stir interest and online asynchronous discussion.

Technology use encourages higher level thinking and activity.	Use technology for higher purposes and not just because for "cool factor" in a course. Use of technology should support learning.	Student blogs can give students an opportunity to reflect on their learning and create new information to share with the class. Students can have an assignment to create a learning module using technologies for the next offering of the course based on their experience in the course, with any selected by professor for incorporation earning extra credit.
Faculty builds in practice items to teach students technology in course.	Structure the course with progression of technological utilization to build upon previous assignments and help develop students technological skills at the same time they are learning course content.	Offer a small stakes practice assignment early in the course using the same technology that will be used later in course for large assignments/quizzes so students can practice using the technology.

Supporting Research

Panagiotis Zaharias. Usability in the context of e-learning: a framework augmenting 'traditional' usability constructs with instructional design and motivation to learn. *International Journal of Technology and Human Interaction*. 5.4 (October-December 2009) p37.

Moller, L., Huett, J. B., & Harvey, D. M. (2009). Learning and instructional technologies for the 21st century: Visions of the future. New York, NY: Springer.

Accessibility

Overview: UF policy requires that accommodations be made for all students to learn. Resources are available to assist instructors with meeting the needs of students. Additional elements of course design make learning easier for all students.

Accessibility - Standard

Standard	Annotation	Example
The course employs accessible technologies and provides guidance to students on how to obtain accommodations as defined in the UF syllabus policy (use of the sample course syllabus as a guide provides the necessary information).	Ensure that all students can access the course material. Make provisions for students with visual, auditory, cognitive and motor impairments.	Handouts in .pdf or other formats can be read by a screen reader. Ensure the syllabus contains information on how students can request accommodation.
If PDF documents are used, they can be read by a screen reader (text in the document is selectable).	Sometimes scans from books or journals are a .pdf *image*. In such a case, the screen reader cannot read the document. If you can select the text within the document with your mouse, then the screen reader can read it.	A finance instructor uses a case study from a textbook. She uses *OCR* (optical character reader) software to ensure that the document can be read by a screen reader (available through UFIT Instructional Design Services).
Text that appears within the course website, PowerPoints, PDFs and other materials is clearly visible against the background.	While text need not be black on white background, provide sufficient contrast to allow easy readability for all users.	Use the Accessibility Checker in PowerPoint to ensure that all students can read a presentation's text.
Avoid using color to convey meaning.	A screen reader does not indicate the text color, which means that visually impaired student will miss some of the information.	An English teacher indicates the parts of speech in parenthesis after the appropriate phrase or word.
The course contains equivalent alternatives to auditory and visual content.	Ensure that images have alt tags describing the image and that video/audio is closed captioned.	Provide PowerPoints that include the full text of the narration and that videos, including student presentations, have text in sync with video.
The course uses fonts, formatting, and design elements to facilitate readability by all students and assistive devices.	Ensure course elements follow a hierarchy and are consistent from page to page. Be sure that fonts are large enough to be legible and color schemes do not conflict.	Avoid red/green and blue/yellow juxtapositions.
All course resources and materials can be accessed using the keyboard.	Remember that special tools and keyboards are available to assist users who may have a mobility impairment. Such users may not be able to manipulate a mouse.	A science instructor is using a lab simulation. He has determined that a user can use the "tab" key to move between the elements in the simulation.
The instructor communicates a willingness to accommodate various accessibility needs.	Communicate that you can meet your students' accessbility need to reduce student anxiety.	Include information on how to request accessibility accommodations in the syllabus.

Supporting Research

Web Accessibility Initiative - http://www.w3.org/WAI/intro/accessibility.php

"Keeping Web Accessibility in Mind", Utah State University. http://www.webaim.org/media/common/video/asd.asx

Creating Accessible PowerPoint Presentations: http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/powerpoint-help/creating-accessible-powerpoint-presentations- HA102013555.aspx#_Toc286131985

Course Design Evaluation

Standard

Standard	Annotation	Example
The course design is evaluated on a regular basis for effectiveness from both the student and instructor perspectives.	Use student surveys and instructor feedback as guides to determine the effectiveness of the course.	Have students complete a survey during the middle and end of the semester to provide feedback. Regularly review the course feedback with an instructional designer to get additional ideas for enhancement.
The results of the evaluation are tied to a plan for continuous review and improvement of the course.	Incorporate a regular cycle of evaluation to ensure long-term value for the course.	Develop courses on a three-year design lifecycle, with smaller tweaks in design completed every time the course is offered.

Exemplary

Exemplary	Annotation	Example
The evaluations are part of the documentation of the course.	Keep evaluations with the course to provide information on effectiveness.	Include a spreadsheet of the evaluation results in the course documentation.

Supporting Research

http://ualr.edu/pace/tenstepsud/

http://www.cast.org/udl/

http://www.intulogy.com/addie/