147 PRACTICAL TIPS FOR TEACHING ONLINE GROUPS

Essentials of Web-Based Education by:

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(For complete text you may check this book out from the CTE Library)

CHAPTER 1 – BEFORE YOU BEGIN

1. Know yourself –

As a teacher, you must know yourself, your assumptions, your learning and teaching preferences, and your strengths and weaknesses.

2. Determine your philosophy of teaching and learning –

Teacher-centered, learner-centered, learning community centered or technology-driven.

3. Be a team player –

As an instructor, you may want to work with colleagues to form an instructional design team for your course.
Team members may include:
* **Instructor** – He or is responsible for planning, implementing, and evaluating instructional activities that are used to teach the course and influence the learning that occurs within in.
* **Coordinator** – The coordinator may be involved to organize the program and serve as a liaison between the instructor and the other members of the team.
* **Learner liaison** – This position involves helping learners navigate the organization; solve problems related to organizational structure and policies, and deal with other logistics that might impede the learning process.
* I**nstructional designer** – The instructional designer is involved to guide the instructor in overall course design and the use of appropriate technologies.
* **Graphic designer –** A graphic designer may be involved in creating the graphics or effects.
* **Technology personnel –** This individual is responsible for equipment setup, network connections, testing, and troubleshooting.
* **Resource personnel –** Resource personnel are responsible for developing or finding readings and other course material, which

may include librarians, research assistants or specialists in the field.

* **Administrative personnel –** They are responsible for ensuring an adequate budget for the course, implementing targeted marketing efforts and overseeing the registration process of the course.

4. **Learn new skills for teaching online –**
   *Communicate with team members
   *Preparing and following timelines
   *Working with design personnel to develop course format and strategies
   *Scheduling guest experts
   *Obtaining copyright approvals
   *Developing contingency plans
   *Taking care of program logistics
   *Preparing course resources ahead of time
   *Providing feedback to learners

5. **Understand your audience –**
   In marketing a program or course, it's important to understand the needs, backgrounds, characteristics, and expectations of the target learners.

6. **Understand the online environment –**
   Multiple components – technology and resources – become essential when you're designing an online teaching environment.

7. **Learn about the technology -**
   Become familiar with your hardware and software and their underlying features and subtleties.

8. **Learn about your resources –**
   Become familiar with the learning and technology resources available within your organization.

9. **Recognize the absence of physical presence –**
   In a completely online environment, this immediate, informal visual and verbal feedback is not available to us in a way we're accustomed to both sending and receiving. To some extent, you can compensate for this communicated body language and other physical cues. As more people join a virtual environment, a new language of cues is being developed, with :) and other symbols being used to express emotive content.

10. **Create multiple spaces for work, interaction, and socializing –**
    Learning occurs in more than one setting in face-to-face classrooms, (for example: as part of before-class relaxation and socialization.) You can

incorporate similar forums into your online course. For example, you might organize small groups into one space to respond to content questions or to work on group projects. Or encourage individual learners to post their papers and assignments to their own content-oriented web pages.

11. **Include multiple types of interactions –**
    One common form of interaction is for a teacher or web page designer to put content onto a web page and for the learners to read it, review it, or be quizzed about it later on – with no actual communication taking place between the teacher and learner.

12. **Consider which interactions to include –**
    When designing an online course, think in terms of the types of interaction you want to include.

13. **Consider learner-to-teacher interaction –**
    This may include online journals, paper assignments, or quizzes in which learners interact directly with you and receive feedback.

14. **Consider learner-to-learner interaction –**
    This involves learners participating in activities with each other, online discussions focusing on problem-based scenarios, problem solving, or case studies.

15. **Consider learner-to-expert interaction –**
    To enhance the course, learners may invite a community member or guest expert to participate in or contribute to the course. Activities might include interviewing the guest, holding an online discussion with the expert, or exploring issues with practitioners.

16. **Consider learner-to-content –**
    In learner-to-content interaction, you the teacher play an indirect role by posting content or directing the learners to work on their own.

17. **Consider learner-to-technology interaction –**
    Some activities may involve learners in completing tasks using a software program.

18. **Establish the preferred class size –**
    Decide the size of your class before you design the course. It is important to recognize that escalating size increases the logistical support you'll need and reduces the direct interaction you'll have with your learners.

19. **Consider team-based learning –**

Team-based learning is an excellent strategy to use because online learning presents rich opportunities for creating teams for problem solving, project development, and discussion.

20. **Form personal relationships online –**
    The first class meeting and the introductions among participants set the tone for what is to come?

21. **Develop learning communities –**
    A learning community is a group of people who have come together to form a culture of learning in which everyone is involved in a collective effort of understanding.

22. **Learn through dialogue –**
    Hopefully, your participants will learn through dialogue, respond to ideas, and continue discussions by offering their concise, thoughtful comments.

23. **Be prepared and flexible –**
    The online environment requires a different amount and style of preparation for you as a teacher. In an online environment, however, you must define the space for discussion before the class begins by outlining what kinds of interactions will be used and through what format.

24. **Define your role in the online classroom –**
    When teaching online, you may have more than one role, depending on the instructional strategy you're using. Consider the following points:
    *Set attainable goals for your learners, and use the benchmarks to acknowledge their growth.
    *State your expectations and minimum participation requirements upfront.
    *Negotiate norms with the learners.
    *Be accessible but not dominating online.
    *Consider carefully your modeling and mentoring processes and ideologies.
    *Be a coach and cheerleader.
    *Learn with and from the class members.

25. **Clarify your expectations of learners' roles –**
    In an interactive course, the learner's role becomes more complex and more active.

26. **Expect learners to be present online and to avoid passively observing –**
    Each learner can contribute his or her ideas at a comfortable pace. Some learners are more comfortable communicating verbally.

27. **Expect learners to create, share, and hold knowledge and experiences –**
    For example, learners who are more familiar with the technology can help the first-timers with their questions or problems.

28. **Expect learners to be self-motivated and self-directed –**
    *Give your learners a brief quiz to assess their readiness for online learning.
    *Discuss your requirements at the beginning of class.
    *Ask the students to create and share with you calendars or learning contracts showing when they will schedule course activities.

29. **Expect learners to manage their time effectively –**
    Online courses move quickly and require self-discipline. The online discussion is always "there", just a click away, but response time is random.

30. **Expect learners to be ready to learn –**
    Learning looks different in an interactive online class; participants may need to be more self-directed and attentive.

31. **Expect learners to troubleshoot problems –**
    Problems often occur unexpectedly in an online class. Learners need to be able to get help easily, but they also need to be able to approach a problem with multiple points of advice and solution.

32. **Expect learners to contribute to the class discussion –**
    To ensure contribution from your students, you may want to require a minimum number of posting from each learner each week.

33. **Expect learners to teach others and facilitate the experience –**
    Learners in online courses have enormous opportunities to "be the teacher" whether in troubleshooting the software and the technology or in forming and communicating their ideas about the content of the class.

34. **Expect learners to act as collegial members of the class –**
    The written language may be misinterpreted and cause a level of discomfort among the members of an online community.

35. **Expect learners to review readings and materials thoughtfully and reflectively –**
    You may post material directly on the web or in a web conferencing environment, send material to learner's via-e-mail attachment, or server.

36. **Expect learners to provide timely, meaningful feedback to you and their fellow learners –**

When learners have a statement to make to you or their classmates, they should write and submit it right away; otherwise, the next time they read the class postings their idea may no longer fit in with the discussion.

37. **Expect learners to be leaders –**
    By acting as leaders, the learners can take ownership of the course and better connect with what's being taught.

38. **Expect learners to "listen" to others –**
    By having all interaction take the shape of written words, the learners can go back and reread comments to ascertain the intent and the actual meaning behind the words.

39. **Expect learners to communicate by addressing each other, not just you –**
    To help your learners build personal and collegial relationships with each other, encourage them to share their comments and ideas with everyone, not just you.

40. **Expect learners to be proactive –**
    Technology doesn't always work, and sometimes a learner might be having trouble without you realizing it. At times like these, learners need to be proactive and inform you.

41. **Expect learners to observe the process –**
    Learning happens on many levels. In an interactive course, learners should avoid focusing solely on the assignments and the products of the course; they should also observe the process of the online discussion.

42. **Establish a contingency plan –**
    Whenever you're working with technology, you can never guarantee that it will do what you want it to do. Have an alternative way for your learners to reach you (such as a different e-mail address, phone number) in case of emergency. And, as the teacher, test the technology often, back up your files.

CHAPTER 2 – MYTHS AND CONSTRAINS OF ONLINE TEACHING AND LEARNING

43. **Myth: Learners are unable to adapt to the online environment –**
    People learn in multiple ways and through multiple senses. Although the preference for one learning style may be stronger, most people can learn in a variety of ways.

44. **Myth: The instructor has to know how to do everything –**

Teaching in an online environment should be a team effort. You should be able to call upon technology specialists, instructional designers, and many others to help you develop and implement your course.

45. **Myth: Time requirements for teachers are lower in an online environment –**
    Online, interactive courses are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week; they are time consuming and challenging.

46. **Myth: Online classrooms aren't conducive to group interaction and activities –**
    Conferencing software offers many opportunities for interaction in multiple group settings that you determine and negotiate with your learners.

47. **Myth: Online classrooms aren't as social as face-to-face classrooms –**
    You, as the instructor, are responsible for creating the types of spaces learners want and need, and for sensing your learners' expectations. You must also gauge how important social interaction is to the participants.

48. **Myth: The number of learners in online classrooms is unlimited –**
    Demand for interaction has a similar effect upon online classrooms.

49. **Myth: Technology will always work –**
    Of course, technology (including software) doesn't always work and technology that doesn't work - or that is so complex that it limits you and your learners as you attempt to achieve the learning.

50. **Myth: The course will market itself; post it on the web and they will come –**
    Unless your course has a predefined audience that is delineated and organized well in advance, marketing your course online can be a significant challenge for both you and your organization.

51. **Myth: Learners will always understand your intended expectations for them from your clearly written syllabus –**
    Learners don't always immediately understand the details of class materials, the class syllabus appears in a text-based format and discussion about its content is difficult.

CONSTRAINTS FOR INTERACTIVE ONLINE TEACHING AND LEARNING

52. **Constraint: Fear of technology –**
    Some people embrace new technologies eagerly, while others are afraid of change and the pressures technology has on their understanding of the world. Although technology is all around us, some people are afraid of it.

53. **Constraint: Different levels of technology skills –**
    The challenges may include adapting the pace of the course to allow time for those learners who need to upgrade their skills. The opportunities may include the possibility of teaming technically proficient learns with those who are less proficient so that they can be "technology buddies."

54. **Constraint: Literacy levels –**
    Some online courses are directed at improving literacy skills, but most courses require participants to express themselves and understand others through the written word.

55. **Constraint: Ability to type and use the keyboard –**
    Again, since most interaction in an online course is typed, learners should be able to type at a reasonable level.

56. **Constraint: Access to a computer and an Internet connection –**
    Computers and software being used are only tools that enable learning and interaction among you and your learners. Learners must have access to working tools in order to participate fully.

57. **Constraint: The comfort of physical work space –**
    The physical environment where each learner works can determine the quality of the online teaching and learning experience. So encourage students to have comfortable chairs that support their weight, because they'll often be required to sit for long periods of time.

58. **Constraint: Having a disability –**
    Consider in advance how you will address issues of access to your classroom environment and the materials you use. Many physical disabilities, such as those involving sight, hearing, and movement, can be effectively addressed in online environments through the application of specialized technologies developed for those specific purposes.

59. **Constraint: Not being able to correspond in the language of the course –**
    With the worldwide web nature of the Internet, more learners are crossing virtual borders and enrolling for courses. Thus, assessing your prospective learners' language proficiencies is another good reason to communicate with your learners before your course begins.

60. **Constraint: Reaching across multiple time zones –**
    Because online education permits asynchronous learning, it can be particularly effective in connecting learners across multiple time zones. At the same time your efforts to build into your course real-time,

synchronous interactions or to incorporate systematic, team-based activities.

CHAPTER 3 – ORGANIZING THE ONLINE COURSE

61. Identify the course design –
In an online course, the element of technology also enters the mix. This section discusses the issues you need to think about when you're organizing your course design.

62. Consider course goals and objectives –
To develop an online course (or any other course), you need to clarify these goals and objectives and write them so that you can clearly communicate them to learners and others working on the course.

63. Consider content –
What will you include? What methods will you use to convey the content? In an interactive online course, some content and methods work better than others.

64. Consider readings –
Select readings that provide different perspectives on the course topic. Use the World Wide Web for some of the readings.

65. Consider resources –
Become familiar with the resources available within your organization. Many organizations place reserve materials online and provide online access to library resources via the web.

66. Consider copyright issues –
Copyright tends to be one of the least familiar areas of concern for most online teachers, but don't overlook it.

67. Determine methods of delivery –
Online programs can be either interactive or non-interactive.

68. Consider interactive applications –
Interactive applications are computer programs that enable two or more people to interact while online. Among these applications are chat functions, bulletin boards, shared documents, and e-mail.

69. Consider non-interactive applications –
Non-interactive applications are computer programs that don't require human interaction. You can use these programs for quizzes, web posting, streaming, content pages and message boards put on a web page.

70. **Give learners appropriate advance information –**
    When possible, before your course begins, contact your learners to tell them about your expectations for the course and to gather some preparatory information from them.

71. **Tell learners about the computer hardware and software they'll need –**
    In a letter or phone call to the start of the course, remind the learners that they will be participating in an online course. Make sure they have the software and hardware they'll need to access and participate in the course.

72. **Tell learners about the level of computing proficiency they'll need –**
    Interview the registered learners about their familiarity with computers and their level of computing proficiency.

73. **Tell learners about the level of course content and the course's time expectations –**
    In a letter or phone call, and also in your syllabus, be sure to include information on the level of course content, your expectations about participations in the course, and a description of the course's projects and activities.

74. **Decide and communicate what's private and what's public –**
    Teaching in an interactive online environment depends on establishing a safe, trusting learning community where learners can share their experiences, opinions, and ideas related to the course.

75. **Develop course details –**
    This section focuses on details such as the discussion guidelines, the syllabus, content organization, the course timeline, and course assignments.

76. **Establish discussion guidelines –**
    Establishing guidelines for participant's postings is an important aspect of online teaching (and learning). Doing so gives learners a sense of knowledge and a structure for their online discussions.

77. **Develop a flexible syllabus –**
    Imagine it as a flexible framework for the course. Use a topic-driven outline that features space for more or less in-depth exploration for the content.

78. **Organize content into modules or units –**

Modules or units provide structure and a sense of content organization for your learners. By offering structure and a series of short assignments, you'll keep your learners focused on the course.

79. **Create a timeline –**
    Depending on the type of course you're designing, consider providing chronological, developmental, or process-oriented timelines.

80. **Develop assignments –**
    Learners are ultimately responsible for completing course assignments. However, you have a duty to provide detailed guidelines for this task.

81. **Decide about evaluation techniques to use –**
    Evaluation is the process of gathering information about the worth or quality of learning and instruction. Why, so that you can make decisions to increase the worth or quality of the learning or instruction.

82. **Evaluate your learners –**
    Evaluate before instruction, during the course and after the course.

83. **Assess course effectiveness –**
    Before Instruction: How well is the instruction likely to work? Will the instruction hold learners' interest?
    During Instruction: What obstacles are learners encountering? What can be done to maintain learner motivation?
    After Instruction: What improvements could be made in the instruction? Did learners find the instruction interesting, valuable, and meaningful?

STRATEGIES FOR EVALUATING LEARNING

84. **Use quizzes –**
    In an online environment, you can post quizzes on a web site, attach them to e-mail, or post them as regular messages. When developing on line quizzes, be sure to connect questions to specific learning objectives.

85. **Use essays –**
    When using essays to measure your learners' competencies, consider including specific directions by phrasing questions or statements clearly (such as "compare," "contrast," "formulate," "discuss," "define,") that way your learners will understand what you expect.

86. **Use portfolios –**
    The portfolio documents the learners' efforts, development, or accomplishments throughout the course.

87. Use performance evaluation –

Performance evaluation involves assessing a skill the learner needs to accomplish a specific task. It's a technique requiring that learners know not only **what** to do, but also **how to do it**.

88. Use interviews –

Interviews are conducted on one person asking questions and the other person responding. You and your learners can conduct interviews with the synchronous feature of conferencing systems by using text-based, video-based and audio-based environments.

89. **Use journals -**

They are records learners' keep as they work through an experience. At the end of each stage, learners could write out their thoughts and experiences about what happened during the process.

90. Use reflective papers –

Here are some elements you might look for in learners' reflective papers:
*A summary of the common themes covered in the online journals.
*An analysis of the participant's learning in the course.
*A reflection on how the participant's experiences as a learner affect his or her own practice.

91. Use web site development –

Encourage learners to develop web sites to:
*Educate a target audience in their field
*Perform a task
*Present facts
*Teach concepts
*Show procedures
*Demonstrate processes
*Provide principles/guidelines

92. Use learner participation figures –

You may assign a minimum number of postings weekly, which will make learners' presence known through substantive contributions to the course, discussions, and activities.

93. Use peer assessment –

Since much of the learning that occurs in interactive online course is done collaboratively, you might want to give your learners the chance to assess each other's contributions to course discussions and common group activities.

94. Use learner self-assessment –

It's a great way to uncover the internal journey of each learner.

95. Consider how you'll grade assignments –

Grading is a process for assessing learning through tests and assignments. Grading means tailoring the test or assignments to the learning goals for the course, determining criteria and standards, helping learners gain the skills and knowledge they need, assessing students' learning over time, etc…

96. Develop a way to evaluate group projects –

You can evaluate group projects by asking learners to reflect upon the following elements:

***Learning that occurred:**

-Individually and team generated, depth of learning overall

***Presentation style/creativity:**

-Organization, aspects of the presentation repeat or do differently

***Content:**

-Scope, depth and relevance to the course

97. Develop a way to grade portfolios –

***Rationale:** Provide the rationale or purpose of the portfolio

***Goals/Intent:** Define the goals or intent of the portfolio, and provide process objectives

***Content/Examples:** Use a minimum number of examples that illustrate growth

***Standards:** Assess contributions of varying quality and the learner's review of the progress he or she has made

***Self-Reflection:** Include a summary of personal experience journals written throughout the course

***Judgments:** Provide a reflective paper, the project, and the course grade

***Organization:** Develop content and displays logically and systematically

98. Develop a way to grade reflective papers –

***Content:** Fulfill the requirements and be comprehensive

***Organization:** Develop content logically and systematically

***Clarity:** Write in an easy-to-read style that communicates ideas clearly

***Quality of Writing Skills:** Use grammar, spelling, and punctuation correctly

99. Consider strategies for course improvement –

*One-minute assessment
*Pretest/post-test approach
*Direct observation
*Ask learners for their reflections
*Peer review
*Your own self-reflection

100. Use a one-minute assessment –

The one-minute assessment allows you to ask questions electronically and collect answers anonymously.

101. Use a pretest/post-test approach –

Pretests and post-tests assess learners' knowledge and skills before instruction, their growing knowledge and skills during instruction, and what they've learned at the end of instruction.

102. Use a learner tryout –

This strategy refers to a test run on an instructional activity, approach, medium, or material with a small group of learners before using it for a particular unit/lesson/module.

103. Use direct observation –

This strategy refers to observing learners as they go through some part of the unit/lesson/module. By directly observing the group discussions, you're able to gain information about the process of your instruction and the outcomes of the students' learning.

104. Ask learners for their reflections –

This strategy involves participating in synchronous or asynchronous conversations with your learners, individually or in groups. You might post questions requiring learners to express their feelings about your instruction (material, timelines, readings, etc.)

105. Conduct peer reviews –

Having someone else look at your instructional materials helps you identify inaccuracies, inconsistencies, and other potential problems. You usually also gain new insights on the material.

106. Do a teacher preview –

Occasionally, online courses are prepackaged. This means that the course material and activities are produced commercially. If this scenario matches yours, you'll likely need to preview the materials before using them to determine whether you'll use the materials, use them with some modification or adaption, or not use them at all.

107. Reflect on your experiences –

Reflecting on your own experiences over what happened during a lesson/unit/module is a good way to identify the parts of the lesson/unit/module that did or did not work.

CHAPTER 4
BEGINNING INSTRUCTION IN THE ONLINE COURSE:

IMPLMENTING THE COURSE DESIGN

108. Create a space for learning –

The overall goal of any teacher is to create a space where learners can safely explore new territory. To achieve this goal, you must build confidence in your learners so that they feel you're respecting them and taking their needs seriously.

109. Design strategies for assessing learners' characteristics and building learners' self-knowledge -

You need to be aware that learning styles differ, and that many learners, are not aware of their preferred learning style.

110. Design strategies to introduce learners to each other –

Learners can post their own biographies and expectations of the course to introduce themselves and to get to know others.

111. Use effective teaching strategies –

When teaching strategies are used well and appropriately, they can help you and your learners build community, understand the content, develop skills, and reflect on the online education process.

112. Gain agreement with the learners about rules, norms, and procedures for discussion – and do so from the start –

If learners are to play an active role in developing the course atmosphere, you must preliminarily define the structure, rules, norms, and procedures for course discussion upfront – but then give your learners the chance to suggest important modifications.

113. Use a free-flowing and interactive content and structure -

If you want to engage learners with the course content and with each other, you need to develop a free-flowing, interactive framework around which you can structure the class.

114. Develop team-building activities –

The criteria for forming teams might focus upon:
*Common interests *Common majors
*Levels of experience with technology *Topical focus
*Varying disciplines

115. Share biographical information or stories –

Biography activities might start with you and your learners sharing personal or professional information about yourselves through the development of personal stories.

116. Share course assignments –

Throughout your course, learners might create four-or-five page issue papers related to the course content, and then share those papers with the rest of the group for critique and analysis.

117. Create a social space –

A social environment will give your learners another informal avenue for establishing personal knowledge of each other's interests and goals for the class and beyond.

118. Involve learners in team projects –

Team projects give learners the opportunity to practice team-building skills, gain leadership and time management skills, and experience real-life situations.

119. Develop asynchronous group discussions –

You can use this type of activity when your course is divided into "topic-centered" modules for which specific readings are assigned. You might, for instance, expect learners to complete reading assignments and participate actively in online discussions at their own scheduled times.

120. Develop challenging problems –

When you are searching for problems for your learners to discuss, consider using real-life examples but simplifying them to the point where the focus is clear.

121. Promote critical thinking –

Learners need to be able to evaluate the quality of the material they're reviewing and to connect it with other pieces of similar data. They also need to understand the purpose behind communicating this information: Is it to sell something, to change an opinion, or just to inform?

122. Encourage learners to evaluate information –

Encourage your learners to make judgments about something by measuring it against a standard, determining criteria for judging merits or ideas, prioritizing options, recognizing errors in reasoning, and verifying arguments and hypotheses through reality testing.

123. Encourage learners to evaluate information –

Involve your learners in recognizing patterns of organization; classifying objects into categories based on common attributes; identifying assumptions that underlie positions; identifying central ideas in text, data, or creations; differentiating main ideas from supporting information; and finding sequences or order in organized information.

124. Encourage learners to connect information –

Engage your learners in comparing and contrasting similarities and differences among objects or events. Encourage learners in developing or analyzing an argument, a conclusion, or an inference, and in providing support for their assumptions.

125. Promote self-regulating learning –

Self-regulating learning refers to learning new cognitive and self-management strategies. Encourage learners to develop their own course goals, negotiate criteria and assignments, and create an environment for independent learning.

126. Build collaborative skills –

Group projects, teamwork, and course discussions all help learners work together and develop collaborative skills. As your group forms and the learners get to know each other, people will usually take on different roles. These roles will rotate and transform as each learner grows and acquires different proficiencies with the technology and the content.

127. Create a loose framework for exploring topics –

When designing your online course, use a flexible framework with open-ended questions and topics as a focus, but with enough space for your learners to develop and explore the issues in depth.

128. Create opportunities for learners to teach and to facilitate discussions -

A useful role for the learners to take on is that of facilitator. Most people learn best by doing or by teaching others what they're learning.

129. Add games and fun activities into the learning mix –

For some variety in your course, and to help your learners discover how to research topics using the web, try doing Internet "scavenger hunts" and then sharing the resources learners discover through an annotated bibliography or resource list.

130. Using existing software applications creatively -

You can use standardized software programs like Microsoft Office Suite, Claris Works, and Corel Suite to enhance your online course. These programs give you ways to communicate ideas in a more orderly or graphical way, manage information, and conduct research.

131. Use case studies –

Case studies are similar to using real-life problems, but you can narrow them down to emphasize a specific facet of the case.

132. Use simulations as opportunities for learning by doing –

Simulations focus on "learning by doing" so they can help illustrate abstract processes or be used as team-building exercises. They also create excitement and build cohesion within the online community.

133. Use external communities, people, and resources to build content knowledge –

Invite outside guest speakers to participate in your online discussions. Or, ask learners to interview people in the community to add a different flavor to the course content.

134. Create opportunities for reflection on the course, technology, content, and process –

To help learners think about the "big picture" use online journals that require the learners to reflect on the course process.

135. Help your learners manage information –

This calls for managing access to recourses, academic discourse, information flow, and service arrangements.

136. Encourage substantive feedback from learners – including you –

Your responses to learner' comments should be thoughtful and provocative. They should help stimulate continued discussion of a topic, and help the learners make connections with their fellow learners and the other knowledge they've gained.

137. Motivate your learners to participate –

Once learners are engaged in the learning community and the course, they're much more likely to complete the course.

138. Give learners roles during discussions –

Rolls can rotate throughout the course, with each learner taking on a different role at different times.

139. Make learners facilitators –

As facilitators, a learner may be responsible for initiating a discussion with one or two questions from the readings.

140. Make learners process observers –

As process observer, a learner monitors the group's dynamics. Process observers are responsible for making sure that everyone is participating in the discussion, that there is an evenness of participation and the discussion maintains a collegial and helpful tone.

141. Make learners information networkers/summarizers –

The network/summarizers role is to look for key themes that emerge in the conversation, keeping track of areas of consensus and disagreement among group members.

142. Consider online office hours –

During office hours you can answer questions learners might have about course assignments or projects.

143. Take advantage of opportunities for continuous learning –

New searches yield information, and the multiple perspectives and approaches learners take in their problem-solving activities and research open up new avenues for future courses.

144. Read all you can about online learning -

Whether you subscribe to some online learning-oriented Internet discussion groups, faithfully read the "Information Technology" sections on The Chronicle of Higher Education, or track down some of the many new books on distance education, be sure to keep up with this developing paradigm!

145. Understand that you're not the only one who feels a little overwhelmed once in a while –

Change happens quickly in online teaching and learning that it's impossible to keep up with it all.

146. Know that sometime, some day, you'll struggle with the technology –

Technology is wonderful, but it can also be temperamental. So be prepared to be disappointed or angered by it someday.

147. Enjoy Yourself –

Online teaching may scare you, at least at first. But it can also be very rewarding, especially as you perfect ways to involve your learners in their own learning. So be patient with yourself, with your learners, and with the technology – and have fun!