Teaching @ ODU

was adapted, with permission, from The New Faculty Guide to Teaching and Learning at McMaster (2014), McMaster University, Ontario, Canada

A Web connection is needed to access the resources in this interactive document. Clicking the crown in the bottom right will navigate the page back to the Table of Contents.

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Center for Learning and Teaching

faculty-focused
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Welcome to ODU, where teaching matters! It’s a great pleasure for us at CLT to offer you this Teaching@ODU handbook.

Whether you are a new faculty, adjunct, instructor, lecturer, or teaching assistant, this handbook is intended to assist you in your teaching. As you know, teaching is an intellectual journey that requires thinking, planning, designing, organizing, and facilitating. While situational factors such as students' background, readiness, motivation, and interests can influence their success; your passion, teaching values, enthusiasm, empathy, patience, thorough preparation, and caring are what makes a difference in student learning and success.

With this assumption in mind, this handbook shares best practices and helpful tips on teaching and learning and on how to engage your students. Based on a review of the literature, the resources included provide practical tips on how to: prepare course syllabi; plan your first day of class; engage your students in lively and meaningful discussions; align your learning objectives with your course content, activities and assessments; and leverage various technologies to promote students' learning and engagement, among other tips.

Ultimately, the most important variable in teaching is to provide our diverse student population with multiple opportunities throughout their journey to promote their curiosity, thinking, and motivation to learn. After all, learning is a lifelong journey…

We look forward to working and interacting with you as you carry out the heavy mission of offering our students a life-changing experience. Helping our students learn how to learn, and how to think critically and skeptically, while recognizing the richness and the diversity of various perspectives, is what teaching at ODU is all about.
At ODU’s Center for Learning and Teaching (CLT), we strive to support and strengthen the faculty’s teaching efforts by offering workshops and opportunities to share, interact, and learn from colleagues. We invite full-time faculty, adjunct faculty, and teaching assistants to participate.

**CLT offers a wide variety of services:**
- opportunities for the collegial sharing of ideas about teaching and learning
- classroom observation for faculty
- instructional design consultations
- course development support and training
- workshops and other events on teaching and learning and on instructional technologies
- graphic design for posters and instructional aids

CLT also coordinates the [Faculty Innovator Grant program](#), [Faculty Summer Institute on Teaching and Learning](#), and the [Provost’s Conversations on Teaching and Learning](#). CLT is located on the first floor of Gornto Hall, on the south side of the campus, bordered by the Education Building, Batten Arts and Letters Building, and Perry Library.
ODU Mission Statement

Old Dominion University, located in the City of Norfolk in the metropolitan Hampton Roads region of coastal Virginia, is a dynamic public research institution that serves its students and enriches the Commonwealth of Virginia, the nation, and the world through rigorous academic programs, strategic partnerships, and active civic engagement.

ODU Vision Statement

Old Dominion University will be recognized nationally and internationally as a forward-focused metropolitan university with a collaborative and innovative approach to education and research that spurs economic growth, focuses on student success, engages civic and community partners, and uses its connections with the military and maritime industries and its exceptional strengths and leadership in related areas to provide practical solutions to complex, real world problems.
An essential part of good teaching is knowing the students you teach. ODU’s Office of Institutional Research offers these University Facts & Figures. Another good resource for information is About ODU.

Although this information is generic, it sets the stage for you as a faculty member to develop an in-depth understanding of your students as learners. Learning more about your students will enable you to better reach out to your students, will reduce the distance between you and your students, and most importantly, will help you to help them succeed as learners.
Connect with the Administrative Assistant in your Department

✦ If you have a classroom, visit it before you begin your course. Is the classroom appropriate in terms of class size, physical arrangement, and A/V equipment?
✦ Has a Teaching Assistant (TA) been assigned to your course?
✦ When does your department require a course outline or syllabus?
✦ If you are teaching an online course, are you conversant with the technologies that you will use?

Connect with the Center for Learning and Teaching

✦ Do you need help with course design or layout?
✦ Do you need to learn to use Blackboard, the university’s learning management system?
✦ Do you need to learn the pedagogical uses of any other technologies (WordPress, Web conferencing, etc.)?

Connect with the University Bookstore

✦ Have you ordered textbooks for your students?

Connect with the University Libraries

✦ Have any required course materials been placed on reserve?
✦ Have you contacted your Subject Librarian to explore resources?
TIPS FOR THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS

✦ In Making the Most of the First Day of Class, Mary C. Clement offers answers to common questions about the first class session, what it should accomplish, and how it relates to the rest of the semester. She encourages instructors to use every minute of the first class and to make the introductory material important and engaging.

✦ In Teaching Online: Planning the First Week of Class, Kristina Smolenski-Nelson considers, in particular, the needs of students who may be new to online learning, may not be particularly computer savvy, and may need help learning to communicate in the online learning environment.

✦ Maryellen Weimer, in her Teaching Professor Blog, lays out a two-pronged approach to the first day of class. Five Things to Do on the First Day of Class includes tips on showcasing course content, getting students talking, being personable, giving students a reason to read the syllabus, and being authentic.

✦ In First Day of Class Activities that Create a Climate for Learning, Maryellen Weimer shares four activities instructors can use: Best and Worst Classes, First Day Graffiti, Syllabus Speed Dating, and Irritating Behaviors: Theirs and Ours.

✦ In Creating the Foundation for a Warm Classroom Climate, a group of professors in the Association for Psychological Science share ways in which teachers can develop a syllabus that sets the tone for the course. Among them are using an effective (and warm) syllabus to communicate -- one filled with positive language, a rationale for assignments, self-disclosure, humor, compassion, and enthusiasm.
Here are some guidelines for what to include in the syllabus for each course:

- your contact information and office hours
- course overview
- course learning objectives
- required textbook
- grading scale
- assessment plans and policies
- course schedule and week-by-week topics
- academic integrity policy (see The Student Conduct System)
- academic accommodation for students with disabilities statements (see Educational Accessibility)

ODU’s Center for Learning and Teaching offers a checklist to help you be sure that you’ve included everything that your students need for a productive semester.
ASSESSING (FOR) STUDENT LEARNING

Assessment for Learning

Sally Brown, in Assessment for Learning, argues that assessment can and should be used to help students learn, rather than simply providing the means by which we arrive at student grades. She urges instructors to think carefully about the why, the who, and the when of assessment, in addition to the what and the how, and to focus on more than the short-term regurgitation of content.

Making the Most of Multiple-Choice Questions

Multiple choice tests are one of the most common forms of assessment in university settings, particularly when classes are large. This collection of essays from CELT describes ways in which instructors might construct multiple choice questions that test more than simple recall, asking students to demonstrate an understanding of content and/or an ability to apply, analyze or evaluate ideas.

In A Self-Correcting Approach to Multiple Choice Tests, Joann Montepare offers a method that allows students to take the exam and then take it home to review. As they review, they can change their answers. The self-corrected exam determines their grade.

Testing to Promote Long-Term Learning

What are tests good for? An article with several sections in the Journal of the Association for Psychological Science, Testing Can be Useful for Students and Teachers, Promoting Long-Term Learning, promotes the use of properly-constructed multiple-choice tests, since testing enhances the ability to learn new information and can even strengthen short-term memory for cross-language information.
ASSESSING (FOR) STUDENT LEARNING

Learning through Testing
In *Learning through Testing*, Henry L. Roediger, III suggests that “Testing memory not only assesses what we know but changes it.” He notes that research shows that replacing a study period with a test can be a key factor in improved performance.

Grading
In *Grading Student Papers: Reducing Faculty Workload while Improving Feedback to Students*, Kathy Pedzek posits that most students do not read most of the comments that professors provide on their papers, and suggests ways to provide feedback that is more likely to be understood and used in learning.

The Dos and Don’ts of Student-Oriented Grading
Grading can be a frustrating experience for students and instructors alike. Students frequently seem surprised by the marks they receive, or confused about the criteria guiding the assessment process. Instructors, on the other hand, are often disappointed that students seem to ignore or object to the constructive feedback that has been offered. *Student-Oriented Grading* offers warning signs, dos and don’ts, a sample rubric, and more.
ODU RESOURCES FOR YOU

**Handbooks.** The Teaching and Research Faculty Handbook and the General Adjunct Faculty Handbook can be found at the website of ODU Academic Affairs.

**Center for Learning and Teaching.** This faculty-focused team stands ready to help you with pedagogical issues, to support you in your effort to use technology in your teaching, and to strengthen your ability to change delivery modes (i.e., from face-to-face to online teaching).

**Academic Calendar.** You can easily plan your syllabus for the coming semester.

**University Bookstore.** This site allows you to order the textbooks needed for your courses.

**Office of Distance Learning.** Here, you’ll find a compendium of information about ODU’s distance learning programs; it also offers distance students links to ODU’s online academic resources (educational accessibility, the libraries, ePortfolio support, etc.).

**Class Rosters.** In LEO Online’s Online News and Secure Area, you can access your class rosters. Be sure to check them frequently, since they change in the days before and immediately after your course begins.

**ODU Libraries.** The Libraries offer a number of services for students and faculty, as well as an extensive online search capability.

**FERPA.** Be sure to familiarize yourself with the material in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

**Educational Accessibility.** Make certain that your course material is ADA-compliant and that you know how to offer your students any requested accommodations.
Student Success Center. A partnership between Academic Affairs and Student Engagement and Enrollment Services, the Student Success Center empowers students to take responsibility for their learning experiences and build their academic success plans leading to graduation.

The Writing Center. The Writing Center offers free individual tutorials to undergraduates and graduates working on writing projects for any course. WC tutors are not editors or proofreaders, but they coach and encourage students to achieve independence in the composition and revision of their own work.

Career Development Services. CDS offers a comprehensive developmental approach to helping students in all phases of career decision making, planning and preparing, gaining experience and success outcomes.

Center for Major Exploration. CME offers specialized advising for students who are undecided about what major is right for them.

Tutoring and Mentoring. ODU offers many opportunities for tutoring and for finding a mentor across the disciplines.

Student Health Center. Full-time undergraduate and graduate students are eligible for Student Health Services, because they have paid a nominal health fee. Part-time undergraduate and graduate students may elect to receive services by paying the fee.

Student Conduct and Academic Integrity. You may want to include the ODU Honor Pledge and Honor Code in your syllabus.

Office of Counseling Services. This campus agency provides comprehensive mental health services to enrolled students.
The majority of the courses taught at ODU are taught in the classroom, face-to-face. In the past, lecturing was the main method of educating students, but such innovations as the flipped classroom, group work, and the use of constructive teaching strategies have replaced lecturing with a much more collaborative form of learning.

In *A Brief Summary of the Best Practices in College Teaching*, Tom Drummond:

✦ considers the lecture, offering ways to make it more of a community effort
✦ offers some triggers for generating group discussions
✦ elaborates on the most effective ways to generate questions that will foster students’ engagement and confidence
✦ encourages the use of responses to learner contributions (paraphrasing, making a parallel personal comment, asking for clarification)
✦ shares ways to reward learner participation
✦ offers active learning strategies, including cooperative group assignments
✦ connects goals to grades and explains how to do the same in other settings
✦ encourages the modeling of the kind of openness, learning, and trust expected
✦ offers methods of fostering learners’ responsibility for their own learning.
TEACHING TIPS FROM EXPERIENCED TEACHERS

David Meyers offers teaching tips from experienced teachers gleaned from experienced teachers and seasoned by his own examples. He encourages teachers to be positive and enthusiastic, to give examples and frequent feedback, and to assume that their introductory students will never take another course in their field.

Teaching Creative Thinking
Thriving in Academe offers tips on Teaching Creative Thinking and More, regardless of the subject being taught. The article includes “Tales from Real Life” that allow readers to move from theory to practice.

Attention, Please!
Your Attention, Please! offers tips to get your disengaged students to focus on their learning: get their attention and don’t proceed without it; “What’s the Big Idea?”; think and act visually; explain why, and other topics, along with real-life examples.

Observations on Teaching
Lee McCann and Susan McFadden suggest that being intentional, teaching compromise, and taking time to reflect are key strategies for teaching success.
Bloom’s Digital Taxonomy
Based on the original developed by Benjamin Bloom, Andrew Churches’ Bloom’s Digital Taxonomy aligns the lower to high order thinking verbs/skills to various digital verbs/skills.

Civility and Incivility
In The Thin Line Between Civility and Incivility: Fostering Reflection and Self-Awareness to Create a Civil Learning Community, Zopito Marini draws upon bullying research to develop a model of classroom incivility that offers insight into ways in which this phenomenon might be prevented.

Promoting Class Discussions
In Class Discussions: Promoting Participation and Preventing Problems, Thomas Kramer and James Korn discuss ways to address some practical problems (large classes, the limits of time and space, and quiet or shy students).

In Asking Questions: Promoting student-faculty interchange in the classroom, Judith Larkin reminds teachers how it felt to be called upon in class and discusses the top five behaviors that students use to avoid being called upon. She then discusses both safe questions that break the ice and ways to establish a norm of participation.

Directing, Discussing, Delegating
These are three primary teaching styles that Paul B. Thornton suggests in The Three D’s. He notes that it’s best to use an appropriate mix of the three.

Keys to More Effective Class Discussions
In-class discussion is a pedagogical tool called on by numerous university instructors. In Six Keys to More Effective Class Discussions, Weimer provides a synopsis of work by Sautter (2007), which outlines a set of suggestions for improving the structure and success of classroom interchange.
FURTHER TEACHING RESOURCES

What Questions Engage Students
What Questions Engage Students? is a one-page document that offers advice on asking questions that are likely to encourage student participation in classroom discussion.

Teaching the Millennials
In Teaching the Millennials, Jeff Nevid offers a picture of the generation that makes up much of the undergraduate student population. He encourages teachers to use technology to enhance good teaching, not to replace good teaching.

Know your Audience
The NEA offers The Necessity of Really Knowing Your Audience, a reminder that, unless we know the mindset of those we are teaching and make content accessible to that specific audience, we won’t be carrying our message as well as we could.

Educating the Net Generation
Diana Oblinger and James Oblinger (2005) edit a portrait of students who were born in 1980 or later in Educating the Net Generation. They offer voices who are, themselves, of that generation, to explain how net technologies can be used, to great benefit, in our courses.

Meet your Students Where They Are
Thriving in Academe offers a look at using social media in courses. Meet Your Students Where They Are: Social Media offers practical ways for instructors to leverage new media in their courses.
Blended Learning

Blended Learning is the meaningful integration of face-to-face classroom experiences with online learning experiences. Often described as “the best of both worlds,” blended learning combines the social and instructor-engagement opportunities offered in face-to-face classroom learning with the technology-enhanced learning made possible online. A well-planned blended learning format builds pedagogical value by using online methods of content delivery and assessment to prepare students for the application of knowledge during inquiry-based, collaborative discussions within the allotted class time. In this manner, instructors act more as facilitators or coaches, and students are given greater ownership over their learning. An effective blended learning opportunity encompasses:

- a shift from a lecture-centered to a student-centered course
- increased student-instructor, student-student, student-content and student-resources interactions
- expanded opportunity for various formative and summative assessment pieces.

Online Learning

Moving a face-to-face course (or creating a new one) to an online format is a complex undertaking that holds tremendous teaching and learning potential. Determining which online learning activities effectively support the course learning outcomes requires a great deal of planning. Activities can include a mix of asynchronous (student-paced) and synchronous (real-time) materials. Asynchronous activities offer students the ultimate in scheduling flexibility, while often incorporating synchronous elements (e.g., webinars and group work) to build community and engagement. Technology is not an afterthought.
**Technology is not a Toy!**

Cathy S. Mester, in *Technology is not a Toy!*, offers specific tips for teachers presenting visual information – several how-tos for both development and presentation.

**Technology’s Impact on Higher Ed**

Chris Proulx’s of eCornell discusses *Technology’s Impact on Higher Education*, including “flipping the classroom” and hybrid learning, both of which are in evidence at ODU.

**Blended Learning Toolkit**

Based on a long history of offering blended learning, the University of Central Florida has developed and refined its *Blended Learning Toolkit*, a useful resource for faculty who are considering adopting a blended learning approach. Main sections include: Process, Model Courses, Effective Practices, Evaluation Resources, Faculty Development and Research.

**Effective Online Instruction in Higher Education**

Heather Crawford-Ferre and Lynda Wiest break *Effective Online Instruction in Higher Education* into three parts: Course Design, Instructor Preparedness, and Interaction among Course Participants, with evidence-based suggestions around each.
Blackboard is the primary learning management system used at Old Dominion University. Although there are many tools that one may use within Blackboard, the most popular include: announcements, email, discussion board, online meetings, assignments, online quizzes, an online grade book, calendar, small groups, and document sharing. Learn more at ITS (Instructional Technology Services) Blackboard information page.
The PLE is an online tool developed by ODU’s Center for Learning and Teaching to provide an intuitive learning environment capable of helping students focus on their learning, while establishing connections and relationships among course content elements and activities. The majority of online courses developed by the Office of Distance Learning use PLE as the main source of content delivery.

For pedagogical support for PLE, contact CLT at 757-683-3172 or at clt@odu.edu.

For technical support, contact ITS at 757-683-3192 or at itshelp@odu.edu.
CLT gratefully acknowledges permission to use material from the New Faculty Guide to Teaching and Learning at McMaster University.

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