

Creating the Online Learning Environment: Assessing the Overall Learning Environment and Expectations

When creating a learning environment, it is easy to over plan along the way and create a course that requires more of yourself and your students than intended. You should be able to provide guiding feedback in a timely manner, and students should be able to complete the work assigned within the time allotted. A good guideline is to plan for 3 hours of work per credit per week for students. So for a three credit course, completion of all readings, viewings, quizzes, journals, discussions, assignments, etc... should require no more than 9 hours of student time per week.

To ensure that you are planning for success you can map each module on a calendar and ask yourself the following questions:

- Are students being asked to complete more than 3 hours of work per credit each week?
- Can you assess work and provide feedback in time for students to apply that feedback to the next similar assignment?
- Is the work load spread out adequately for you and your students to succeed?

In the example below, you will see how this instructor has planned the class. She has mapped one module on a calendar, highlighting student-content activities in purple, student-student activities in orange, and student-instructor activities in teal. This visualization helps her to see more clearly how the work spreads out and better determine the answers to the questions above. Note how she has given herself 24-48 hours to provide feedback on assignments and that students have 4-5 days to use that feedback on subsequent related work.

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	View TED talk on Global Literacy	Readings on Family Literacy Practices	Family Literacy Discussion	Due: Reflection Journal Family Literacy Discussion	Review Instructor Comments on Journal Family Literacy Discussion	Family Literacy Discussion
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Family Literacy Discussion	Due: Position Statement on Integrating Family Literacy in Class (draft)	Due: Peer Review of Position Statement	Review Instructor Comments on Position Statement Due: Lesson Plan	View Family Literacy Mini-Lesson Video Lesson Plan Discussion	Review Instructor Comments on Lesson Plan Lesson Plan Discussion	Lesson Plan Discussion
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Lesson Plan Discussion	Due: Position Statement on Integrating Family Literacy in Class (final)	Teach the Lesson (video tape II)	Due: Teaching Analysis	Review Instructor Comments on Teaching Analysis	Due: Peer Review of Teaching Analysis	