

Empowering Student Success: Identifying Essential Supports

Participation in online courses requires different skills than participation in face-to-face courses. For example, students rely more heavily on reading and writing skills to participate in courses online whereas they rely more on listening and speaking to participate face-to-face. It might be necessary to provide additional supports for some students as they navigate this shift and others.

Some other common areas to consider include the following:

- Technological competencies needed for participation in online courses may be new to students.
- Computer mediated social interactions within online learning environments may be unfamiliar or uncomfortable for students.
- Time management skills, study skills, and other self-monitoring skills are needed for success in online courses and may not be well-developed yet.
- Self-help and knowing how/where to find help is a necessity; not all students have developed academic resourcefulness yet.
- Personal responsibility, confidence in learning, and self-motivation may be lacking as previous classroom experience may not have required it.

It will be necessary to determine the ways in which these factors could impact student success in your course. In what ways do you ask students to exercise these skills and traits? In what ways might they need support and scaffolding to succeed? It is not necessary to fill all the gaps in student experience and preparation, but it is necessary to provide adequate supports for the things you are asking them to do.

Examine this example to see how one instructor is planning to support student success.

Support Areas	Impact on my Course	Supports to Provide
Reading/writing vs listening/speaking	Students discuss through written posts.	<p>*I will provide instructions and samples that demonstrate the expectations of online discussion posts and replies.</p> <p>*If I decide to require any formal writing in the discussions, I can provide samples and resources such a link to the APA style guide.</p>

Designing for Online Learning: Essential Reminders for Planning Fully Online Courses

Support Areas	Impact on my Course	Supports to Provide
Technological competencies	Students create presentations using the VoiceThread multimedia platform.	*I will include a mini-resource module on how to use VoiceThread, instructions on how to create presentations, and a short task to create a mini-presentation.
Computer mediated social interaction	Students engage in discussions and group work.	*I will post instructions and expectations for the content and flow of these activities. Pacing the posts and subtasks as well providing resources on netiquette will help students to succeed.
Time management, study skills, monitoring skills	The paper and presentation project require planning and monitoring.	*In my course resources area, I will include tools for planning and monitoring projects. *For the undergraduates, I will provide a sample set of steps and due dates. *For the graduate students, I will require submission of a work plan with self-determined due dates.
Self-help and resourcefulness	Students need to follow their own questions and inquiries throughout the course.	*I have the course resources area with links to a variety of helpful resources on content and skills such as professional organizations or online tutorials.
Personal responsibility, confidence in learning	Submissions need to be on time and should demonstrate critical thinking, personal interest, and proficiency with the content.	*I can model enthusiasm in the subject matter and encourage students to do the same. *I can present a statement on how online learning differs from face-to-face and share that I view my role as to set up learning experiences and facilitate them, but also that I view the role of students as to take initiative and overall responsibility for their learning, for asking questions, etc....