Canvas Course Design Best Practices: Quick Reference Guide

- Organize your course page chronologically rather than thematically (this way, everything needed for a particular week can be found in one place, for example).

- Make your home page the *Modules* page. You may instead choose to make it a customized *Front page*, but *Modules* is likely most efficient for the students.

- Create modules for organization and include *everything* that the student will need to access in order to complete assignments and prepare for the classes in that module.

- Create a task list/overview for the beginning of each module that the learners can use and "check things off." This section is also a good place to state your learning objectives for the module, which will help keep both you and the students on track.

- Publish content in the course only once. This will avoid duplication and outdated files. Publish everything in your *Files*, and then link to it in *Modules*. This allows you also to keep track of updating any documents or information only in one place.

- Use a brief but clearly descriptive title for each item that you publish in the course.

- Hide menu items that the students do not need to access like: Files, Pages, Quizzes, Assignments, Conferences, People, etc... Note: if you will not be using Discussions, hide that, too. Otherwise, leave it visible so students can start new discussions if required in the course.

- Provide the digital syllabus information in the syllabus section (this also will then transfer due dates to the student's Canvas calendar), but also provide a downloadable PDF copy of the syllabus.

- Be consistent with naming conventions throughout the course (i.e. refer to the same assignment by one name only, and also name associated files with that same name).

- For online students in particular, a course introduction module is helpful.

- Provide an orientation module or page for any software that the students will need to use during the semester in the course

Sources:

- Canvas Course Design Recommendations (Instructure): https://psu.instructure.com/courses/1741795/pages/1c-course-design-recommendations
- Pennsylvania State University Canvas UX Study Results (in a nutshell): https://sites.psu.edu/canvasux/2017/04/21/canvas-ux-think-aloud-observations-report/.
- Pennsylvania State University Canvas UX Study-Final Report: https://sites.psu.edu/canvasux/files/2017/04/CanvasUXThinkAloudObservations_FinalReport-_final-1qg4718.pdf)
- University of Washington Canvas Course Design Resource: https://canvas.uw.edu/courses/866251/pages/best-practices-the-one-page-guide-for-course-building
- University of Alabama-Birmingham: https://www.uab.edu/cas/online/how-to-what-makes-a-good-module-in-canvas

Further Reading on Best Practices In Online Teaching

Books:

- Darby, F., & Lang, J. M. (2019). *Small Teaching Online: Applying Learning Science in Online Classes*. San Francisco, CA : Jossey-Bass.
    - Podcast: https://teachinginhighered.com/podcast/small-teaching-online/

- Linder, K. E., Hayes, C. M., & Thompson, K. (2018). *High-impact practices in online education: Research and best practices*. Sterling, Virginia : Stylus.

- Boettcher, J. V., & Conrad, R.-M. (2016). *The Online Teaching Survival Guide: Simple and Practical Pedagogical Tips*. San Francisco, CA : Jossey-Bass.

- Nilson, L. B., & Goodson, L. A. (2018). *Online teaching at its best: Merging instructional design with teaching and learning research*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, a Wiley brand.

- Major, C. H. (2015). *Teaching online: A guide to theory, research, and practice*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

- Miller, M. D. (2017). *Minds online: Teaching effectively with technology*. Cambridge : Harvard University Press.

- Dabbagh, N., Marra, R. M., & Howland, J. L. (2019). *Meaningful online learning: Integrating strategies, activities, and learning technologies for effective designs*. New York : Routledge.

- Stavredes, T. (2011). *Effective online teaching: Foundations and strategies for student success*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Web Resources:
- Designing and Developing Videos for Online Learning

- http://designingforlearning.info/writing/ten-best-practices-for-teaching-online/

- http://designingforlearning.info/ecoachingtips

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