"The learning-teaching synergy happens when teachers are thinking, observing, and focusing in all sorts of ways on learning—when we are constantly asking, ‘What's going to help students learn this?’ This focus on learning and attempts to understand how it's happening for students drives decision-making about teaching. It is what determines whether students will work in groups, whether they need to write or speak answers, whether their understanding of a concept should be tested, and on and on. Teachers become learners of learning. We have always been learners of content, but now in every class we seek to better understand the relationship between the learning experiences of students and the instructional approaches we are using.” – Excerpted from The Teaching-Learning Synergy by Maryellen Weimer, PhD.

6 Ways to Prepare Your Online Course

Rob Kelly, Editor, Online Classroom

Careful preparation is essential to the success of an online course “to provide a positive experience for the students and to be able to maximize your time with students so that you’re not spending time on reworking things that weren’t clear up front,” says Ann Millacci, associate professor of education at the University of Cincinnati. The following six tips were adapted from an interview with Ms. Millacci.

1. **Be clear, concise, and comprehensive.** Everything has to be there. You can’t walk in as an instructor with your yellow pad and ad lib the session like you might in a face to face classroom. You have to have everything laid out. It has to be very organized. And the students have to have the material as soon as the course goes online. Logical flow of the course is important as well, and Millacci recommends having a colleague check the course for ease of navigation, clear instructions, and accurate placement of content. “You don’t want students to be frustrated because things aren’t where they’re supposed to be.”

*Note: Here you can change your “role” in D2L to that of a student to see exactly what the student will see when they open your course. Go through your course and verify that all of the (hyper) links work and that all of the Word, PDF, and PowerPoint documents can open properly.*

2. **Provide a manageable amount of content.** Because online courses often operate on a compressed schedule, it’s important to consider how much work is reasonable to expect of students while at the same time ensuring you’re covering the necessary content.

3. **Provide a variety of learning activities.** Consider which types of activities are appropriate for the goals of the course and how you might offer different types of assignments to make the course more interesting and engaging for the students. For example, field interviews, case studies, discussion boards, and collaborative assignments.

4. **Avoid making last-minute changes.** Making changes in an online course can have unintended consequences such as inconsistent information. This can create confusion for the students. It’s best to make changes when you have the time to check that changes didn’t create any problems in the accuracy or flow of the course.

5. **Provide resources to help students succeed in the online classroom.** Don’t assume that your students have all the knowledge and expertise to succeed in an online course format. While it’s unrealistic to teach students what they need to know about the learning environment, you can provide them with links to resources that can help.

6. **Test the course in the recommended browsers and on different platforms/devices.** Sometimes what works on one computer doesn’t work on another. Fixing any problems before the course goes live will help avoid student frustration and the need for you to scramble to help them access the course.

For training on academic technology contact Mr. William Mitchell Ex. 7751 or wmitchelle@oakwood.edu
IMPORTANT DATES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>QEP Critical Thinking Professional Development Instructors Workshop</td>
<td>Thursday, February 27th</td>
<td>4:00 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm Grades Due</td>
<td>Monday, March 3rd – 7th</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring Break</td>
<td>Monday, March 3rd – 7th</td>
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<tr>
<td>Classes Resume</td>
<td>Monday, March 10th</td>
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<tr>
<td>QEP Critical Thinking Think Tank Kick-Off</td>
<td>Tuesday, March 11th – 10th</td>
<td>5:00 PM – 6:00 PM</td>
<td>Cunningham Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oakwood Authors’ Book Signing</td>
<td>Tuesday, March 18th - 19th</td>
<td>10:00 AM – 11:30 AM</td>
<td>Eva B. Dykes Library</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| QEP Critical Thinking Think-Tank VIII                   | Thursday, March 13th – 19th  | 4:00 PM – 5:30 PM     | Committee of 100 Auditorium,
|                                                         |                               |                       | McKee B&T Building         |
| Faculty Meeting                                          | Tuesday, March 25th – 29th   | 8:30 AM – 4:00 PM     | Committee of 100 Auditorium,
|                                                         |                               |                       |                            |
| 2014 Faculty Research Symposium                         | Tuesday, April 22nd – 26th   | 8:30 AM – 4:00 PM     |                            |

WHITE HOUSE INITIATIVE ANNOUNCES CALL FOR PAPERS FOR 2014

COMPRENDIUM OF U.S. GOVERNMENT SPONSORED RESEARCH AND PROGRAMS

Projects resulting in partnerships between HBCUs and the Federal Government will be published in the 2014 Compendium of U.S. Government Sponsored Research Program at Historically Black Colleges and Universities. The following are acceptable manuscripts for this volume:

- The manuscript focuses on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); social science, arts and humanities; program evaluation; or needs assessment.
- The author is a principal investigator or co-principal investigators of a federally funded project awarded to an HBCU;
- The project received federal funding within the past 3 years or has been completed within the past 2 years;
- The manuscript uses an objective and widely established quantitative or qualitative research methodology.

For initial consideration, please submit an abstract no longer than 500 words and a brief biographical sketch from the primary author via email by March 1. All inquiries regarding submissions should be directed to Dr. Ivory A. Toldson at ivory.toldson@ed.gov and copy the Office of Research & Grants, smalone@oakwood.edu

RESOURCES @ YOUR LIBRARY

LibGuides are online guides on any topic, subject, course, or process.

LibGuide on Critical Thinking
http://libguides.oakwood.edu/content.php?pid=511149&sid=4206315

Click on LibGuides from library homepage and search the term “critical thinking”

FOR FUN

“olerance oferror. But if you mean it, you should say it a lot. People forget.”

-Jessica, age 8

DATABASE OF THE MONTH

The Oxford African American Studies Center is the most comprehensive collection of scholarship available online to focus on the lives and events which have shaped African American and African history and culture.

Civil Rights in America is the theme for Black History Month 2014

Check out these DVDS from Media Resources

DVD 3393 Civil Rights Movement: Martin Luther King, Jr.
DVD 330 Reconstruction: The Second Civil War
DVD 260 Separate But Equal

To have information included in News & Notes, contact Shannan Moore Malone, Project Coordinator:

smalone@oakwood.edu | Ex. 7738

Contact us at Ex. 7731 or visit us online: www.oakwood.edu/facultydevelopment