Oregon State University Ecampus Research Unit

Advice for new online instructors

This advice is the result of interviews with 33 OSU faculty who have taught online for 10-plus years. Their insights are for instructors new to teaching online.

More about the study

ecampus.oregonstate.edu/instructor-study

Build a connected online community

Help students feel connected to you as an instructor as well as to other students. How you can interact with your students? How can you encourage your students to interact with each other?

Be aware of the time and effort involved in teaching online

Developing new online courses takes a lot of upfront work. Once a course is developed, teaching online takes more time than you think. Many online instructors think that the time commitment is similar to in-person teaching.

Learn from others and take advantage of professional development

Don't reinvent the wheel. Learn from other online instructors and online learning professionals, and take advantage of professional development opportunities.

Believe in your ability to teach online

Most content can be taught online with some creativity. Even if you are unsure of how to teach something online, you will have better outcomes if you believe that it is possible.

Utilize the online medium

Online environments function differently than in-person environments. Think about how you could use the online medium to your advantage.

Focus on what you love about teaching

Enjoy the experience of teaching online and focus on aspects of the work that you love. For example, you may love your content area, interacting with and mentoring students, and online pedagogy.

Make your presence known and communicate regularly

Consider what methods of communication you wish to use (text, phone or video) as well as where communication could happen (inside the LMS, over Zoom or in person).

Consider and support your students

Online students often juggle multiple life responsibilities. Think about your course from the students' perspective. How can you continually invite your students into your course?

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