SUNY CANTON

FACULTY GUIDEBOOK FOR TEACHING ONLINE

Best Practices and Suggestions for Teaching at a Distance
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This guidebook provides guidelines for both new and experienced instructors teaching online. It offers practical suggestions for making the most out of technology and reflects best practices and learning suggestions gleaned from faculty teaching online and students taking online courses. Suggestions are supported by current research literature on distance learning.

We welcome contributions and look forward to ideas for its further improvement. Please contact us at ol@canton.edu if you would like to contribute to this Guidebook.

BEFORE CLASSES START: TO DO LIST

- Take a moment for a ‘Go live’ review of your course. Make sure course materials are ready for the first day of class by checking content links, course dates, accessibility of materials & assignments, syllabus information, etc. This is much like ‘showing up to class.’

- Please review basic angel functions such as ANGEL’s communication features (email & discussion board functions).

- Frequently check your SUNY Canton email. Important campus announcements from the Registrar, Provost, and Center for Excellence in Teaching and Online Learning are sent via this email. Contact the SUNY Canton Help Desk at (315) 386-7448 if you need any assistance with your Canton email account.

TEACHING AT A DISTANCE: BEST PRACTICES & SUGGESTIONS

(Please visit the ANGEL Teaching Repository located automatically on your ANGEL home page under Repositories. This is a resource rich site that provides open source teaching materials for the online professor)

Good beginnings: The first day of class impacts students, with potential negative effects lasting the entire term.

- Provide a clearly defined course syllabus: Include a description of any special exam procedure-must students obtain a proctor?

- Make your availability clear to students. Be sure to let students know how long it will be before they hear back from you. We recommend a 24 hour response time to email & bulletin board postings, but you decide what is reasonable for your course.

- Specify method of course communication and have students practice using it the first week of classes.

- Consider sending a welcome announcement to students prior to the start of class. You may wish to attach your syllabus.

- Use icebreakers: The sooner you engage students in the course, the better (encourage students to prepare web pages about themselves, including, for example, educational background, work experience, hobbies, learner expectations etc.).

- Check student attendance by a “check-in” posting within the first 3 days of the course

- Reinforce students’ early attempts at participation

- Be responsive to questions: Timely, supportive, and constructive feedback is essential to student learning in the online environment.

- Include a statement of expectations about the amount of time students will need to spend online/offline to successfully complete your course (9-12 hours per course per week is a recommended time commitment).

- Encourage or require students to review the orientation module on their ANGEL course listings. They are automatically enrolled in this when they register for your course.
Consider developing a learning agreement that outlines a student's responsibility for participating in your course. Here's an example:

As a student in [course name], I understand my responsibilities for participating in this class. These responsibilities include:

1. Having access to a working computer with Internet capability.
2. Downloading appropriate software such as Acrobat Reader and PowerPoint.
3. Orienting myself to the course by reading and printing the Course Syllabus.
4. Using proper netiquette and decorum in all my communications with my classmates and instructor.
5. Using my ANGEL email account for communicating with my instructor.

Please acknowledge your understanding of your responsibilities in this class by clicking on the link below and typing the following response into the comment space: I...... have read and understood my responsibilities as a student in this class.

**MOTIVATING STUDENTS AT A DISTANCE**

*Responsiveness, social presence, and regular, timely feedback affect student motivation and learning satisfaction.*

Good feedback:

- Is specific to the task
- Contains relevant and detailed information
- Is timely
- Directs the learner to understand the main issues
- Challenges the learner toward additional thinking

Decrease psychological distance and build a sense of connection & community with your students:

- Send scheduled motivational messages
- Send frequent announcements and reminders to help keep students on task and help establish a dynamic social presence in the classroom.
- Acknowledge receipt of assignments with a “thank you for your submission” note
- Send personal messages addressing specific individual problems
- Provide quality social interaction by including planned synchronous or asynchronous interaction activities in your Syllabus
- Organize students into small collaborative groups and assign group monitors or representatives responsible for group dynamics
- Create opportunities for student involvement by assigning responsibilities to moderate discussions or be group leaders
- Create community-building activities (café, Q & A, small group discussions, share experiences, discussion summaries, pause & post method)
- Give value to discussion board postings; course grades should reflect importance of db postings
- Use videos to illustrate concepts that are difficult to explain by text alone
- Use webcams for real-time conferencing to promote immediacy (contact ol@canton.edu)
- Personalize your content: Go into your HTML editor and insert $FIRST_NAMES$. The name of the student will automatically appear in the text.

*Course design affects student motivation (have a colleague, peer, or student proof your course for typographical errors, content inconsistencies, broken links, old due dates)*
Regardless of the medium, most students respond positively to a well-organized course taught by an enthusiastic instructor who has a genuine interest in students and what they learn.

**ASSESSING LEARNING**

- Use multiple methods of assessment to accommodate different learning profiles and provide a more holistic picture of student learning
- Include student self-evaluations (e.g. reflective analysis). Here is an example:

  This week you will be writing a reflective analysis of your learning. This is an opportunity for you to look back on your work. Students, as well as teachers, gain knowledge and understanding through reflection. When you write your reflective analysis, include your thoughts and opinions on your learning. Specifically:
  - Comment on the skills you have developed or improved. 2 pts.
  - Judge the overall quality of your work (e.g., did you turn work in on time?). 2 pts.
  - Describe how you might have improved your performance. 2 pts.
  - Comment on what you would do differently if you had to take this class again. 1 pt.
  - Give examples of what you have learned. 2 pts.
  - Describe how the actual experiences of researching, interviewing, and posting to the discussion board have affected you as a person. 1 pt.

- Resource: Anti-plagiarism software TurnItIn (see ol@canton.edu)
- Proctor Guidelines (see Online Policies and Procedures Manual for suggestions on proctoring exams)
- An example of a rubric used to grade discussion board postings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Posted to the main topic.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supported post with at least (1) specific example.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used proper APA format for citations.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posted according to participation requirements articulated in the Syllabus.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing is grammatically correct.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used correct spelling.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replied to one other student posting with constructive feedback.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhanced quality of discussion (i.e. suggested new perspectives on issues, asked questions that helped further discussion, cited current news events etc)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
COURSE DEVELOPMENT

All online courses need to include components of the Online Syllabus (see Appendix A). Courses offered online for the first time require review:

- Courses offered in the Winterterm need to be submitted for review by October 15.
- Courses offered in the spring semester need to be submitted for review by November 1.
- Courses offered in the summer sessions need to be submitted for review by March 15.
- Courses offered in the fall semester need to be submitted for review by April 1.

For details on the course review process, please see the OnLine Policies and Procedures Manual. To help with course development, design frameworks are available via the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Online Learning. Please contact ol@canton.edu

Writing Effective Learning Objectives:

Excellent resource: Writing learning objectives using Bloom’s taxonomy
http://www.ukcle.ac.uk/resources/reflection/table.html

Words open to many interpretations:

To know
To understand
To appreciate

Words open to fewer interpretations:

To write
To recite
To identify
To construct
To compare
To contrast

COPYRIGHT Q & A

What does the Internet do to copyright law? The answer: nothing. Follow the same guidelines for fair use as you would in your traditional classroom. Best practice: Linking to electronic resources is better than scanning.

For more information see Copyright Basics: http://www.marshall.edu/muonline/copyrightbasics.asp

Some commonly asked questions:

1) Is it permissible under fair use guidelines to download a journal article into an online course?
The purpose of the journal article is educational and the nature of the work is factual, weighing in favor of fair use. However, it is **highly recommended and good practice** to have students access the article by linking to the university’s database, rather than downloading the article into the online course.

2) **Can an instructor post newspaper articles from a local paper into an online course if the articles are relevant to the subject of the course and the instructor subscribes to the newspaper?**

The purpose of the article is educational, the nature of the work is factual, and the amount posted is small, so it is likely it is fair use. Limiting access to the articles to only the students enrolled in the course also is in favor of fair use.

However, just like the above-mentioned scenario, it is best to have students access the article by linking to the university’s database, rather than downloading the article into the online course.

3) **Is it permissible for an instructor to scan diagrams or illustrations out of a textbook (purchased or not) and incorporate them into a PowerPoint presentation either in a distance or traditional course?**

As long as students are required to purchase the text, scanning is allowed. However, when scanning images out of an unassigned text, it is allowed only to the extent the materials are in the public domain.

**Alternative:** Create own expression/version of the diagram (Create own exercise following the model in the text) and cite (attribution to avoid plagiarism)

4) **Does an instructor need to ask permission to take an exercise from a textbook (not necessarily the one used for class) and use it in their online course, every time they teach the course?**

Repeated use is not advised. An alternative solution would be to create an exercise following the model in the text and cite.

5) **Is it ok to Xerox an article from the New York Times (or other publications) and post it to an online course?**

Copying and sending an article once is within fair use. However, in an online class, it might be better to give instructions about how to locate the article.

**ADA COMPLIANCE**

*Making content accessible to all:* **All of our online courses must be designed so that individuals with vision, hearing, and mobility impairments can access the information, complete the assignments, and take the required exams. The screen reader mode 508 button is located on the bottom of each ANGEL page.**

ADA Tips:

- Text alternatives are available for all audio and video content.
- Background colors-make sure that they are pale enough so that the text is easily readable. Keep length of pages to two screen depths maximum – if longer, consider whether to divide into more than one page, or use anchors (a link within a web page allowing the user to ‘jump’ up or down to a specific point on that page for easy navigation on the page).
- Abbreviations and acronyms are spelled out the first time they are used.
- Background is not distracting.
- All relevant graphics contain ALT text descriptions or have a link to a description.
- Timed responses are difficult for people with mobility limitations, low vision, cognitive, and hearing disabilities
- Provide captions for access to multimedia presentations for people who have a hearing impairment or an auditory learning disability
COURSE IMPROVEMENT: REVISING AND UPDATING COURSE MATERIALS

Feedback from the students is a valuable source for revising and continuously improving online classroom syllabus and materials.

- Use students course evaluation and solicit feedback via formative surveys for continuous course improvement
- Keep a journal that records the items that should be redesigned or altered the next time the course is taught.

It is also useful to make notes of assignments that worked well and those that did not, and to evaluate the effectiveness of content and instruction
- Include new e-learning technologies to present course material (contact ol@canton.edu)

USING ANGEL

Before classes begin, please be comfortable with the basic ANGEL functions outlined in the CHECKLIST OF ANGEL COMPETENCIES (see Appendix B). Email ol@canton.edu for questions on using ANGEL or to schedule individualized training.

Please use the course site, How to Use ANGEL, as a resource for learning or reviewing functions in ANGEL. This site automatically appears on your course listings and offers Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced video clips showing basic ANGEL functions. Print downloads are also available:

- Instructor Reference Manual
- Instructor Quickstart Guide
- Student Quickstart Guide

BROWSERS

Use separate web browsers (e.g., Firefox or Internet Explorer) when moving back and forth between multiple windows or tabs.

BASIC ANGEL FUNCTIONS

COMMUNICATION:

- Sending Email from ANGEL:

  Communicate> Send Course Email> (Then choose your recipients from the list)> below that list click the To-> button (this will place the selections you made in the header of the email)> compose subject and message> hit send.

  To copy email to a SUNY Canton account, check Send a copy to each recipient’s Internet e-mail

- Student responses in ANGEL: When students respond to your emails, their response will only appear on Angel.

- See which students have read your emails: Communicate> Read Course Email> select email> see who has read this message

DISCUSSION BOARDS

Post Permissions: Discussion (Message Board)> Settings> Post Permissions (check read, new post, reply)

Grading: Click on utilities>grade forum. Grades will then appear in your Gradebook

Archiving: DB Thread > Utilities > Print Discussion Forum (Print/Archive all or parts of the Discussion Forum) > Select All >
FYI: If a student is in the process of submitting a post, and gets disconnected prior to saving/submitting, ANGEL does grab the content, but does NOT attach it to the person doing the posting. So, you will see a posting, but it will list a guest instead of a student’s name. ANGEL does send that student a message letting them know that there was a problem with the connection and that their work may not have been saved. The SLN helpdesk advises students to notify their instructor if this occurs and to attach the message sent to them from ANGEL. SLN can do a search to see who actually submitted the “guest” assignment, but it could take several hours.

GRADEBOOK TIP: To minimize emails from students who ask about how to get their grades, consider posting the following blurb on your Announcements page or including it in your syllabus: How to view your grades: Go to Report>Gradebook Grades>Chart/Table

STUDENT VIEW: To see your course from a student’s perspective, just click on the sunglasses icon at the top right of your Announcements page.

COURSE MATERIALS

- Settings: Allows you to modify an area
- Add Content: Allows you to upload files, quizzes, discussion boards, links, folders, etc.
- Access: Allows you to control what students see (Provides view and date restrictions)

The Instructor Quick Guide is a handy reference for reviewing ANGEL functions-Great for gradebook and quiz refreshers

COLLEGE POLICIES

Please refer to SUNY Canton’s OnLine Learning Policies and Procedures Manual for information relative to teaching at a distance and polices related to learner support for online courses. Special considerations for faculty teaching online and students taking online courses are detailed in this Manual. The Manual is available on the web under Faculty/Staff.

SUPPORT & RESOURCES

For general information on online learning, visit the SUNY Canton OL webpage at http://www.canton.edu/ol/

The ANGEL Landing page http://www.canton.edu/angel/ is a handy web reference with information on how to logon to ANGEL and:

- Frequently Asked Questions about ANGEL
- Technical Requirements
- Textbooks Information
- Online Tutoring
- Useful Software
- Video tutorials

For username & password questions, please call the SUNY Canton HelpDesk at (315) 386-7448
For technical help, please call the SLN HelpDesk directly during office hours at 1-800-875-6269 or 1-518-443-5617.

- Monday through Thursday - 8:00AM to 9:00PM EST
- Friday - 8:00AM to 5:00PM
- Saturday - 1:00PM to 5:00PM
- Sunday - 1:00PM to 9:00PM

For server support or if you experience any slowness of the ANGEL server or it goes down after hours: Contact ITEC at 716-878-4832.

For course scheduling questions, please contact the Registrar office at (315) 386-7042

Other important resources:

→ Accommodative Services: http://www.canton.edu/accommodative_services/
→ Textbook Center: (315) 386-7112
→ Online Library: http://www.canton.edu/library/
→ Online Tutoring and Writing Center: http://www.canton.edu/tutoring/
→ Teaching Repository: See your ANGEL home page under Repositories
→ The Center for Excellence in Teaching and Online Learning ol@canton.edu
APPENDIX A: ONLINE SYLLABUS

SUNY CANTON
Canton, New York

DEPARTMENT/PROGRAM/SCHOOL:

COURSE NAME AND NUMBER:

SEMESTER/YEAR:

CREDIT HOURS:

INSTRUCTOR:

OFFICE ADDRESS:

OFFICE HOURS/VIRTUAL HOURS:

OFFICE TELEPHONE:

EMAIL ADDRESS:

TECHNICAL SUPPORT INFORMATION:

• Issues with usernames, passwords, or SUNY Canton Email:
  • SUNY Canton Help Desk at helpdesk@canton.edu or phone 315-386-7448. Open Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

• Issues with ANGEL:
  • SLN Help Desk at Helpdesk@sln.suny.edu or phone 1-800-875-6269 (toll-free within the United States) or 1-518-443-5617 (direct).
    • Monday through Thursday - 8:00AM to 9:00PM EST
    • Friday - 8:00AM to 5:00PM
    • Saturday - 1:00PM to 5:00PM
    • Sunday - 1:00PM to 9:00PM

COURSE DESCRIPTION: (from catalog)

PRE-REQUISITES:

CO-REQUISITES:

MINIMUM TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS: (Example: Access to a working computer with Internet capability. Operating System: Windows 2000, XP, Vista or Macintosh OS X

• Hardware: 256 MB of RAM, 1GB free hard disk space

• Connection to the Internet: (broadband connection, such as RoadRunner or DSL, is preferred). Broadband connections are recommended for assessments (tests/quizzes). Dial-up connections may not be as reliable as the broadband connections when taking exams or quizzes online.

• Software: Microsoft Word, Microsoft PowerPoint (or PowerPoint Viewer), Adobe Acrobat Reader. Some course content may require additional software.

• View "Test Your System" on your login page. Internet Explorer 7 is currently not fully compatible with the ANGEL system. You may use Internet Explorer 7 with the understanding that all features may not function as expected. You must “maximize” the Internet Explorer window if you use this browser within ANGEL by pushing the F11 key on your keyboard. It is recommended to use Firefox from www.mozilla.com to access your Angel course.
STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES: (From Course Outline)

REQUIRED TEXT (S): Author, title, ed., publisher, date) (Link to college’s Textbook Center)

OTHER REQUIRED MATERIALS:

COURSE REQUIREMENTS/EVALUATION CRITERIA:
(Indicate if student satisfaction or other surveys are required.)

NETIQUETTE: (Refers to general guidelines of acceptable behavior for electronic communication, details consequences for threatening or harassing language. Link to the college’s Computer Use & Network Policy.)

FEEDBACK SCHEDULE: (Information on instructor response and availability. Example: Most often, a student can expect a response to email within...)

METHOD OF DELIVERING ASSIGNMENTS: (Example: Please submit work via ....All submissions should be titled with the student’s last name accompanied by their first initial and course title (e.g., SmithJ_EDUC205). Be sure to have anti-virus software installed on your computer and update it regularly.)

ATTENDANCE POLICY /PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS: (Specify any asynchronous or synchronous components)

EMERGENCY OR INTERRUPTION IN COMPUTER SERVICE POLICY: (Example: Prepare for unexpected problems and emergencies. Understand that problems and glitches do occur in online learning, as they do in any learning environment. Have a back-up plan, such as using the computers at a local library, for submitting assignments in case your computer crashes or your service is interrupted). Specify how emergencies or interruption in service will affect assignment deadlines.

ACADEMIC CONDUCT: Students are expected to comply with all academic and behavioral standards established in the SUNY Canton Code of Student, Rights, and Responsibilities (Code). The Code is published in the Student Handbook and is accessible from the SUNY Canton homepage (www.canton.edu). Print copies can be obtained in the Dean of Student’s Office (Faculty Office Bldg. 604).

ACCESSIBILITY POLICY: Any student with a documented disability who is eligible for, or has questions regarding accommodations, should contact the office of Accommodative Services at: 315-386-7392 or Leev@canton.edu

THE INSTRUCTOR HAS THE RIGHT TO MODIFY ANY SECTION OF THE SYLLABUS. EACH STUDENT IS RESPONSIBLE TO READ AND UNDERSTAND THE SYLLABUS.
APPENDIX B: CHECKLIST OF ANGEL COMPETENCIES

- Instructor Reference Manual
- Instructor Quickstart Guide
- Student Quickstart Guide

ACCESSING ANGEL
- Log on to ANGEL (use ‘I forgot my password’ function’)

SUPPORT & RESOURCES
- Access How to Use ANGEL
  - Locate instructor Manual, Guides, and video tutorials
- Access SLN Student Orientation
- Access SLN Help Desk
- Access SUNY Canton Help Desk for username & password questions

COMMUNICATION
- Send emails  [QS (QuickStart) p. 32](http://www.canton.edu/angel/)
- Use the “See who has read this message” function

CONTENT
- Add content - assign flags/track it [Manual p. 60](http://www.canton.edu/angel/)
- Rearrange content [Manual p. 135](http://www.canton.edu/angel/)
- Delete content [Manual p. 159](http://www.canton.edu/angel/)
- Add announcements [QS p. 34](http://www.canton.edu/angel/)
- Add Discussion Boards [QS p. 22](http://www.canton.edu/angel/)
- Save Discussion Boards
- Grade Discussion Boards [Manual p. 123](http://www.canton.edu/angel/)
- Locate and use the html editor
  - Upload an attachment [QS p. 21](http://www.canton.edu/angel/)
  - Upload an image Angel [QS p. 21](http://www.canton.edu/angel/)
  - Upload a link [Manual p. 72](http://www.canton.edu/angel/)
- View course from student perspective
- Save course [Manual p. 318](http://www.canton.edu/angel/)

ASSESSMENT
- Design gradebook and grading scheme [Manual p. 232](http://www.canton.edu/angel/)
- Create and place assignments into Gradebook [Manual p. 232](http://www.canton.edu/angel/)
- Create quizzes and tests [QS p. 18; Manual p. 78](http://www.canton.edu/angel/)
- Run reports to track student progress [QS p. 36](http://www.canton.edu/angel/)