Online Course Development Guide

Introduction

This guide outlines the considerations and role of the Content Author (CA) when developing a *fully online* course with the Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning (CITL). Additionally, the goal of the course development along with a table differentiating an online and remote offering are presented.

Course development means the preparation of course materials and includes, but is not limited to, the preparation of the resources, assignments and activities for students, collections of readings and relevant World Wide Web sites, multimedia resources or any combination of materials for the purpose of delivering a credit course via distance delivery. (Memorial University, 2019, Agreement For the development of courses for The Centre for Innovation in Teaching and Learning).

Remote vs. Online Course Instruction: The table below outlines the basic differences between remote and online courses. Visit the Instructional Resources site for more information.

Table 1 Comparison of Remote vs. Online

	Remote	Fully Online
Design philosophy	By Instructor with some support; learning experience varies depending on the instructor's level of expertise with learning technologies.	Instructor as content author supported by instructional designer and media support; various technologies are considered to facilitate a self-directed learning experience.
Development framework	Often developed week-by-week, with consideration of the overall course plan.	Fully developed at the start of the course; may go through multiple iterations before development is considered complete.
Delivery of instruction	Asynchronous (i.e. recorded lectures) OR synchronous (i.e. real-time classes in the web conferencing applications).	Primarily asynchronous; some synchronous components.
Student preparedness	Students may be less technologically prepared, with access to a mobile device only and limited connectivity in their homes; instructional planning should reflect these limitations.	Students know from the onset that all instruction will happen online, so likely have access to the technology that enables them to actively engage in the learning experience.
Learning Management System use	General use of system to communicate with students, relay course content, and administer assessments and grades.	Advanced use of tools and components to facilitate social interaction of class and learning activities.
Instructor presence	Mirrors expectations of face-to-face instruction.	Students are expected to be self-directed with regular check-ins by Instructor to monitor progress and provide feedback.
Interactions with classmates	Periodic; often instructor initiated.	Interaction is built into learning activities; addition of defined spaces within the learning environment for social interaction.

Goal of Course Development

Fully online courses offer students the flexibility of managing the demands of school, work, and family by creating individual schedules that work for them anytime, anywhere. The overall goal of the course development is to create a fully online course that meeting the needs of the learning and provides an engaging and interactive experience. It is expected that all course materials, including media, are developed in an accessible manner and added to the learning management system, Brightspace, *before* the first day of classes.

The Content Author

Role
The instructor's role as content author is to bring their extensive knowledge of their academic discipline and subject-matter expertise to create a high-quality online course. Working collaboratively with a course design team, using an instructional design process, this collective expertise is transformed into a realistic, engaging, and interactive experience for the learner.

Collaboration with Course Design Team
To plan sufficient time to prepare the course for delivery in the scheduled semester, the content author must be able to commit the development approach. This includes setting aside time to map out the course in a pedagogically sound manner, prepare content, attend course design meeting, consult on the development of resources (media, technology) for learning activities and assessments, attend training, and complete possible edits post course piloting.

Development Milestones
The CA will work with the Course Design team to establish and meet key milestones reflected in the Course Development Agreement. Milestones include:
- Early planning
- Detailed planning
- Initial module sign off
- Completion of remaining content, including media
- Verification course is ready for pilot (first semester offering)
- Follow-up after pilot offering
- Post-pilot sign off

First Offering (Pilot)
Ideally, the CA would be the first person to teach the course. However, decisions relating to who will teach the course, and when they do so, ultimately rests with the academic units.

Technological Proficiency
Basic computer skills and a fundamental knowledge of computer applications are requirements for online course development. To increase your proficiency with Brightspace and other technologies used during development and delivery, there are a myriad of resources and training opportunities available at CITL. Please consult the workshops schedule for forthcoming sessions.

Quality Course

During development, CITL promotes the use of the general standards provided by the Quality Matters Rubric adapted by Memorial University and attached to the Course Development Agreement. See the Course Design Checklist for more information. Based on these guidelines, a quality course is learner-centered and encompasses the following features:

- A clear course introduction and overview
- Well-defined measurable learning outcomes
- A comprehensive course syllabus
- Suitable and varied assessments
- Clear and relevant instructional materials and resources
- Interactive and relevant learning activities
- Appropriate and engaging technology
- Ample learner support
- Accessibility and usability features that support a diversity of learners

A strong alignment between course learning outcomes, assessment, and learning activities is essential.

Resources to Help the Course Design Process
- Instructional Resources: Resources to guide planning, creating, teaching, and assessing a course.
- Technology Resources: Guides for effectively using technology in teaching.