TEACH: Key Takeaways

As an online instructor, you guide the students throughout the material you have gathered and arranged, rather than serve as the sole source of knowledge. Your role in the online course is pedagogical, social, technical, and administrative. Set expectations for your students and yourself and develop a plan to manage your time while teaching the course.

Strategize the best ways to communicate with students.

Communicate through:
• Announcements (same message to all students)
• Email to individuals or groups
• Video
• Audio
• Discussion boards (students can read your replies to individual students)

The key with each of these communication tools is to be consistent and not overwhelm the students.

The discussion board is a tool for students to:
• Express their opinions
• React to readings
• Engage with one another
• Ask questions of the instructor and each other

Set word limits for posts and replies. Create a separate due date for the original post and another for their responses to each other.

Monitor and enhance student engagement. Check on students' participation through course analytics, discussion board posts, grades, completion of ungraded activities, and a mid-course evaluation. Reach out to students or adjust material accordingly.

Remember it's about “high-touch,” not “high-tech.”

Questions for Application:
Q: What are my expectations of the students, and of myself?
A: Share your expectations early, either by syllabus, through introductions, a video, etc.

Q: How will I manage communicating with students through this course?
A: Find the time management system that works best for you. Set a turnaround time for email responses and assignment feedback, and communicate this to the students in the beginning of the course. Then stick to it.

Q: Will I respond to each student individually?
A: To save time and avoid repeating yourself, you may make announcements or post a video so students can all get the message at once, if it pertains to the whole class. For individual issues, respond to students via email or in their assignment feedback.