Tips, Techniques, and Instructional Strategies for Online Learning

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Online learning is becoming more prevalent in institutions of higher education. Whether a course is fully online or employs a blended approach, instructors need to know how to build effective online learning environments that foster a strong sense of community and provide effective learning resources for students. In addition, students may need to better understand how to be successful in an online course and often look to their instructors for guidance.

This talk will describe one instructor's experiences over the last ten years with building and delivering online courses including

Examples of introductory exercises that help students and instructors get to know one another Instead of having students simply provide their name and a bit of their background, the use of a more creative approach encourages students to personalize their postings which lead to greater engagement and interest.

Examples of the types of organizational material that contribute to a high quality course Identifying specific policies, such as communication and management guidelines helps students know how the course will operate and the best ways to communicate with the instructor and other students.

Examples of assignments that help students learn from each other Providing choices for students in assignments and using peer review are two strategies that help make course assignments relevant and motivating. Using carefully designed rubrics helps clarify expectations for students.

Examples of free tools Many free tools exist that can be used to create short video or audio clips for instruction or course announcements such as Jing and Audacity. Other Web 2.0 tools, such as blogs and wikis can be used collaboratively with students to share information and resources and build knowledge and skills.

This presentation will provide those attending with practical advice and guidance for how to build, nurture, and sustain quality online environments that support student learning.