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LEADING A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT: PROVIDING EFFECTIVE TRAINING AND SUPPORT FOR ONLINE ADJUNCT INSTRUCTORS

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This article describes the design and development of a set of interventions for the training and support of adjunct instructors in a rapidly growing online graduate program at a large, Midwestern research university. These interventions were designed to improve teaching preparation and assistance provided to our adjuncts. During this effort, the online program administrator collaborated with the staff from a higher education partner (Wiley), full-time faculty, and experienced adjuncts to determine what interventions were necessary. The stakeholders were also involved to varying degrees in the design, development, and implementation of the interventions. The interventions include: modifications to the general instructor orientation; check-ins for newly hired adjuncts; creation of course expectation guides; formalization of course orientation; opportunities for adjuncts to collaborate; a mentorship program for inexperienced adjuncts; monitoring and formative feedback for individual adjuncts; the creation of an executive committee and addition of a staff member; and a formative evaluation process to evaluate adjunct training and support. The goal of these changes was to improve the performance and satisfaction of adjuncts, leading to retention of talented online instructors and higher overall student satisfaction. This article addresses the unique design considerations made during the selection of training methods and support services and the related performance measures.

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INTRODUCTION

This article describes in detail the process and decisions made in designing, developing, implementing, and fine-tuning a set of training and support interventions for online adjuncts within Purdue University's Learning Design and Technology program. This process has taken four years, and we continue to adapt it in order to take into account what we have learned along the way.

Although our program began relatively small, it soon became clear that we simply did not have enough full-time faculty available to teach multiple online sections for all courses offered, especially as one of our guiding principles always has been to provide a high-quality learning experience equivalent to that given to our on-the-ground Master's students. In order to maintain a high level of quality, we require ongoing instructor-student and facilitated student-student interaction as well as consistent teaching and assessment practices across course sections. At the time of this writing, the number of students enrolled and the low faculty-to-student ratio has led us to offer 35-45 course sections each semester, many of which are taught by outstanding adjunct instructors.

Most of our adjuncts currently work in the instructional design field or are faculty in other programs, and many publish their own research. They allow us to provide students the opportunity to learn from individuals with unique backgrounds and experiences who have a tremendous amount to share in the classroom. Online professional programs like this

one are often motivated to recruit in-practice professionals with experience, knowledge, and expertise, and who have demonstrated a desire to teach, have flexible schedules to meet the needs of non-traditional students, and are willing to work at a lower wage than full-time faculty (Rogers, McIntyre, & Jazzar, 2010; Stenerson et al., 2010; Tipple, 2010). Many prospective adjuncts teaching this kind of program are specialists in their domain and teach primarily for enjoyment and to give back to their field (Lyons, 2007). Although such professionals have a lot to offer a program like this one, locating and hiring appropriate adjunct instructors has not been a simple task for us. Even with a Ph.D. requirement, many enthusiastic individuals who have had domain expertise proved to have little or no online teaching experience, or had experienced very different modes of online teaching (such as MOOCs or self-paced corporate training), leaving them unprepared to meet the expectations for teaching in our program. As we examined the complexities of supporting a steadily growing pool of adjuncts, we found that existing literature supported our experiences and provided some insights into addressing the types of challenges we ourselves had begun to encounter.

As Larcara (2011) suggests, we have found training and supporting adjuncts instructors to be as important as the initial recruitment. Once an instructor has been hired, clearly communicating expectations and providing adequate training and support processes are key factors to an instructor's success (Larcara, 2011). Without effective training and support, adjunct instructors may encounter a variety of issues both professional (i.e., account access, technical, pedagogical) and personal (i.e., psychological distance) that could have been avoided (Vinlove, 2011). Tallent-Runnels et al. (2006) argued that there is an ongoing need for training and course development assistance, which aligns with our own experience. Isolation has been shown to cause a myriad of issues that may leave adjuncts feeling separated from their teaching programs and potential support systems (Johnson, MacGreggor, & Watson, 2001). As discussed below, we were particularly interested in considering mentorship as a component of our training program (Pankowski, 2004). Mentoring provides instructors with an opportunity to connect with full-time or experienced adjunct faculty, helping adjuncts to feel less isolated. The informal instructor community that had developed between full time faculty and adjunct instructors early in our program's history also inspired us.

Clearly, when they begin teaching an online graduate program, adjunct instructors need training continued support, and sense of connection. In this article, we describe how the online program administrator and faculty at Purdue University's Master's of Science in Learning Design and Technology tackled these needs by improving overall communication, including the design, development and implementation of new training, support, and monitoring processes. This was accomplished with the help of an instructional designer from Wiley, a corporate higher education partner. Full-time faculty and adjunct instructors in the program held key roles in identifying the needs, providing resources, collaborating in the process, and mentoring new adjuncts.

CONTEXT

In 2011, Purdue University's College of Education partnered with a corporate higher education partner (Wiley) to create a new online Master's of Science in Education (MSEd) in Learning Design and Technology (LDT). The LDT program had a long history of offering Master's and doctoral degrees face-to-face, as well as arriving early to the game of creating and teaching online courses (Exter & Lehman, 2016). However, LDT had not previously offered a fully-online program. Scheduling within the program of the new online MSEd was deliberately designed to meet the needs of working professionals, offering largely asynchronous eight-week courses that could be taken one at a time and allowing students to complete the program in 20 months (5 traditional semesters).

Five full-time faculty members developed the initial 16 courses and were initially responsible for teaching these. Applicant response was strong and enrollments grew steadily. We began to offer multiple sections of each course, leading to a need for additional instructors. *Lead instructors*, full-time faculty assigned to manage one or more specific courses, were responsible for designing courses and developing and updating online materials each term. Lead instructors were also expected to provide guidance to adjuncts to ensure that each section would be taught according to the intended course design.

As the student body continued to grow, it soon became clear that additional full-time faculty were needed to administer the program and handle the many new issues that arose. During the second year, two new faculty members were hired to teach and serve as administrators of the online program. Victoria Lowell was one of the two new administrators who eventually became the sole online program convener. Among other roles, Victoria took on the role for hiring, training, and overseeing the online instructors; handling student issues; and working with Wiley's Higher Education partnering services (which at the time was a separate company known as Deltak) to grow the program. Initially, the other administrator worked with the online program's course schedule, the program's website, various program documents, and program guides and manuals. Both administrators dealt with student and instructor issues. When the second administrator took on a new position with new responsibilities within the department, Victoria, as the sole online program convener, acquired administrative responsibility while another staff member provided support

on more routine tasks and assisted with development of materials. For the remainder of this article, we shall refer to Victoria as *online program administrator*.

The program continued to experience growing pains as the number of students concurrently enrolled had stabilized between 180-200 students, depending on the semester. Eight-week terms ran back-to-back, year-round with only a short break between December and January. Both of the new administrators as well as the full-time program faculty soon realized that the desired level of quality, frequency of interactions, and condensed schedule of the courses required a lower student to faculty ratio, which led to the need to offer more course sections with student enrollments no greater than 25 per section for some courses and a cap of 15 for the most demanding courses. The program began to regularly provide between three and eight sections for each course offered. All of these factors led to the conclusion to hire additional instructors within a relatively short timeframe.

In 2012, 14 adjuncts were hired and added to the adjunct instructor pool. However, not all instructors taught all terms, and several were not actively teaching in any given term. In spring 2013, the online program administrator hired 30 new adjuncts during a large hiring initiative, increasing the total pool to 45 instructors who taught the majority of online course sections (although full-time faculty continued to teach as well). The new adjuncts gradually began to teach courses over a period of 12 months. These instructors had previously taught in a variety of formats (i.e., face-to-face, blended/hybrid, fully online) of different lengths (i.e., 3 weeks, 7-8 weeks, 16 weeks). Their instructional technology experiences varied too, such as in course management systems (CMSs) and teleconferencing software. Some had well over ten years of teaching experience, while others had far less. Most of the adjuncts hired had specialized skills and industry experience, which enabled them to provide a unique perspective while teaching. Just prior to teaching our online courses, all newly hired adjuncts attended a short orientation provided by a Wiley instructional designer.

NEED FOR DESIGN INTERVENTION

As the program grew a number of issues arose and the online program administrator realized that we needed more systematic processes and supports. The following section summarizes the major challenges we encountered leading to the need for a design intervention.

Performance Issues

The program expectations require a high level of responsiveness and teaching rigor from its instructors. For example, instructors were expected to respond to student questions within 24-48 hours, post announcements in the online courses several times per week, return graded assignments within 3-5 days, and actively participate in asynchronous online discussions. Assignments were to be graded quickly with detailed feedback provided to students. These policies were implicit and were communicated to the instructors during the orientation training they received prior to teaching.

Students had complained that some adjunct instructors were not providing the level of instruction, communication, and timeliness they expected. Students also complained about the lack of feedback on assignments and unclear grading criteria. We also were told that some adjunct instructors took too long to grade assignments, while others did not respond to student emails or questions in discussion forums. Sometimes students requested to change course sections to a different instructor, while others dropped the course, or even dropped out of the program.

We realized there were serious issues with one or more instructors each semester, and one adjunct instructor was fired due to serious repercussions from their performance issues. After further investigation, we became aware that some adjunct instructors did not clearly understand the program's expectations. Other performance issues were related to instructors who were new to teaching, new to teaching online, or new to teaching a particular course.

Unclear Communication Processes

One problem quickly identified by the online program administrator was the adjunct instructors' uncertainty regarding whom to contact with administrative, technical, and pedagogical questions. Both administrators were overwhelmed with the time spent responding to emails. Course lead instructors also expressed concerns about the number and types of questions they received. Ultimately, the new program administrators became involved in almost all issues in the communications around them. Often there were unnecessary delays in addressing the issues because it was not clear to whom the issues should be directed. Some questions that should have been posed to technical support, student services, human resources, or other services on campus were instead sent to program administrators or full-time faculty.

The online program administrator realized that many questions were asked repeatedly by different adjuncts, indicating that the number of questions could be greatly reduced with better training on where to go to find answers or whom to ask. The administrator identified the root cause to be a lack of consistency in communicating information and the absence of a formal location for the instructors to find information and resources when needed. Initially a static FAQ page placed on the program's website was considered a simple way to direct adjuncts to information without any further training. However, given the obstacles in updating the college's web-site and the limitations of a static web page, a public FAQ would not provide the level of support

the administrator was hoping to encourage. It also would not be regularly updated with information to resolve the major issues and the wide variety of questions the administrator spent most of her time dealing with. Therefore, a better training program was developed along with a stable but easy-to-update instructor resource site that included a knowledge base for adjuncts and other instructors to locate information and documents when needed. Inspiration for this new site came from viewing and using other higher education resource websites and developing such sites over the years.

Adjunct Instructor Workload

The workload of adjunct instructors was also a concern because of the demanding program schedule and rigorous course content. Most courses within the program are project based, which include multiple projects that must be graded quickly. Instructors were also expected to actively participate in discussions and other activities that occurred each week, including responding to and grading student discussions. In addition, some lead instructors provided access to a course only one to two weeks prior to the start of the term, which created an undue strain on adjunct instructors to learn the new course material, personalize the content within their course section(s), and prepare for the initial interactions with students.

Consideration was given to the possibility that the demands were unrealistic, and the program's full-time faculty considered redesigning the courses to provide a more reasonable workload for the instructors and students without reducing the quality of the course content. In particular, program administrators and lead instructors discussed potential changes to the most time-consuming courses. Several of the most challenging courses were advanced courses in the program, complex for any instructor to teach. All lead instructors were asked to review their courses and reduce extraneous activities that added to the workload for instructors and students, while maintaining the quality of the course.

Consideration was also given to the schedule of the program, since until this time, courses ended on Sunday of the 8th week and the next session started the following day. This pace was exhausting for both instructors and students, and was especially difficult for instructors at the end of each term, since grades were due the following Tuesday. We considered compressing the courses down to 7 weeks, but since many courses are 3 credit-hours, this did not leave enough time to cover the material and provide adequate opportunities for practice and feedback. Based on discussions between the program administrators and full-time faculty, all of the courses were changed to a 7.5-week term. Therefore, all course sessions would end on a Wednesday, giving students four days off before the next session began. In addition, the online program administrator asked that the due date for major final assignments be set for the Sunday prior to course completion. This would give instructors a full week to grade final projects and discussion activities before new courses begin while students could participate in activities and discussions focused on reflection. These design changes were inspired by the need for time, allowing students to rest between courses and allowing instructors to complete final grading and prepare for their next courses. Planning for this change began in 2012, and the change was in place in 2013.

Although this schedule modification provided some relief to adjunct and lead instructors, it created other issues, especially for students attempting to master material in a very short amount of time. There was little flexibility for students who became sick or otherwise missed deadlines, creating an additional unexpected load on instructors. But as the courses were reviewed to remove extraneous material and activities, the extra burden on students and instructors was reduced. Based on our trial with this approach and from largely positive informal feedback from lead instructors and adjuncts, we felt that the trade-off was worth it. We then moved onto other ways to alleviate the burden on adjuncts and make teaching a more fulfilling experience through other mechanisms described in this article.

Increased Workload for Program Administrators and Lead Instructors

The workload was high for all involved due to the issues mentioned above and the overall "newness" of the program. Full-time faculty members were not accustomed to mentoring adjuncts, as required in the lead instructor role. Faculty were given extra compensation in the form of additional travel funding each year, but this did not assist with the workload issues or the time taken away from research and face-to-face teaching.

As the adjunct instructor pool grew, the processes for adjunct instructor account creation, proper account access, and procedures for working with international adjuncts hired for short contract periods needed to be worked out. This created additional work for the program administrators and confusion for adjuncts.

Other issues added to the workload of the administrators and lead instructors included the lack of appropriate training and orientation on the online program's processes, procedures, and expectations. For example, the lack of sufficient reminders led adjunct instructors to forget to do things such as submit student participation reports by the end of the second week or submit final grades by the correct day and time.

These types of omissions caused administrators and lead instructors to spend hours filling out paperwork, writing letters, and generating reports.

LEADING THE DESIGN PROCESS

From 2012-2014, new policies were put into place, and existing practices and policies were refined to address difficult or reoccurring problems. These changes were most often a response to immediate or ongoing issues, i.e., the previously noted communication and process issues; absence of instructor presence in courses; and adjuncts' lack of knowledge about policies relating to teaching at the institution, expectations within the program, and expectations of lead instructors for individual courses.

The program administrator realized that a more systematic process needed to be put into place. During her second year, she initiated a much more purposeful design-based planning process. This design was inspired by the need to develop a process that was clear, concise and understood by all parties involved. An integrated plan was made and discussed with other full-time faculty, a formative evaluation process was designed (in collaboration with Marisa Exter), and meetings were scheduled with Wiley to move forward on specific needs. This process began prior to the large hiring initiative that tripled the adjunct pool to 45 instructors in 2013.

The first stage in the planning process was to layout the goals.

Goals

The goals for the revisions were based on the current and expected future needs of the program. The high-level goals set were to:

- Clarify processes, procedures and policies among all stakeholders.
- Increase adjunct instructors' level of preparedness prior to teaching for the online MSEd and prior to teaching each course.
- Increase the support provided to adjunct instructors at both program and course level.
- Improve the quality of the instruction the adjuncts provided to students.
- Retain high-quality adjunct instructors.
- Reduce the workload on lead instructors and administrators.
- Improve the experience for students.

Priority was given to the first three goals, with the expectation that if these three goals were in place the latter four goals would follow.

Collaboration with Stakeholders throughout the Process

The design of the interventions was a collaborative process in several ways. The stakeholders included college administrators, program administrators, full-time faculty, Wiley staff, adjunct instructors, and students. The stakeholders that the online program administrator collaborated most closely with while leading this process were the full-time faculty, Wiley staff, and adjunct instructors. Input from other stakeholders such as students and college administrators was also considered during the process.

Collaboration with Wiley

A division of Wiley (formerly known as Deltak), a higher education partner, was contracted by the college to support the online MSEd program. Program administrators and full-time faculty regularly met with Wiley managers and staff through teleconferencing sessions, over the phone, or in face-to-face meetings on location at Purdue or at Wiley's Chicago-area offices. Although the Wiley staff were not involved in teaching, their services involve many other aspects of the program, including marketing, recruitment, student services, some instructional design support services,

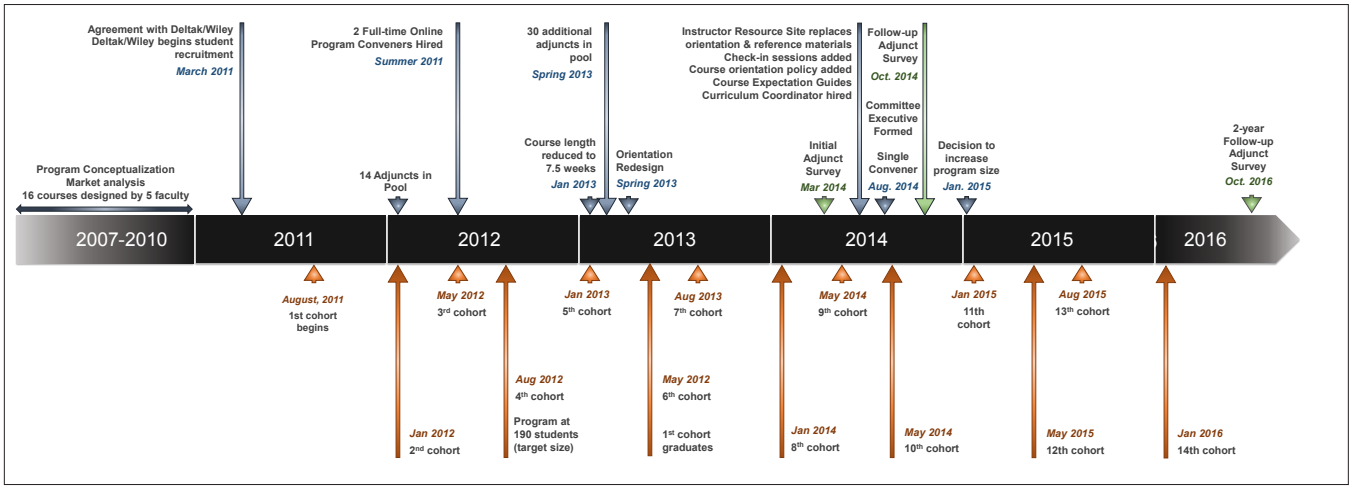


FIGURE 1. Timeline.

and data management. LDT program faculty designed and maintained their own courses, although Wiley instructional designers offered technical assistance. During the design process for the new adjunct training and support interventions, the online program administrator met regularly with Wiley staff. Wiley's operations manager for the LDT program was involved in the initial steps and participated in many of the meetings. An instructional designer was made available to assist in updating the adjunct training. Other Wiley staff offered to help with gathering data requested by the administrator for formative evaluation and research purposes.

Wiley staff became involved with the redesign process in 2013 and met with the online program administrator periodically. The goal was to provide a vision of what was needed and to lead the Wiley staff in providing the products and resources needed. Typically, when we met, the online program administrator would describe the need and what was in place. A Wiley staff member, generally the instructional designer, would suggest one or more possible ways to implement the change. For example, as discussed below, a static PowerPoint was replaced by a Blackboard site full of resources and FAQ pages that could be updated and available for adjuncts to use after being referenced during an orientation session. The Wiley instructional designer suggested this approach and after discussing the possibilities, she implemented this with content provided by the online program administrator. There were never any major disagreements about the ideas generated. However, as the process continued some items that were agreed on were not completed due to the overall workload of the Wiley staff at the writing of this article. Design conversations were held and several ideas for the instructor resource site remain as a plan for the future. Other ideas were scrapped due to the cost to complete them, such as the creation of videos for several course modules.

Collaboration among Full-time Faculty

In their role as lead instructors, full-time faculty also collaborated in this process. Their experiences supporting adjuncts over the first few years of the program, often on a last-minute basis, had led them to develop supports within their own courses individually.

Faculty meetings became an opportunity to discuss what was working well and where we were falling short of the program goals. The faculty identified the key problems that needed to be addressed. The online program administrator then took the lead on coming up with the set of interventions.

As the online program administrator began to design interventions and work with Wiley on developing them, she presented early versions at faculty meetings and invited them to attend early training sessions and provide feedback. This often resulted in extensive conversations and sometimes changed the design dramatically as faculty members provided their perspective. Often their previous experiences with the issues we were trying to address would include their critique of the designs and suggestions that would improve or enhance the materials. The full-time faculty members were also welcome to provide additional materials, such as articles to include in the Blackboard resource site. For example, the full-time faculty wanted to ensure that adjuncts were confident in preparing for teaching courses. In developing materials for the resource training, faculty assisted in developing a Dos and Don'ts list that is posted in the course and sent out each semester and a list of great reads for instructors new to online teaching. The Do's and Don'ts list provides a concise list of things that the faculty wanted the adjuncts to be aware of that they felt leads to a successful online teaching and learning experience. Some things included in the list are sending a welcome announcement to students, regularly posting in the discussion forums, and providing a lot of feedback to students assignments and grading assignments within 3-5 days.

Collaboration with Adjuncts

The online program administrator considered the feedback received from adjuncts important for determining where processes and procedures could be improved. During the first two years of the program, these unprompted suggestions were provided to full-time faculty members. Although these often resulted in changes, particularly within individual courses, there was no formal way to ensure that they were collected or acted upon.

The online program administrator took many of the previous concerns and suggestions made by adjuncts into account as she designed the interventions. These concerns and suggestions inspired the changes that were made. She was in direct communication with some of the most experienced and enthusiastic adjuncts, who provided detailed feedback on some interventions. As part of the interventions, we attempted to formalize the feedback loop through regular surveys of adjunct faculty. However, the informal feedback continued to be provided by enthusiastic adjuncts. For example, one adjunct shared materials used at another institution (including surveys used for formative evaluation), which were used as a reference when developing our own materials. As the interventions began to be implemented, the experienced adjuncts shared resources, presented on special topics at orientation sessions, served as formal mentors, and continued to provide feedback on the process.

Because of a strong sense of faculty autonomy among the full-time tenured/tenure-track and clinical lead instructors, it was not possible to enforce a particular policy on how each

course was run. Differences among courses and between adjuncts resulted in varying needs for orientation and support materials (for example, a formal orientation may not be held if all adjuncts for a given semester had already taught this course several times and were known to be comfortable sharing concerns and questions with the lead). However, the online program administrator encouraged all lead instructors to collaborate directly with adjuncts, to treat their adjuncts as though they were part of a team and encourage them to offer their opinions and experiences. The online program administrator also encouraged collaboration by having all instructors teaching the same course in a term (full-time and adjunct) regularly communicate via email or other media, answering each other's questions, and sharing resources. As a result of the design process, many lead instructors met synchronously with adjunct instructors to orient them to the course before the term began, during which experienced adjuncts sometimes offered suggestions to less experienced adjuncts. The collaboration that has occurred at the course-level has resulted in continuous improvement of the course material and an increase in the subject knowledge of the instructors. During and after each course is run, adjuncts frequently make recommendations for revising course activities and materials. Each lead instructor is responsible for collecting recommendations, vetting them, and making the course design changes as they see fit. However, the recommendations are generally used in revisions for subsequent offerings.

DESIGN OF INTERVENTIONS

The interventions were chosen based on the constraints of the eight-week term, the online format, the feedback received from stakeholders (as described in the "Collaboration with Stakeholders" section above), and the success with similar processes at other universities. The interventions include:

- Modifications to the online instructor orientation training
- Additional check-in sessions for the newest hired instructors
- Course expectation guides (job aids)
- Individual course orientation
- Opportunities for collaboration among the adjunct instructors
- Mentoring (instructors new to teaching online participate in mentorship program, prior to independently teaching on their own)
- Weekly monitoring of the adjunct instructors and formative feedback
- Establish executive committee
- Staff growth
- Formative evaluation of interventions

The design and development of these modifications and additions were intended to provide a supportive and encouraging collaborative community while supporting and assessing the quality of the adjunct instructors' instructional practices.

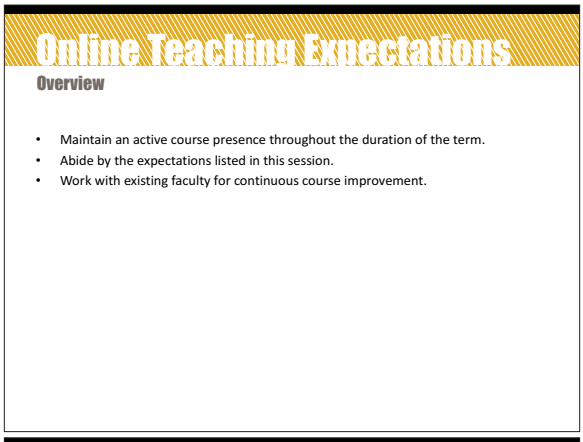
Modifications to Online Adjunct Instructor Orientation Training

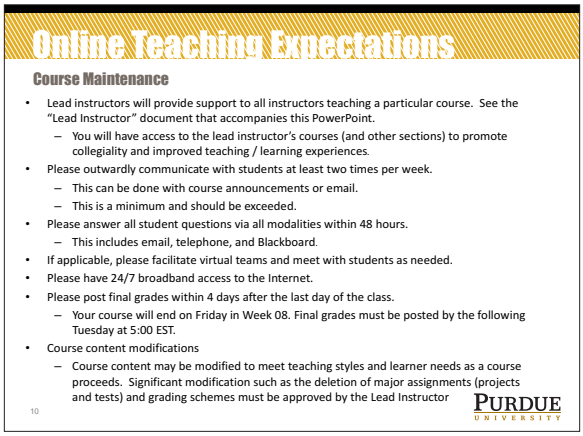
During the first year of the program, new adjunct orientation training consisted of an online presentation using Adobe Connect™ and Microsoft PowerPoint™ (see Figure 2). The instructor orientation-training course, PowerPoint, and other materials were sent to instructors after the session.

In the faculty meetings during the second year, full-time faculty discussed the concerns they had about adjuncts – particularly the lack of understanding of Purdue processes, lack of preparation, and especially concerns about adjuncts that did not appear to understand the expectations for teaching (including the frequency of communication required in our program). Based on these concerns, the online program administrator and instructional designer worked together to significantly expand and reorganize the PowerPoint presentation, increasing the focus on teaching expectations, program- and Purdue-wide policies, and other information about teaching in this unique program (see Figure 3).

However, issues with adjuncts continued to be reported by students and lead faculty. Although major issues, such as failure to appear to teach the course or disappearance of the instructor for a large chunk of the term, pointed to lack of responsibility or availability among adjuncts. The online program administrator felt that the majority of issues resulted from a lack of information or enculturation of the adjuncts. Therefore, her first response was to expand and grow the resources in the program, ensure that these were current, and provide additional resources to help adjuncts understand the *type* of instruction expected as well as the benefits that this type of instruction offers to online students. Additional resources relevant to the identified needs were located, and training materials were moved to a newly developed Instructor Resources Site, a course within Blackboard, the university's Learning Management System (See Figure 4 - Figure 6). Instructors have access to this site and can find all resources in one central location. The new Instructor Resources Site provided more information than the previous orientation course. It was organized to provide the information and resources instructors needed in an easy to navigate format. The main content areas of the Instructor Resources Site were: a) Teaching in the LDT Program and b) LDT Resources.

The "Teaching in the LDT Program" section of the Instructor Resources Site provides information on the program, how to prepare to teach each semester, general information needed while teaching courses, program policies, and end-of-term





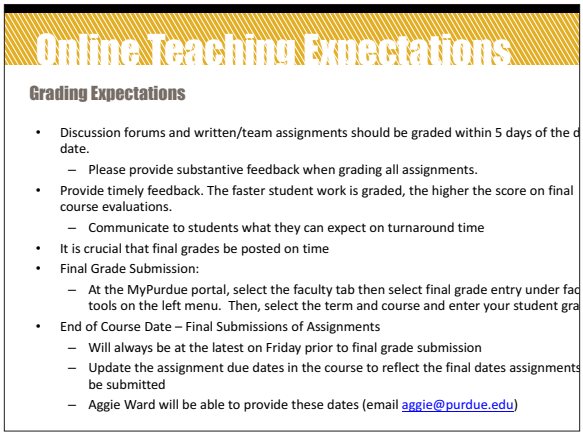
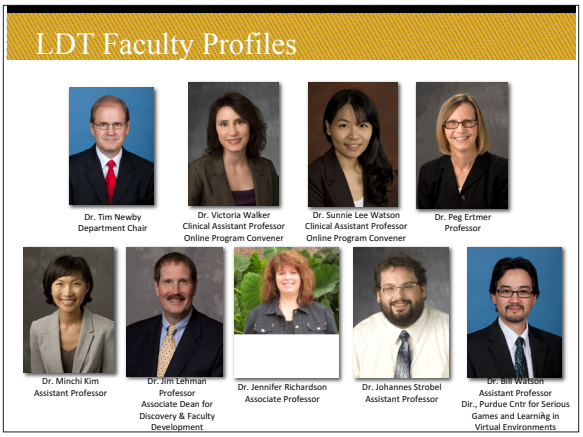
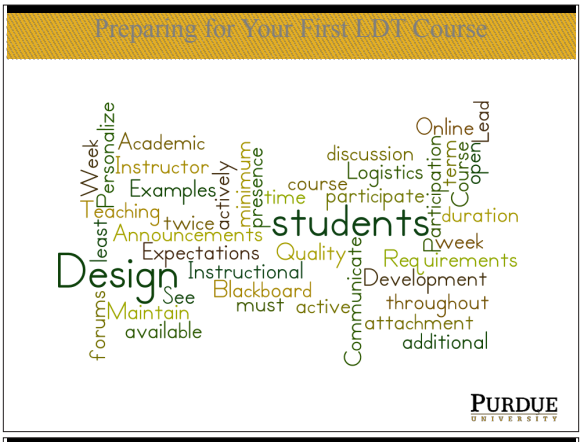
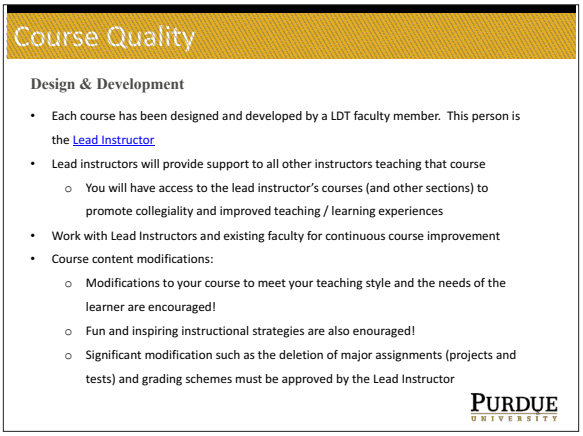


FIGURE 2. Year One—Initial Orientation Materials.







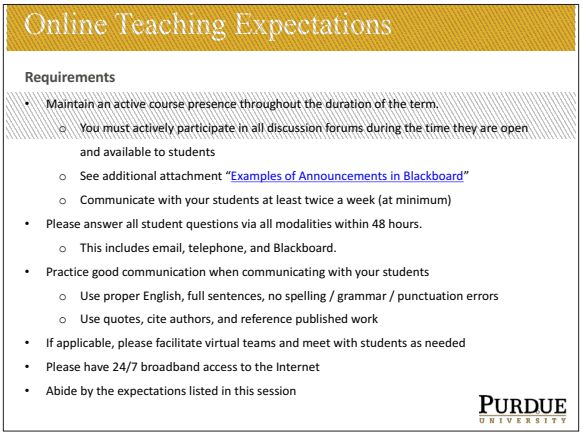


FIGURE 3. Year Two—Redesigned Orientation Materials.

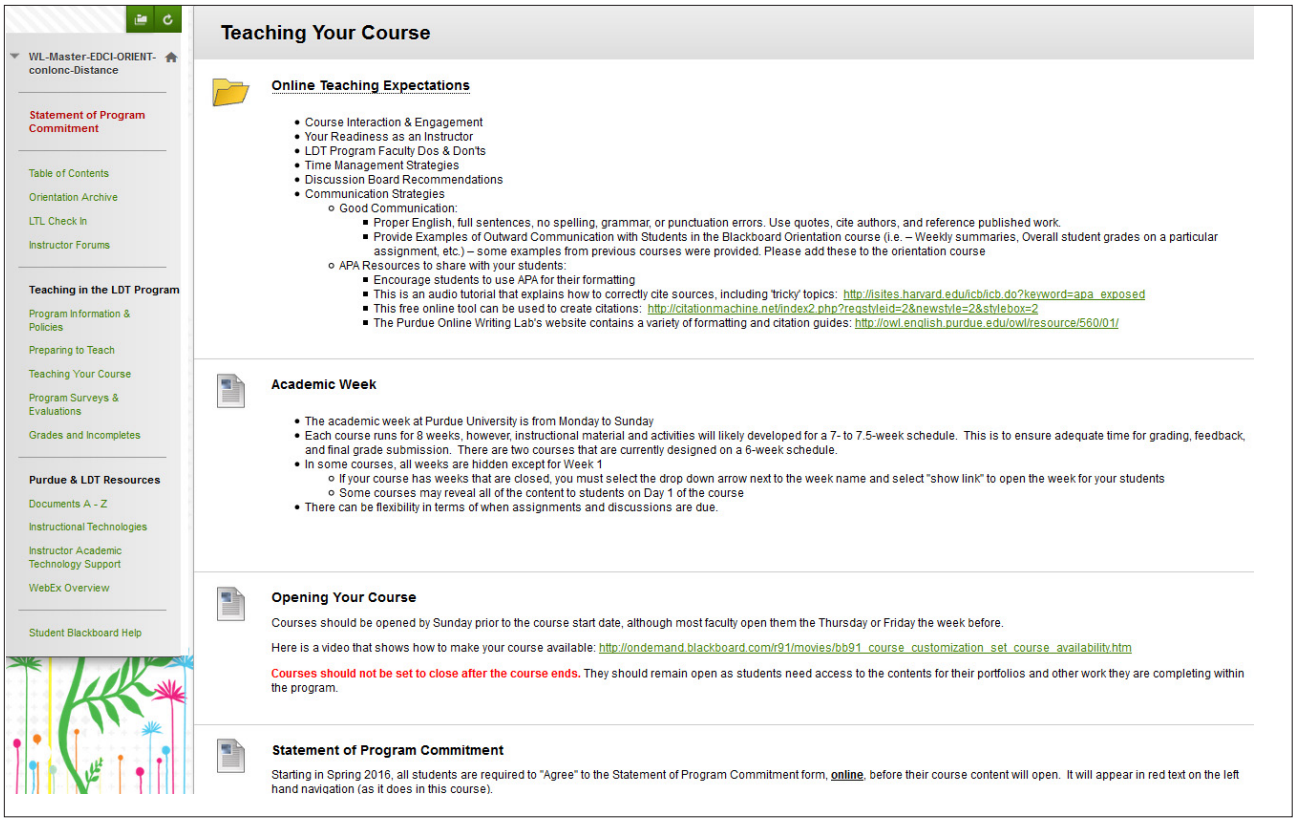


FIGURE 4. Year 3—Redesigned Orientation & Reference Materials (Instructor Resources Site: Teaching Your Course).

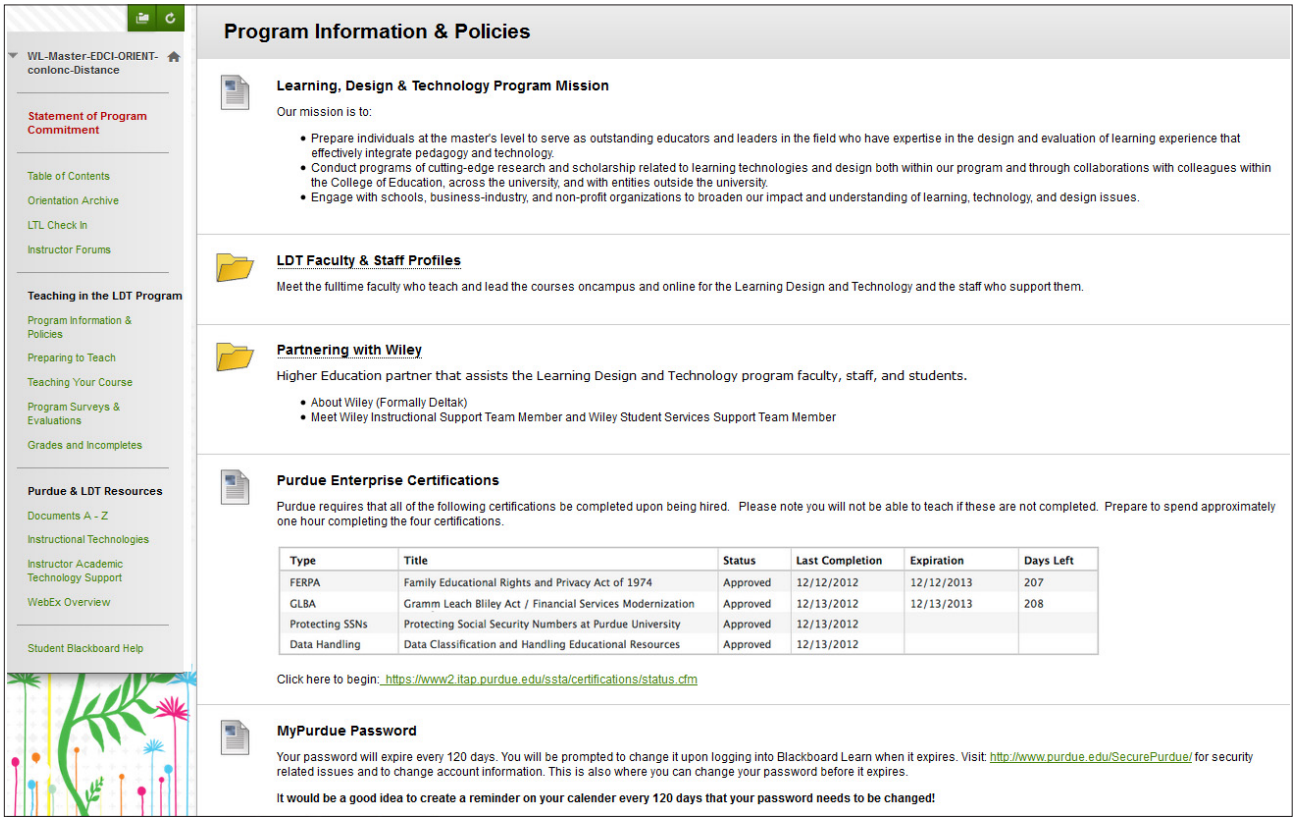


FIGURE 5. Year 3—Redesigned Orientation & Reference Materials (Instructor Resources Site: Program Information & Policies).

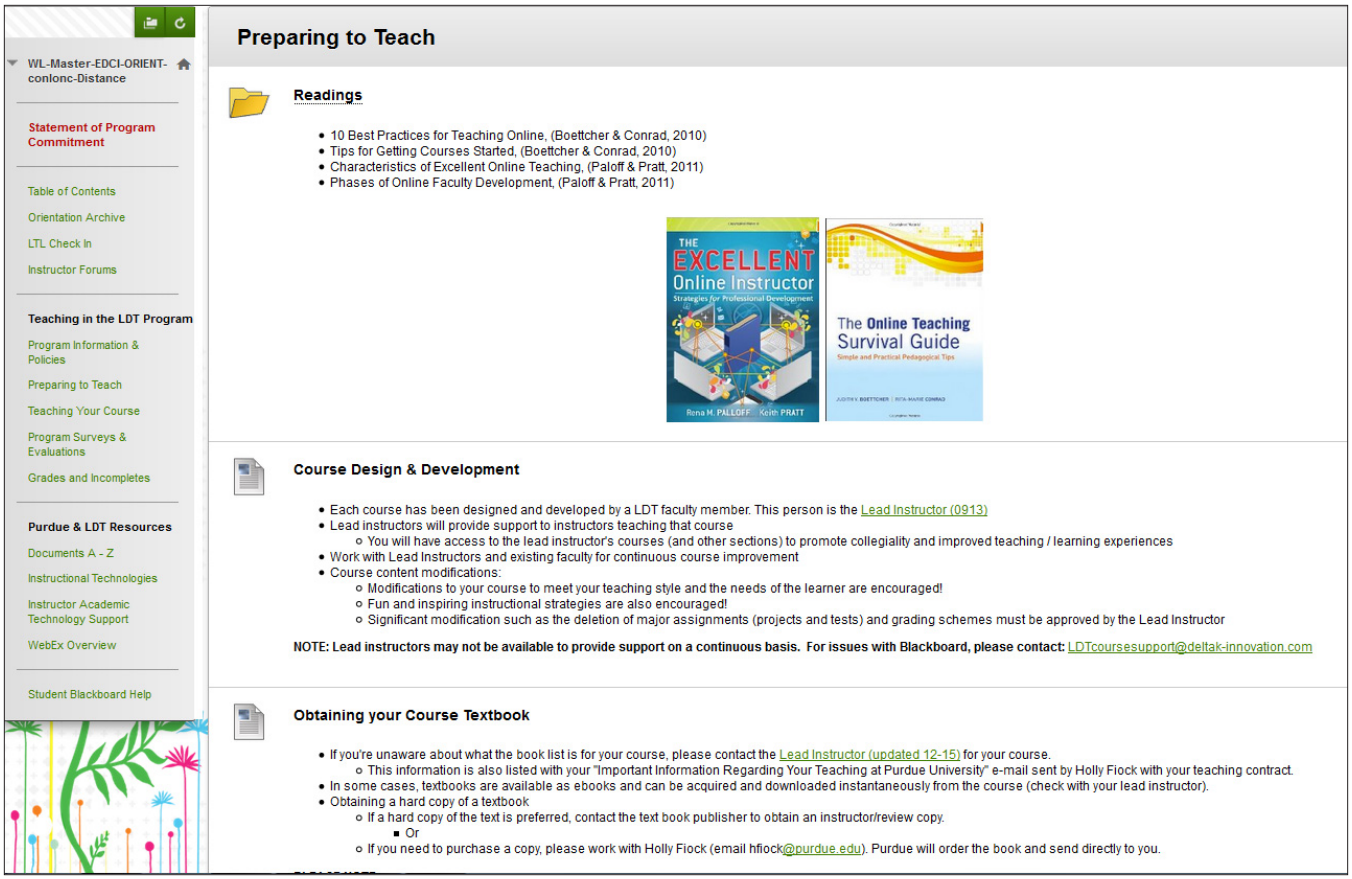


FIGURE 6. Year 3—Redesigned Orientation & Reference Materials (Instructor Resources Site: Preparing to Teach).

information. Readings on good online teaching practices were also provided. The content has answers to many general instructor questions. Program Information & Policies included LDT faculty and staff profiles and information on partnering with Wiley, and policy information. Other general information regarding addressing student concerns, including incompletes, submission of final grades, lead instructor information, and other important information adjunct instructors may need, can also be found in this section of the resource site.

The "Purdue & LDT Resources" section of the Instructor Resources Site provided information about instructional technologies at Purdue, assistance available for working with instructional technologies, the various surveys and evaluations the program and university collects each semester, and many of the documents and forms adjunct instructors may need. All instructor orientation-training sessions were also recorded and the recordings provided on the course site.

Instructors were added to the Blackboard course (Instructor Resources Site) prior to attending the orientation session and they remained enrolled in the course after attending the session. The training sessions were still presented by the Wiley instructional designer using Adobe Connect with a shared screen format. However, the presentation was much richer than the previous training provided to the adjuncts using PowerPoint because the presenter was presenting important information, answering questions, pulling up documents, and providing access to content on the fly that participants could access while they were enrolled in the Instructor Resources Site. The orientation session was also increased to a 1.5-hour session due to the significant increase in material and to add opportunities for questions throughout the session.

The policy regarding attending the orientation training was also modified. All instructors are now required to attend an orientation training session prior to teaching. It is expected that they will attend the training as a group, hoping they will gain from the learning community. Other opportunities for such collaboration are discussed in the "Opportunities for Collaboration among Adjunct Instructors" section below.

Check-in Training Sessions

Besides providing an improved orientation experience and materials that were available at all times (as discussed above), the online program administrator felt we needed a better way to check in and continue to develop adjuncts throughout the term. The online program administrator determined that the best way to do this was to begin with

an opportunity for adjunct instructors to gather early in the term for a session, after their courses had started, where they could ask questions about any issues they had noticed. Beginning in spring of 2014, all adjuncts were invited to attend a workshop two weeks into each course term. The check-in session workshops were mandatory for the first semester for new instructors and mentees, but voluntary for all others. The purpose of the check-in sessions are two-fold: 1) to offer instructors an opportunity to meet with the instructional designer, student services coordinator, and the curriculum coordinator or an administrator and to freely ask policy, technical, or pedagogical questions; and 2) to assist new instructors early with things they might struggle with during the term. The check-in sessions are designed to be welcoming and encourage all instructors to ask questions and share their experiences, ideas, and resources during the first half of the one-hour session. The second-half of the session is used for a short and useful training opportunity. Often a veteran adjunct instructor or technical staff member at the university will provide a brief training on a topic. The program administrator or the instructional designer who offers the training sessions contacts a prospective speaker based on a potential topic. Topics are selected based on recent questions from adjuncts or recent changes in technologies used within the program or university. For example, for one session, a veteran adjunct instructor presented how she used Blackboard rubrics. For another, a speaker from the university's IT department (also an adjunct instructor) was invited to discuss SafeAssign™, a plagiarism detecting software solution recently added to all courses as a new requirement. The Check-in training sessions are advertised for several weeks and are usually well attended.

Leading this effort meant developing an entirely new mindset about training and support for the adjuncts. They were now attending sessions during the term their classes were being held, during which they could get answers to technical questions, program policies, and other just-in-time information from attending staff members. And many adjuncts in attendance shared answers to the questions posed by other adjuncts. In addition, adjuncts were offered training during the check-in sessions on topics of relevant interest to most instructors that affected their teaching.

Although the overall attendance numbers pleased us, we were disappointed at the level of attendance at some of the check-in sessions, as some adjuncts do not regularly attend. Sessions are scheduled a year in advance. However, because our adjuncts are busy professionals with other jobs and home lives, it can be difficult for them to attend. We have experimented with how far in advance adjuncts are notified of these events and how many reminders to send. We have found that it is optimum to send the announcements two weeks before the courses start, with a reminder once the course starts (two weeks before the check-in session). This timing seems to balance giving enough notice for scheduling, while not sending something so far in advance that adjuncts will not have teaching a given course on their mind.

Course Expectation Guides (Job Aids)

In addition to program-level expectations, each course is designed around a particular pedagogy and schedule. Therefore, lead instructors may have unique expectations for instructor practices within a course. We realized that here, too, expectations needed to be made explicit.

To assist with the unique expectations a lead instructor may have, starting in Spring of 2014, the online program administrator requested all lead instructors create a document for each course that included the expectations for adjuncts (see Figure 7, for an example of two completed guides, see Appendices A and B). Leading this effort required encouraging lead faculty to understand the benefits of the job aids for the adjunct instructors and the lead instructor.

These job aids were meant to serve two purposes: provide adjuncts with clear expectations when teaching a particular course and allow for easier monitoring of adjunct instructor performance while teaching. The course expectation guides provided spaces for lead instructors to inform adjunct instructors of the goals for the course, the type and frequency of interactions expected, and tips for teaching the course. Lead instructors could modify the course guide template provided to them to meet their needs in providing an effective job aid for their adjunct instructors. The Wiley instructional designer provides a weekly report on adjunct activity levels, based on the guidelines set out within this document (e.g., if the course design requires higher discussion participation in one week and no discussion participation in another because of the type of topic or task the students were asked to tackle in a given week).

The challenge for this intervention is encouraging all lead instructors to participate by creating and updating these expectation guides consistently. Because of the expectation for faculty autonomy among the full-time lead instructors as well as difficulty prioritizing a new task within their already busy schedule, faculty are requested, but not required, to complete these guides. By encouraging faculty to see the benefits of these tools for preparing adjuncts, most of the faculty have created these job aids and are readily using these tools with their instructors. The online program administrator also has found that individual lead instructors have filled out the guides in different ways, or even modified the template. Although this has been useful in personalizing expectations for the course and each lead instructor's personal style, it has made it challenging to use these for other purposes, such as course monitoring (discussed below). We continue to consider ways to improve the process while maintaining individuality.

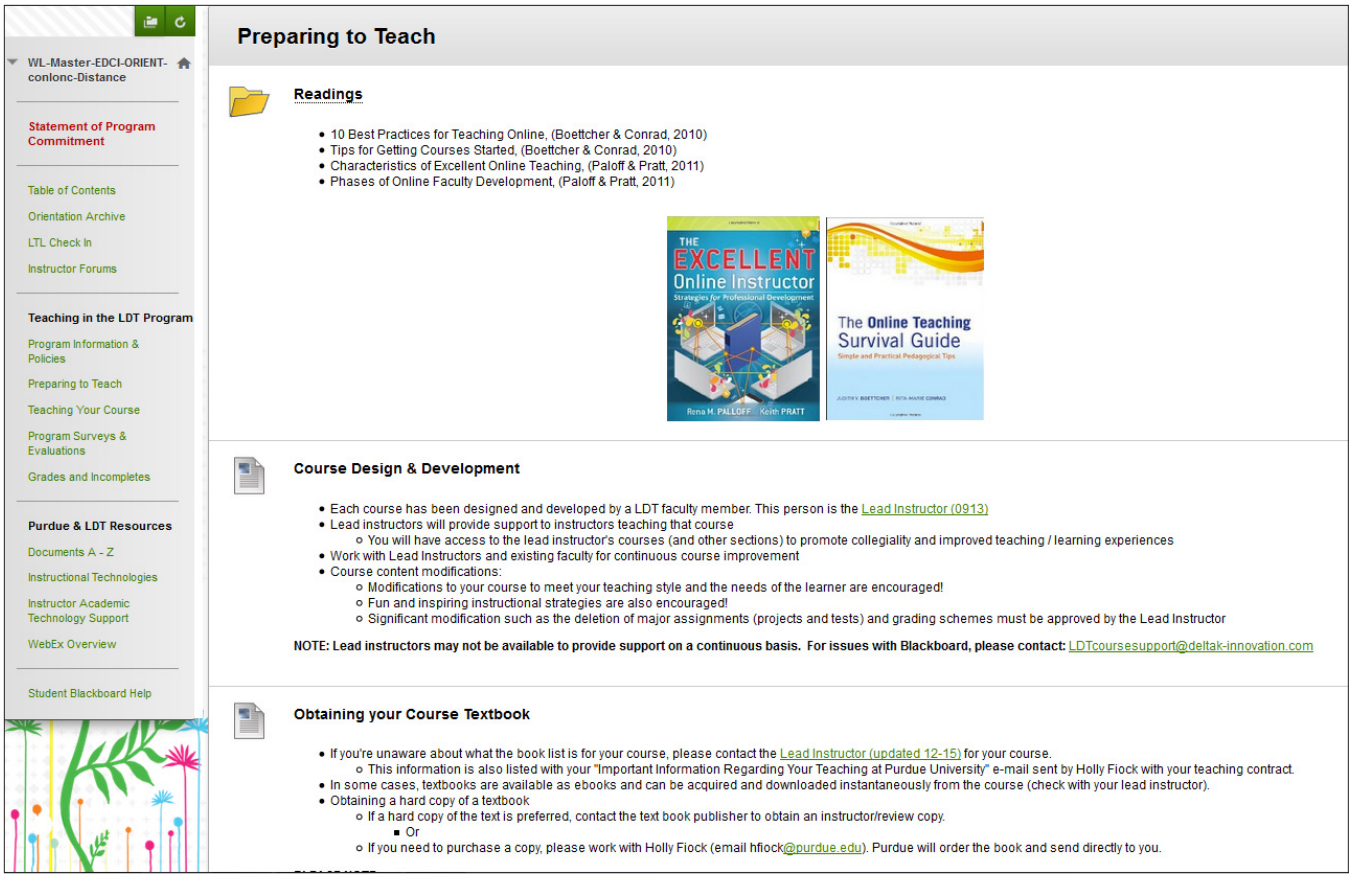


FIGURE 6. Year 3—Redesigned Orientation & Reference Materials (Instructor Resources Site: Preparing to Teach).

Course Orientation

The lead instructor of each course is expected to provide course orientation several weeks before the start of the term, in order to go over the course and offer advice about teaching the course. The expectation is that lead faculty will provide information on the course assignments, discussions, amount of interaction with students, and other pertinent information. Ideally, this should align well with the Course Expectation Guide (Job Aid), but may use a course walk-through or interactive discussion to point out particular features of the course or strategies that have worked in various situations in the past. Lead instructors are expected to connect with their instructors 3-4 weeks prior to the course start date with the course syllabus and course orientation information. Then lead instructors are expected to provide a course orientation for instructors that will be teaching their course. Although the synchronous course orientation had been a regular practice for many lead instructors, lead instructors had often provided this session just prior to the course starting, and there were concerns that some instructors had not been providing significant course information and clearly communicating their expectations. Program policies put into place require that lead instructors provide more robust course orientation sessions and/or orientation material and offer these at least 2 weeks prior to a course start date. Program policies dictate that course orientation information must be provided in one of three ways: a) providing a synchronous course orientation session; b) a recorded video of the course orientation; and/or c) a written Course Expectation Guide (Job Aid).

Although these materials and sessions generally go well, we have struggled to maintain the schedule we set out for ourselves; occasionally the orientation may occur as late as the week before a course begins. This is due to a variety of causes including last-minute course redesign changes, scheduling conflicts for everyone needing to attend the sessions, and technical issues within Blackboard. We continue to improve and are especially aware when new adjuncts are teaching a course.

Opportunities for Collaboration among Adjunct Instructors

Throughout the history of this program, adjuncts have been encouraged to send questions and ideas to all instructors teaching sections of a course and often have answered one-another's questions or provided resources for all to use. Adjunct instructors were frequently enrolled in one-another's sections. This allowed them to receive one-another's announcements and, if desired, enter other course sessions and observe modifications made to the course Blackboard

Course Number:

Below are suggestions for instructing this course:

General recommendations for teaching the course:	
How is the textbook used in the course? How are students directed?	
What is the purpose of the assignments? Any areas to watch out for? Do you have samples of excellent and/or poor work you can share?	
What is the expectation/purpose of the discussions? What are examples of good student posts?	
List any discussion prompts or questions you use.	
Which areas of the course or concepts do students struggle with? How do you support them?	
Are there any resources (websites, videos, etc.) that would extend or enrich the students' learning? Provide a list.	
What announcements do you post? List them and paste sample text.	
What emails or reminders do you send students? List them and paste sample text.	

Example:

You should familiarize yourself with the textbook, Analytical Techniques in Financial Management. This book has evolved out of my experience in teaching in the classroom. The students that I have met were uniformly hardworking and well motivated. For online teaching, I suggest that the students take the following steps.

1. Reading. The textbook has fourteen chapters. Each chapter opens with a list of objectives. The students

FIGURE 7. Course Expectation Guide.

site, course discussions, and additional resources provided. This allowed instructors to learn from one another. Instructors often borrowed and adapted announcements that were particularly well-written or provided links to useful resources. Perhaps more importantly, they learned strategies from one another. For example, one experienced instructor created weekly summaries at the end of each week; including quotes from student discussions. Another created a weekly video summary. Once instructors began sharing their course sections, others copied these approaches, which were favorably received by students. Frequently, course leads or adjuncts themselves requested that all instructors for a course in a given term include all others on questions, concerns, or suggestions emailed to the lead. Often, adjuncts would address one-another's questions before the lead instructor got to them. The entire group may also begin a lively discussion on particular concerns or events that took place across course sessions, coming up with strategies that worked for all. At times, an instructor may ask a trusted peer to take a look at a difficult question posed by a student or a student project that was particularly difficult to grade.

Although this has happened from the very beginning of this program, we have become more aware of the value of these practices and more proactive about encouraging such collaboration. Many of the adjuncts have noted that they appreciate the learning community that has developed within the courses they are teaching, through sharing resources with other adjuncts, with the lead instructors, and with their students. Adjuncts often send questions to everyone teaching a given course as well as the lead instructor – and often the questions are answered or general advice given by other adjuncts. There is also an extended learning community that has developed through the sharing of ideas, experiences and resources which we see when the instructors come to the program orientation sessions, course

orientation sessions, or the check-in sessions. All of these are highly encouraged, and through promoting the orientations, the events and adding the adjuncts into each other's courses and encouraging sharing ideas and resources, this community has continued to grow.

Mentorship

Mentorship was implemented in two ways. First, as described earlier, lead instructors were encouraged to mentor their adjunct instructors by providing course orientation training sessions and/or other course orientation materials including the course guides. The adjunct instructors who received course orientation training and additional mentoring by their lead were more prepared to teach their courses, and they needed less assistance once the course started. Most lead instructors provided mentoring to new adjunct instructors teaching their courses and immediately saw the benefits of providing that mentoring. This not only helped their adjunct instructors, it also reduced the workload of the lead instructors during the semester and helped to prevent potential problems.

However, we realized this was not sufficient for new adjuncts who had little prior experience teaching in similar programs. Therefore, in 2014, the online program administrator proposed and trialed a formalized mentorship program designed for instructors new to the program who had little or no experience teaching online courses or courses that were offered in an accelerated format. In this program, mentees would be paid to co-teach a course under the direct supervision of a mentor for two semesters. This position allows the mentee to work closely with an experienced online instructor who will mentor and guide the trainee. Mentors were usually full-time faculty, though sometimes a highly skilled adjunct who had taught for the program for many semesters served as mentor. The mentor process has been fully adopted since.

Although the mentoring process is primarily intended to train mentees, it also serves as a vetting process. For example, one mentee did not consistently respond to emails or other communications, did not appear to understand expectations, and did not seem to be available when needed for grading, student support, and other crucial activities. Based on our experience with this individual across two terms, we did not feel she was a strong enough candidate to teach in our program, and the online program administrator had to remove her from the mentee program.

Occasionally we have struggled to match a given mentee with a full-time faculty member willing to mentor a particular mentee. Full-time faculty find that working with mentees is relatively time-consuming and they may prefer to work alone or with a volunteer TA (typically a doctoral student or graduate of the MSEd program) they are familiar with. This has made it difficult to schedule mentees to work in the program. Pairing mentees with very experienced and highly respected existing adjuncts has helped to address this gap.

Weekly Monitoring and Formative Feedback for Adjuncts

Serious issues with adjuncts early in the program were nearly all due to a lack of timely communication and interaction with students. We knew from prior experience and literature

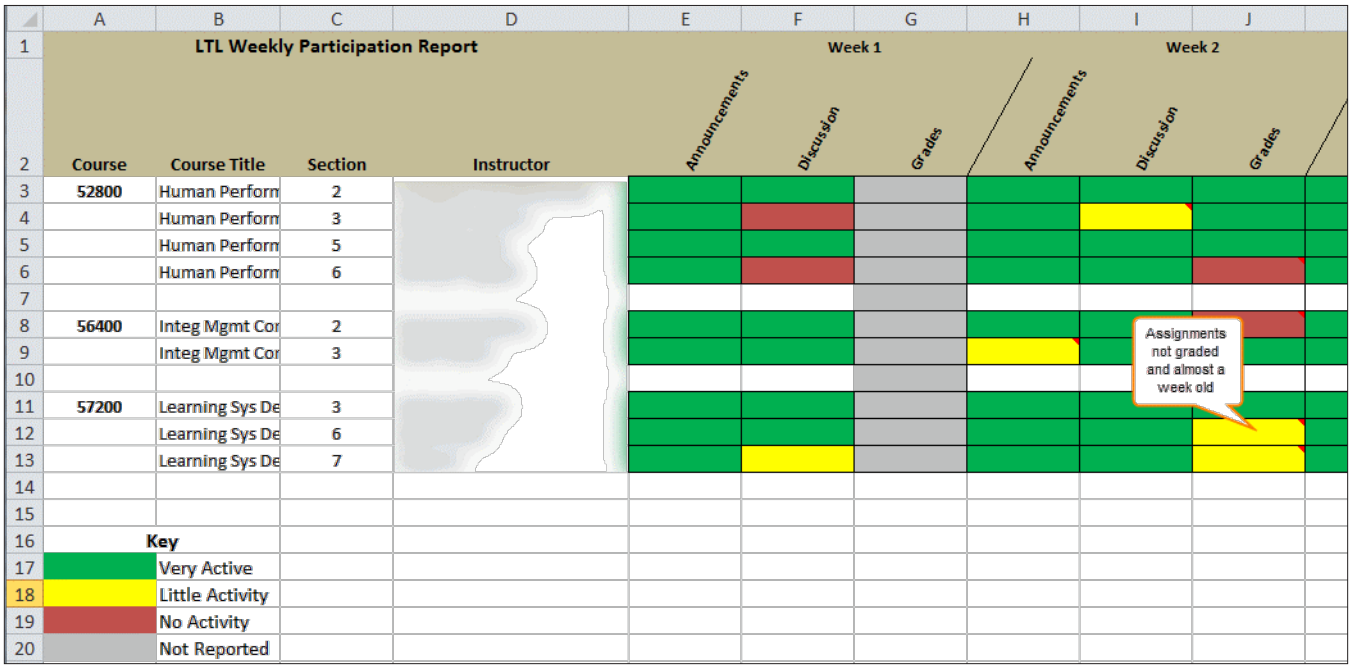


FIGURE 8. Monitoring Spreadsheet Generated Weekly.

on distance education (Baker, 2010; Richardson et al., 2015) that instructor-to-student interaction and instructor presence (a sense that an instructor is "real," visible, and active within the class environment) in a course play an important role in student success and satisfaction. Unlike face-to-face courses, the program administrator and lead instructors cannot see adjuncts arriving and leaving or hear students interacting with them.

To prevent issues before they occurred, we needed a mechanism to determine whether adjuncts were interacting with students as intended, and to respond quickly if not. We began monitoring adjuncts' level of presence in a systematic way in order to provide quick formative feedback and remediation if necessary. Before beginning to teach, adjuncts receive a document that explains that the program sponsors will have access to their course sections and will be evaluating their performance. Another document provided to adjuncts outlines the rights of the university related to the performance of Limited Term Lecturer's (which are used as adjuncts in our program).

Weekly monitoring involves opening each online course and checking the amount of, and variety of, interactions to ensure the adjunct instructors were actively participating in their courses. One of the program staff members who reports to the online program administrator collects this information and forwards to lead instructors each week using a spreadsheet listing the courses, the instructors, and the three main areas of review for each week during the term (see Figure 8). Generating the report takes approximately 30 minutes each week. The areas reviewed and reported include participating in the discussion forums, actively sending announcements each week, and posting grades as expected. General program expectations were that instructors should be active in their discussion forums and posting 3-5 days a week, sending 2-3 announcements per week, and grading small assignments within 3-5 days and larger assignments within 5 days, and discussion forums within 3 days. However, since these expectations may vary by course, lead instructors would determine whether the levels were appropriate for a given course in a week. It was also up to the lead instructor to contact the adjunct instructor if there were any concerns.

Often, a quick clarification of expectations proved sufficient to resolve a problem that otherwise could have escalated. For example, one lead instructor contacted an adjunct who was very enthusiastic but did not realize that regular participation in ongoing student discussions was expected, as this approach differed greatly from what was done at another institution she had taught. In another instance, students reported that they were not getting feedback for major parts of the course, which was also reflected in the spreadsheet. Investigation by the lead instructor soon revealed that the adjunct had been giving feedback to students, but was having a technical issue with Blackboard, causing the feedback to be invisible to students.

We are happy with the first iteration of this process. The system has been working well, although it is not as customized to individual course designs as we had initially intended. Ideally, lead instructors' expectations could be clarified both to adjuncts and to the instructional designer who monitors their sections through the course guide. This should result in different thresholds for expectations for each type of communication within each course. We have recently recognized that we need to better communicate this additional purpose in the course guides and have updated the template for the next term. Once lead instructors fill in the new information, the online program administrator will direct the staff member who monitors adjuncts to these course expectation guides.

However, until this is in place, the current system is working well. Because the data sheets are directed to lead instructors, they determine whether there is actually an issue, and how to respond to it. If a lead instructor recognizes that a certain form of communication is not as important in a given week, he or she can determine if there is no issue, even if the cell for one or more adjuncts is yellow or red. For example, if there is no required discussion that week or the discussion activity could be better served by low instructor presence during a student debate.

Staff Growth

As the program grew, the online program administrator quickly became overwhelmed with the workload, and a staff member was hired as a "curriculum coordinator". The curriculum coordinator was responsible for assisting with contracts for adjunct instructors, course scheduling, program manuals, development of an online student center, program website, interacting with Wiley staff regarding student issues, providing technical support for adjuncts, and other administrative and clerical tasks. This role has grown significantly since it was originally listed.

Executive Committee

During the early history of this online program, and continuing into the intervention period, decisions relating to the program were made either by the faculty as a whole or by individuals in isolation. Because the online program is relatively large, consistent monitoring and adjustments are required. We determined that a separate leadership group focused specifically on the online program was needed. An executive committee was formed, comprising three members: the area program convener (who oversees all of the LDT programs); the online program administrator, and the curriculum coordinator. This committee meets every two weeks to discuss online program needs, issues, and concerns. The committee reports back to the program faculty

members and collaborates with them on major decision points. This alleviates some of the communication issues and inconsistencies that had previously hampered the overall process.

Formative Evaluation

A formative evaluation process was designed in parallel with the development of the interventions. The primary goals of the evaluation process were to determine whether adjuncts were satisfied with the training and support they received, and whether this change has affected the outcomes of the program: student satisfaction, retention, and success. Adjunct instructors were surveyed every six months for one year and then two years later to determine the strengths or weakness of the training and support at a program level. Adjuncts were also surveyed after teaching each course to determine their perceptions of the course and the support they received specifically related to that course. We plan to add additional data sources, such as student drop statistics, in the future. Following best practices, the design and development process is expected to continue to iterate as the program and adjunct instructor needs change.

The adjunct survey includes closed-ended, Likert scale questions regarding satisfaction with:

- program-level orientation and support (including orientation sessions, supplemental meetings, and resources).
- course-level orientation and support (including the quality of materials provided/presented, the degree to which they felt prepared to teach the course, and the responsiveness of lead instructors to questions and concerns).
- support staff (including the program administrators and Wiley instructional designers and student support coordinator).
- technical resources (including Blackboard™ and tools such as the mid-term evaluation).
- frequency and value of interactions with lead instructors, other adjuncts, and support staff.

Adjuncts were asked to give open-ended feedback on each area.

In the future, this data can be combined with adjunct and mentee retention rates, average performance in the weekly monitoring spreadsheet, and measures of student satisfaction, retention, and performance for a higher-level program evaluation.

EARLY EVALUATION & FEEDBACK

Adjunct instructors with prior experience in the program were invited to participate in an initial survey just before the new interventions were introduced. Only experienced participants were invited, as they had received the original training and had experience with our support systems. Eight adjuncts participated. A follow-up survey was conducted six months later, after the first round of changes had been introduced, and all adjuncts in good standing were invited to participate. Seventeen adjuncts participated. Although this data is included in a manuscript being prepared for publication, highlights are given below.

As discussed in Walker and Exter (2015), a comparison of data between the two surveys showed increased overall satisfaction levels. For example, when asked to respond to "Overall, my experience teaching in the program has been…" survey respondents can indicate from "poor" to "excellent" using a 5-point Likert scale. In the preliminary results, 58% (10 respondents) indicated their overall experience teaching in the program had been excellent, compared with 13% (1 respondent) in the follow-up survey. In the six-month follow-up survey, participants also indicated a statistically significantly higher level of satisfaction with the degree to which the program orientation prepared them to teach, including the extent to which they felt they know where to look or who to ask for additional information, the usefulness of course orientation and materials, and the responsiveness of ID staff. There was also a small, but statistically significant, increase in their satisfaction with lead instructors, including the sense that the lead instructor provides adequate information, that their instructions are understood, and that they respond to questions and concerns. Unsurprisingly, there were no significant changes in responsiveness and helpfulness from the student service coordinator and LDT program administrators since there was no change to their roles or interactions.

Although the trends are positive, we could see there was more work to do in several of these areas. For example, the average scores in the follow-up survey were between 3.0 and 3.5 on the five-point Likert scale for the degree to which the program orientation prepared them to teach and for some aspects of the lead instructors' roles. These lead instructor roles included preparing adjuncts to understand the overall course content and flow and general information received from course instructors (likely due, at least in part, to a variation between lead instructors). As one adjunct indicated, "Some lead [instructors] are more hands-on [than others] with the instructors, share more clear expectations, and are more responsive to questions." However, most participants were much more satisfied with their relationship with lead instructors and their overall responsiveness. As one indicated, "My lead instructors have been fantastic! Responsive, reaching out, in fact -- and sharing every example, sample possible including opening up their courses for me to shadow."

In addition to survey data, the program administrator and faculty who played lead instructor roles have noticed a

decrease in the need for lead instructors to intervene in problems arising from a lack of adjunct preparation or understanding of expectations and a decrease in last-minute emergencies (as reported by the program administrators and support staff). A two-year follow-up survey is planned for next fall. This will allow us to determine how adjuncts perceive the training and support interventions now that they have matured.

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

It appears that the use of adjunct faculty, particularly in online programs, will continue to rise. In our program, we intentionally hire skilled adjuncts currently working in industry to increase the number of instructors available and to bring in different perspectives and experiences. Although exposing students to instructors with diverse backgrounds and instructional styles can be beneficial to students, our online students expect to receive an adequate and consistent level of interaction with faculty across courses and course sections. When this is not the case, we have seen student learning suffer and complaints are likely to rise. Adjunct faculty satisfaction also depends on receiving adequate preparation and support. Early in our program, a lack of preparation, support, and consistency led to a significant workload for full-time faculty, especially for the online program administrator and course lead instructors.

As the program grew, the program faculty realized that they could not continue handling these issues on a just-in-time response basis. The newly hired online program administrator collaborated with full-time faculty, dedicated experienced adjuncts, and Wiley staff to design and lead an initiative to implement the set of interventions described in this article. We realized that training alone was not sufficient. Therefore, in addition to expanding our instructor orientation and formalizing course orientation sessions, we added check-in sessions, course expectation guides, opportunities for collaboration, a mentor program for less prepared adjuncts, weekly monitoring and formative feedback for adjuncts, and a formative evaluation process. Adding an executive committee and a dedicated staff member helped to streamline the work of the online program administrator and faculty. Our processes remain collaborative. In addition to the formal formative evaluation, our collaborative relationship with adjuncts continues to grow, and we regularly get useful recommendations from adjuncts, which are then brought up to administrators or lead faculty and are discussed in program meetings. Often these suggestions are implemented or alternative resolutions are found in order to support and meet the needs of both the adjuncts and the larger program.

This article offers one model for providing adjunct training and support. We were inspired to make changes based on the needs of the adjuncts and students and the program. The model we used was customized to meet the needs of our program and will continue to be updated based on our ongoing formative evaluation. Early evaluation data and our own experiences appear to indicate that these interventions have had a positive effect. So far, it has been met with support by adjuncts, and there has been a reduction in the need for lead instructors to intervene in problems arising from the lack of adjunct preparation or understanding of expectations. It remains to be seen whether the interventions will affect student graduation rates and overall success and satisfaction with the program. Ongoing data collection through our formative evaluation process will help us to continue to improve the adjunct training and support within this program.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to acknowledge the contributions to the design and design process by the Purdue LDT faculty and staff, Wiley staff, and our limited term lecturers (adjunct instructors), as well as their feedback as part of the iterative design process.

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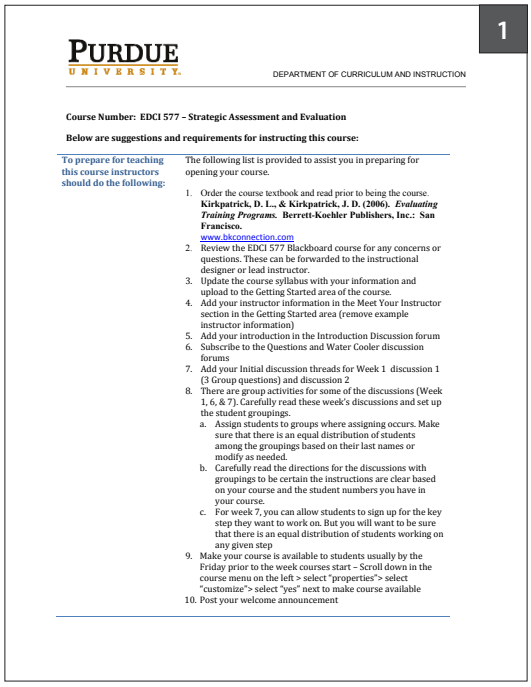
APPENDIX A

Adjunct Instructor Guide for EDCI 577: Strategic Assessment and Evaluation



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PURDUE UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

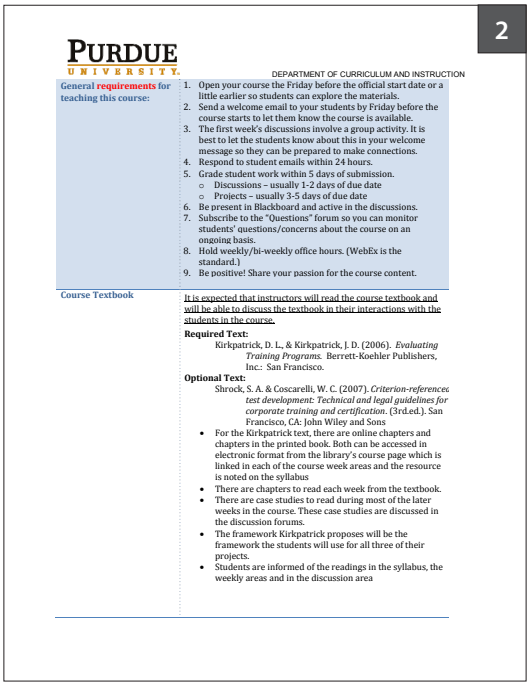
Course Number: EDCI 577 – Strategic Assessment and Evaluation

Below are suggestions and requirements for instructing this course:

To prepare for teaching this course instructors should do the following:

The following list is provided to assist you in preparing for opening your course.

1. Order the course textbook and read prior to being the course. **Kirkpatrick, D. L., & Kirkpatrick, J. D. (2006).** ***Evaluating Training Programs.*** **Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.: San Francisco.**
   www.bkconnection.com
2. Review the EDCI 577 Blackboard course for any concerns or questions. These can be forwarded to the instructional designer or lead instructor.
3. Update the course syllabus with your information and upload to the Getting Started area of the course.
4. Add your instructor information in the Meet Your Instructor section in the Getting Started area (remove example instructor information)
5. Add your introduction in the Introduction Discussion forum
6. Subscribe to the Questions and Water Cooler discussion forums
7. Add your Initial discussion threads for Week 1 discussion 1 (3 Group questions) and discussion 2
8. There are group activities for some of the discussions (Week 1, 6, & 7). Carefully read these week's discussions and set up the student groupings.
   a. Assign students to groups where assigning occurs. Make sure that there is an equal distribution of students among the groupings based on their last names or modify as needed.
   b. Carefully read the directions for the discussions with groupings to be certain the instructions are clear based on your course and the student numbers you have in your course.
   c. For week 7, you can allow students to sign up for the key step they want to work on. But you will want to be sure that there is an equal distribution of students working on any given step
9. Make your course is available to students usually by the Friday prior to the week courses start – Scroll down in the course menu on the left > select "properties"> select "customize"> select "yes" next to make course available
10. Post your welcome announcement



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General requirements for teaching this course:

1. Open your course the Friday before the official start date or a little earlier so students can explore the materials.
2. Send a welcome email to your students by Friday before the course starts to let them know the course is available.
3. The first week's discussions involve a group activity. It is best to let the students know about this in your welcome message so they can be prepared to make connections.
4. Respond to student emails within 24 hours.
5. Grade student work within 5 days of submission.
   - Discussions – usually 1-2 days of due date
   - Projects – usually 3-5 days of due date
6. Be present in Blackboard and active in the discussions.
7. Subscribe to the "Questions" forum so you can monitor students' questions/concerns about the course on an ongoing basis.
8. Hold weekly/bi-weekly office hours. (WebEx is the standard.)
9. Be positive! Share your passion for the course content.

Course Textbook

It is expected that instructors will read the course textbook and will be able to discuss the textbook in their interactions with the students in the course.

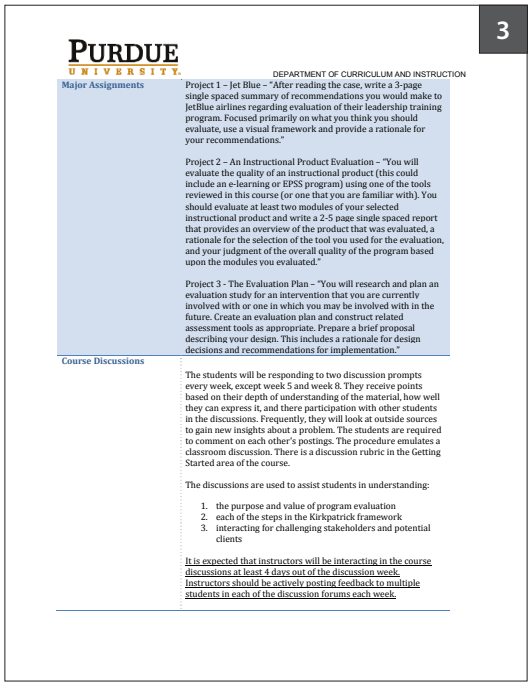
Required Text:

Kirkpatrick, D. L., & Kirkpatrick, J. D. (2006). *Evaluating Training Programs.* Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.: San Francisco.

Optional Text:

Shrock, S. A. & Coscarelli, W. C. (2007). *Criterion-referenced test development: Technical and legal guidelines for corporate training and certification*. (3rd.ed.). San Francisco, CA: John Wiley and Sons

- For the Kirkpatrick text, there are online chapters and chapters in the printed book. Both can be accessed in electronic format from the library's course page which is linked in each of the course week areas and the resource is noted on the syllabus
- There are chapters to read each week from the textbook.
- There are case studies to read during most of the later weeks in the course. These case studies are discussed in the discussion forums.
- The framework Kirkpatrick proposes will be the framework the students will use for all three of their projects.
- Students are informed of the readings in the syllabus, the weekly areas and in the discussion area



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Major Assignments

Project 1 – Jet Blue – "After reading the case, write a 3-page single spaced summary of recommendations you would make to JetBlue airlines regarding evaluation of their leadership training program. Focused primarily on what you think you should evaluate, use a visual framework and provide a rationale for your recommendations."

Project 2 – An Instructional Product Evaluation – "You will evaluate the quality of an instructional product (this could include an e-learning or EPSS program) using one of the tools reviewed in this course (or one that you are familiar with). You should evaluate at least two modules of your selected instructional product and write a 2-5 page single spaced report that provides an overview of the product that was evaluated, a rationale for the selection of the tool you used for the evaluation, and your judgment of the overall quality of the program based upon the modules you evaluated."

Project 3 - The Evaluation Plan – "You will research and plan an evaluation study for an intervention that you are currently involved with or one in which you may be involved with in the future. Create an evaluation plan and construct related assessment tools as appropriate. Prepare a brief proposal describing your design. This includes a rationale for design decisions and recommendations for implementation."

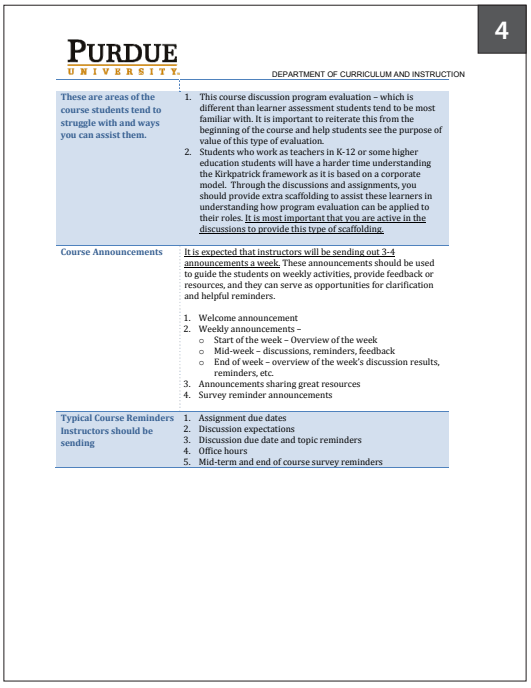
Course Discussions

The students will be responding to two discussion prompts every week, except week 5 and week 8. They receive points based on their depth of understanding of the material, how well they can express it, and there participation with other students in the discussions. Frequently, they will look at outside sources to gain new insights about a problem. The students are required to comment on each other's postings. The procedure emulates a classroom discussion. There is a discussion rubric in the Getting Started area of the course.

The discussions are used to assist students in understanding:

1. the purpose and value of program evaluation
2. each of the steps in the Kirkpatrick framework
3. interacting for challenging stakeholders and potential clients

It is expected that instructors will be interacting in the course discussions at least 4 days out of the discussion week. Instructors should be actively posting feedback to multiple students in each of the discussion forums each week.



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These are areas of the course students tend to struggle with and ways you can assist them.

1. This course discussion program evaluation – which is different than learner assessment students tend to be most familiar with. It is important to reiterate this from the beginning of the course and help students see the purpose of value of this type of evaluation.
2. Students who work as teachers in K-12 or some higher education students will have a harder time understanding the Kirkpatrick framework as it is based on a corporate model. Through the discussions and assignments, you should provide extra scaffolding to assist these learners in understanding how program evaluation can be applied to their roles. It is most important that you are active in the discussions to provide this type of scaffolding.

Course Announcements

It is expected that instructors will be sending out 3-4 announcements a week. These announcements should be used to guide the students on weekly activities, provide feedback or resources, and they can serve as opportunities for clarification and helpful reminders.

1. Welcome announcement
2. Weekly announcements –
   - Start of the week – Overview of the week
   - Mid-week – discussions, reminders, feedback
   - End of week – overview of the week's discussion results, reminders, etc.
3. Announcements sharing great resources
4. Survey reminder announcements

Typical Course Reminders Instructors should be sending

1. Assignment due dates
2. Discussion expectations
3. Discussion due date and topic reminders
4. Office hours
5. Mid-term and end of course survey reminders

APPENDIX B

Adjunct Instructor Guide for EDCI 528: Human Performance Technology

1

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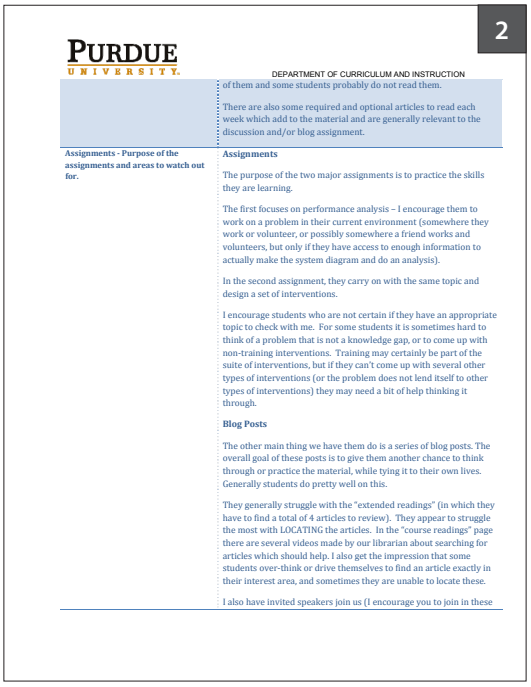
Course Number: EDCI 52800 - Human Performance Technology

Below are suggestions for instructing this course:

General recommendations for teaching the course:	The 6 weeks are really intense and students panic in the first few weeks. I have tried to lower the load a bit this semester but I do remind them that this is a full 3 credit hour class. The purpose of the 6 week format is two-fold: for those who are taking it as a final course, it allows them to graduate on time. For others, it gives them a 2 week break. The course is also front-loaded, especially in readings. Please try to open your course the Friday before to give them a chance to get started. Inform students that they really need to come to you if they have a personal emergency or issue as soon as they know it, not AFTER they have already missed the deadline. Be willing to work things out with students who have a legitimate issue. If you see students start to miss things (for example, not participating in the discussion forum in the first week), reach out to them. This will help you determine if there is a real issue – and sometimes is enough to get students going by itself. Encourage students to post their questions in the "Ask a Peer, Ask the instructor" forum so other students will benefit from the answers. If a student emails you a question that seems general, ask them to please post it there. Encourage students to respond to peers' questions in the "As a Peer, Ask the Instructor" forum as well. This will help build community and get them answers more quickly.
Textbook	Students are required to read the main textbook (Stolovitch & Keeps, 2004). The textbook is designed to be interactive, and when I do my course intro I emphasize that they need to actually do the exercises to get the most out of the book. Tables and tools in the book will also be used directly in the assignments. The optional textbook (van Tiem, 2012) is much more theoretical. I suggest that students use the electronic copy first and see if they really like the book – if they are going into HPT seriously I recommend they buy it. Various chapters from this book are "recommended" for each week – realistically, some students read all



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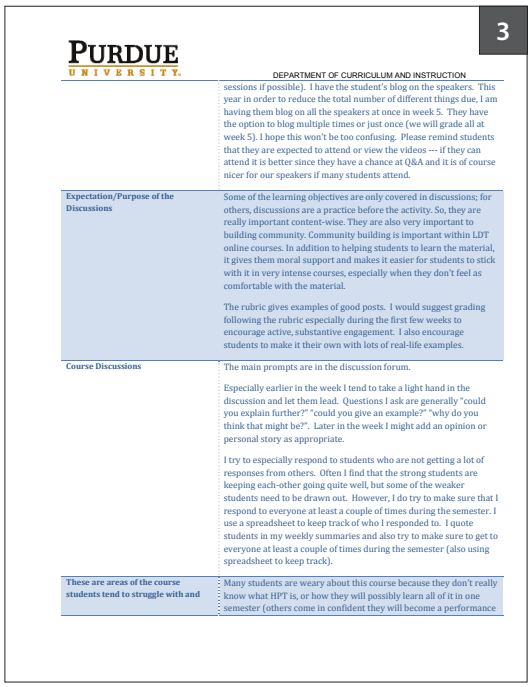
	of them and some students probably do not read them. There are also some required and optional articles to read each week which add to the material and are generally relevant to the discussion and/or blog assignment.
Assignments - Purpose of the assignments and areas to watch out for.	**Assignments** The purpose of the two major assignments is to practice the skills they are learning. The first focuses on performance analysis – I encourage them to work on a problem in their current environment (somewhere they work or volunteer, or possibly somewhere a friend works and volunteers, but only if they have access to enough information to actually make the system diagram and do an analysis). In the second assignment, they carry on with the same topic and design a set of interventions. I encourage students who are not certain if they have an appropriate topic to check with me. For some students it is sometimes hard to think of a problem that is not a knowledge gap, or to come up with non-training interventions. Training may certainly be part of the suite of interventions, but if they can't come up with several other types of interventions (or the problem does not lend itself to other types of interventions) they may need a bit of help thinking it through. **Blog Posts** The other main thing we have them do is a series of blog posts. The overall goal of these posts is to give them another chance to think through or practice the material, while tying it to their own lives. Generally students do pretty well on this. They generally struggle with the "extended readings" (in which they have to find a total of 4 articles to review). They appear to struggle the most with LOCATING the articles. In the "course readings" page there are several videos made by our librarian about searching for articles which should help. I also get the impression that some students over-think or drive themselves to find an article exactly in their interest area, and sometimes they are unable to locate these. I also have invited speakers join us (I encourage you to join in these



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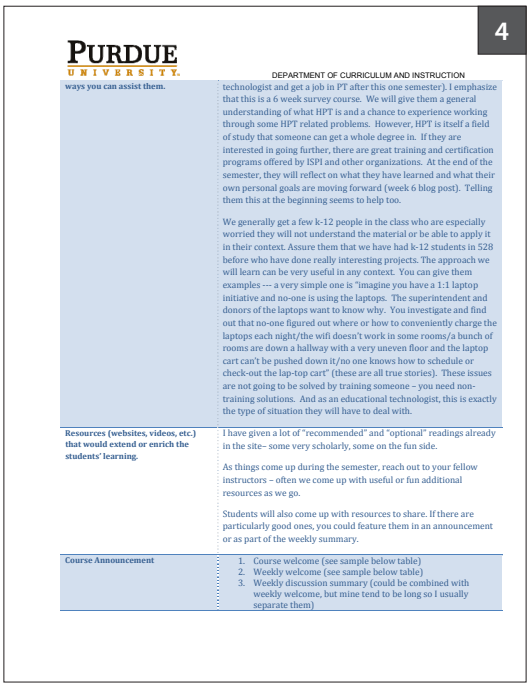
	sessions if possible). I have the student's blog on the speakers. This year in order to reduce the total number of different things due, I am having them blog on all the speakers at once in week 5. They have the option to blog multiple times or just once (we will grade all at week 5). I hope this won't be too confusing. Please remind students that they are expected to attend or view the videos --- if they can attend it is better since they have a chance at Q&A and it is of course nicer for our speakers if many students attend.
Expectation/Purpose of the Discussions	Some of the learning objectives are only covered in discussions; for others, discussions are a practice before the activity. So, they are really important content-wise. They are also very important to building community. Community building is important within LDT online courses. In addition to helping students to learn the material, it gives them moral support and makes it easier for students to stick with it in very intense courses, especially when they don't feel as comfortable with the material. The rubric gives examples of good posts. I would suggest grading following the rubric especially during the first few weeks to encourage active, substantive engagement. I also encourage students to make it their own with lots of real-life examples.
Course Discussions	The main prompts are in the discussion forum. Especially earlier in the week I tend to take a light hand in the discussion and let them lead. Questions I ask are generally "could you explain further?" "could you give an example?" "why do you think that might be?". Later in the week I might add an opinion or personal story as appropriate. I try to especially respond to students who are not getting a lot of responses from others. Often I find that the strong students are keeping each-other going quite well, but some of the weaker students need to be drawn out. However, I do try to make sure that I respond to everyone at least a couple of times during the semester. I use a spreadsheet to keep track of who I responded to. I quote students in my weekly summaries and also try to make sure to get to everyone at least a couple of times during the semester (also using spreadsheet to keep track).
These are areas of the course students tend to struggle with and	Many students are weary about this course because they don't really know what HPT is, or how they will possibly learn all of it in one semester (others come in confident they will become a performance



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ways you can assist them.	technologist and get a job in PT after this one semester). I emphasize that this is a 6 week survey course. We will give them a general understanding of what HPT is and a chance to experience working through some HPT related problems. However, HPT is itself a field of study that someone can get a whole degree in. If they are interested in going further, there are great training and certification programs offered by ISPI and other organizations. At the end of the semester, they will reflect on what they have learned and what their own personal goals are moving forward (week 6 blog post). Telling them this at the beginning seems to help too. We generally get a few k-12 people in the class who are especially worried they will not understand the material or be able to apply it in their context. Assure them that we have had k-12 students in 528 before who have done really interesting projects. The approach we will learn can be very useful in any context. You can give them examples --- a very simple one is "imagine you have a 1:1 laptop initiative and no-one is using the laptops. The superintendent and donors of the laptops want to know why. You investigate and find out that no-one figured out where or how to conveniently charge the laptops each night/the wifi doesn't work in some rooms/a bunch of rooms are down a hallway with a very uneven floor and the laptop cart can't be pushed down it/no one knows how to schedule or check-out the lap-top cart" (these are all true stories). These issues are not going to be solved by training someone – you need non-training solutions. And as an educational technologist, this is exactly the type of situation they will have to deal with.
Resources (websites, videos, etc.) that would extend or enrich the students' learning.	I have given a lot of "recommended" and "optional" readings already in the site– some very scholarly, some on the fun side. As things come up during the semester, reach out to your fellow instructors – often we come up with useful or fun additional resources as we go. Students will also come up with resources to share. If there are particularly good ones, you could feature them in an announcement or as part of the weekly summary.
Course Announcement	1. Course welcome (see sample below table) 2. Weekly welcome (see sample below table) 3. Weekly discussion summary (could be combined with weekly welcome, but mine tend to be long so I usually separate them)

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	4. Reminder posts – remind of upcoming events such as speakers, assignment due, etc. 5. Response to issues that are arising – either in the discussion forum or if I get more than one email about a topic that seems like it could be a general issue for everyone (e.g. misunderstanding about deadline or one portion of an assignment). I like to nip these in the bud and it is possible that not all students are watching the Ask the Instructor forum.
Typical Course Reminders Instructors should be sending	I use announcements for reminders. See above. I will directly email a student only if there is something personal – such as checking in on why they did not participate. I also respond to all student emails in a timely fashion (within 1 day, including on weekends). Students generally ask questions about assignments but may also ask about other things, including personal advice for job-search. Students may also express concerns about the class or work-load. I make sure to send a polite response and acknowledge their concerns and consider whether to make any changes based on the student concern.

Instructor checklist:

- Personalize your site. At a minimum:
  - Put your own name, image, and brief bio on the Getting Started page
  - Put your own name, email, and office hours policy in the Syllabus
  - Create a bio blog post for yourself
- Open your course the Friday before the official start date so students can explore the materials.
- Send a welcome email to your students by Friday before the course start.
- Comment on student introduction blogs (at least a brief comment for each student).
- Respond to student emails within 24 hours.
- Be present in Blackboard daily.
- Subscribe to the "Ask a Peer, Ask the Instructor" forum so you can monitor students' questions/concerns about the course on an ongoing basis.
- Hold weekly office hours OR hold gatherings at key points, such as once before each assignment is due.
- Participate in weekly discussion. You don't have to comment on everyone's post, but try to make sure everyone gets a comment every few weeks.
- Give feedback when grading student work.
- Use rubrics and grading sheets while grading student work so that we can be consistent across sections.
- Grade student work within one week of submission. Be especially sensitive to assignments that build on one another and try to grade more quickly, if possible (while still giving useful feedback).
- Remember that grades are due by the Tuesday after the last week of class. The major assignment is due during week 5, but you will still need to grade discussion and blog posts for week 6.

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- Post questions or ideas to all 528 instructors, so that we can all learn from one another.
- Be positive! Share your passion for the course content.

Sample Materials:

Announcements:

Welcome to 528: Human Performance Technology!

We will be covering a lot in this six week survey course, and will be getting a running start this first week, so please take the time now to review all of the course materials and familiarize yourself with the syllabus and the course schedule. I will offer a course introduction on Monday evening at 8:30 EDT at [WebEx link] . If you cannot make it, I will be recording the session.

A few things to think about as you begin the course:

- On the Getting Started page you can find information about the goals and structure of the course along with the course schedule. Please take note of the deadlines for each assignment.
- In addition to two written papers and weekly discussion forums, a major activity this semester will be posting in your individual blog. Please review the blog assignments carefully so you can keep track of the due-dates for individual posts. Although it is not required, you are strongly encouraged to review other students' posts and comment on them.
- I encourage you to start your readings early in the week. The main course textbook, *Training ain't Performance*, is designed to be interactive. I found I learned a lot from walking through all of the built-in activities – I hope you will too!
- This course also includes an optional textbook, *Fundamentals of Performance Improvement*. Because this book is fairly expensive, it is not required and we have made a copy available through the library page. However, if you decide to delve deeper into HPT in the future, you might want to consider purchasing this book.

The more you put into this course, the more you will get out of it. The course activities have been designed to help you connect your own prior experiences with the new information you acquire from the course readings. The discussion and blog post activities are also designed to allow you to gain from the experiences of your classmates.

If you have any questions about the course, please put them in the "Ask a Peer, Ask the Instructor" discussion forum – if you have a question, I am sure others are wondering the same thing!

I look forward to learning with you this summer!

Marisa

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Welcome to Week 1!

I look forward to seeing some of you in the introduction session at 8:30 EDT tonight ([webEx link]). If you cannot access a computer at this time, you may want to download the mobile app (IOS / Android). I will also be recording the session.

Thank you to those who have posted introduction blog posts. It is nice to start to get to know some of you. I can already see we will have a diverse group, with a lot to learn from one another. Each of us is an expert in our own domain, and the examples each of you brings in to the discussions will help us all gain a richer understanding of the subject matter.

The main goal this week is to start looking at things from an HPT perspective. For some of us, this may require thinking outside of the box to identify areas in which non-training solutions would be useful to improve the situations we see around us. The textbook is designed to help you start thinking this way. I think you will find it a quick and easy read, but it is designed around your active participation in the activities embedded in the text. Make sure to leave yourself time to engage in the activities!

Week 1 will be the busiest week this semester in term of number of things you need to turn in or do.

A few thoughts on these:

1. Most of you probably have already taken the **plagiarism tutorial.** Feel free to submit the certificate from an earlier date.

2. If you are having some difficulty thinking of things to write for **discussion 1**, here are some things to think about: Can you think of any situation with a previous employer where things were just not as good as they could have been? Bad or just inefficient choices made - at any level (could be by individuals, by management, by administration)? Lack of motivation among employees or a generally bad atmosphere? Customers feeling confused or disorganized?

   Your example does not necessarily need to be with a current or former employer. One student mentioned noticing inefficiencies at a doctor's office she visited recently. Or perhaps you can think of examples that occurred during your own formal education, a volunteer position, a religious institution, or some other sort of organization you are involved with.

3. This week there are two smaller blog assignments, including :

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   a. Your **introduction blog post** - please contribute soon so we can get to know one another!
   b. A **Goals and Expectations** post which will help you think through your own goals for the course

Please visit the Week 1 page for details on all of the assignments and activities.

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to post them in the Ask a Peer, Ask the Instructor forum!

Marisa

Communications with Students – Spreadsheet

	Week 1			Week 2		Week 3		…
	Comment on Intro	Respond in DF	Quote in summary	Respond in DF	Quote in Summary	Respond in DF	Quote in Summary	
Student 1	X	X			X			
Student 2	X		X	X		X		
Student 3	X	X	X			X	X	
…								