

## Topics: Beginning/ Ending Semester Checklist

### Effective Practices from the Dr. C's:

<http://connections.blackboard.com/resources/3fba85fda2/summary>

#### **Title: Beginning of the Semester Check List**

*Best Practice posted Jan 01 by Kevin Reeve plus an addition by Carol Alexander*

Description: The start of the semester is just days away. Time to get those online courses ready to roll for the new term. Here is a checklist I use to get my course ready after copying the content over from the last time I taught it.

1. Update the Syllabus
  - Text book information is accurate
  - Due dates are updated
  - Point system and assignment
  - Office Hours and contact information
2. Assignments
  - Update due dates in assignment tool
  - Tweak instructions if needed
  - Update points possible in assignment tool
3. Assessments
  - Update due dates in assessment tool
  - Update questions/add new questions as needed
  - Update points possible in assessment tool and individual questions if needed
4. Gradebook
  - Update calculation and formulas if assignments, assessment or others added or removed.
  - Hide letter grade column and other columns from students as needed
5. Discussions
  - Create a new welcome message to students and invite them to respond and introduce themselves.
6. Course content
  - Check video clips, slide decks, PDF files and links. Make sure they all work.
  - Link all activities that pertain to each learning module in order to maintain flow and focus as well as provide ease of usability. – added by Carol Alexander

#### First week success

Research shows that students will be more successful in your online course if you do something to engage them the first week. Be creative and think of something that will get them going the first week. Have them use the discussion tool to introduce themselves, respond to other students, and take a sample quiz. Consider a homework assignment to give them an opportunity to learn your style and relive any apprehension they may have.

#### Set Expectations

Let students know what you expect, and how often and soon you will respond. Make sure they know what contact method to use to contact you.

#### Reflection

Can you recall any issues with the course content from last time you taught this course? Was there any content that was not clear? What questions did students have? Is there any new content or activities you want to try?

#### Update and Enhance your skills

What workshops, training, and assistance does your campus offer you to help you learn new tools, ideas, and best practices to improve your online course? Take advantage of them.

***Spend the time upfront and enjoy a very successful course.***

## **Title: End of Semester Checklist for your Online Course**

*Best Practice posted 06/23/09 by Kevin Reeve*

Description: Here is an end of a semester checklist for your online course.

### **Gradebook**

- Complete all grading
- Set-up/or verify all calculated columns are working correctly
- Set-up/or verify letter grade column is working correctly
- Scan columns in the grade book and look for anything that is out of place. Students who have blank scores
- Particular assignment missing a lot of scores
- Turn in Grades

### **Reflection**

- What worked well in the course?
- What did not work as planned?
- What technical difficulties did I or my students have?
- What areas of the course would I like to improve?
- What content or activities would I like to add?

Schedule time to work on the course to make improvements. Take advantage of instructional designers, e-learning support specialists, media production and graphic artists to improve your course. If you found some technical difficulties that your students had, visit with your Blackboard support staff on campus and get their help in resolving what those issues are.

### **Comments from others on the Dr C connections board: Include**

- Back up course - Save backup to your computer? (optional)
- Download and print gradebook (recommended) – copy of grades in Excel spreadsheet.

*If you would like to add any additional tips for your fellow colleagues, just send me a note. Hope you find this information helpful.*

*Anne*