Toward Success in Hybrid/Online Teaching: A Guidebook

The hybrid and online environments offer a great deal of promise for education as well as pose a number of challenges. The purpose of this guidebook is to offer advice, best practices, and structured guidelines to assist faculty who are interested in or have been assigned to develop and/or teach a hybrid or online course. We have written it with all faculty in mind, from the novice to the veteran, and we hope that you will find valuable information in this document no matter what your experience level.

You may not be aware of how engaged you already are with online learning and how adept you may be at it. We already do much online that we don’t think of as online teaching. If, for example, you are posting your syllabus, quizzes, or grades in Moodle, you have moved beyond traditional classroom practices and into hybrid teaching. Moving towards a hybrid and/or online environment can be a gradual process. It is possible to incorporate activities traditionally associated with hybrid and/or online classes into the traditional classroom environment. Examples might include the use of discussion forums or giving a quiz online.

Hybrid and online teaching provides another venue to engage our students in Millikin’s mission, namely professional success, democratic citizenship in a global environment, and a personal life of meaning and value. That said, no set of guidelines nor any standardized program will work for every course in every format or for every department. We recognize, as an institution, that meeting Millikin’s commitment to both theory and practice needs to remain at the core of all of our courses, but definitions of practice will vary widely by discipline. Some forms of practice, such as a writing assignment, are more easily transferred to the hybrid and/or online environment than others.

As you plan your course, remember the general guidelines regarding credit hours. In the traditional face-to-face format, standard practice suggests that undergraduate students complete three hours of work outside of class for every one hour spent in class, so that is four hours of time you need to account for in a hybrid or online course. Remember that it will take longer for students to participate in class via discussion forum than it does for them to blurt out an answer in the classroom. You may struggle with this piece of planning your course, especially the first time that you teach a hybrid or online course. Help is available, both in this guidebook and from the campus Educational Technology Coordinator (see below).

It should also be understood that this guidebook is not meant to be a “click by click” manual of “how-to” instructions for Moodle and other campus software programs. Such guidelines are already readily available from the campus Educational Technology Coordinator (see https://www.millikin.edu/staley/edtech/Pages/moodle.aspx), and via numerous free online resources, including the developer’s website.
Toward Success in Hybrid/Online Teaching

Furthermore, given the constantly changing nature of software, click-by-click guides lack the longevity of a more holistic approach to course design. Thus, the purpose here is more about supplying faculty with a toolbox for course design and implementation.

In addition to this guidebook, faculty can and are encouraged to meet with the campus Educational Technology Coordinator, who can assist you with a number of course development tasks, including systematic development of course goals and learning objectives, mastery of Moodle skills and techniques, and discovery and research regarding other available tools. To schedule an appointment or consultation, e-mail the Educational Technology Coordinator or call (217) 424-3692. The Educational Technology Coordinator also periodically schedules workshops for faculty. A schedule of such workshops will be available at https://www.millikin.edu/staley/edtech/Pages/moodle.aspx.

Note that a glossary of terms is attached as Appendix A. It may be useful in understanding the material that follows.

I. Asking “Am I Ready to Teach a Hybrid or Online Course?”

There are many reasons why we might wish to teach a course in the hybrid or online format. Increased flexibility, the ability to use multimedia and other new technologies, and the opportunity to simply try something new in teaching are just a few of the reasons why we might be excited by the prospect of teaching a hybrid or online course. Enhanced interactivity among students and with the instructor, supplemental learning, and multimedia options are areas which make hybrid and online teaching exciting opportunities!

However, hybrid and online courses may pose challenges in certain situations. Clinical experience, science experiments that require controlled environments and laboratory equipment, musical performances, speeches, and many more kinds of activities necessitate the presence of the students and faculty member in a certain physical space. While it is certainly possible to utilize the hybrid format in these scenarios, careful planning regarding the amount of face-to-face and online time will be necessary.

You also need to consider your own goals and attitudes with respect to teaching and hybrid and online learning. Hybrid and/or online teaching, particularly in the first semester that you attempt it, may not initially be easier, faster, or more flexible than traditional classroom teaching. It can require the re-writing and restructuring of a course, even if the course is ostensibly the “same” as its classroom-based counterpart. Nevertheless, as stated earlier, you most likely possess more online teaching skills than you realize, and any initial challenges in planning and preparation should not deter you from teaching online.
Another issue to consider is the typical student enrollment and learning objectives for your hybrid or online course. You may want to give careful consideration to the type of course you want to offer and the most effective means by which to present so as to encourage optimum student success.

II. Determining Course Goals and Learning Objectives

The successful design of any course, be it hybrid, face-to-face, or completely online, begins with defining course goals and learning objectives. When the course is over, what do want your students to have learned?

A course goal is a more general statement of what you want students to learn, while a learning objective is a specific, measurable statement about what we expect students to be able to do or know upon completing a specific activity.

Whether you are converting an existing face-to-face course to hybrid or online, or developing an entirely new course to be delivered in hybrid or online format, you’ll likely need to choose and develop at least a few activities and assignments that are different from those you’ve used in the face-to-face environment. Having a sense of what the student outcomes should be will make it easier to determine the appropriateness of all the varied and vast activities and assignments you can choose from for your specific course.

Before you write course goals, determine if your course or program have specific items you need to include. Many of the courses in the MPSL have pre-defined goals and objectives that you must include in any course you teach under that umbrella. Additionally, many departments have specified goals for their courses.

It is not necessary to write learning objectives in infinitesimal detail for every single activity or assignment you plan to do in the course, but understanding the “why” of each assignment and sharing such information with your students will foster a greater sense of trust in students who are inclined to meet every activity with a complaint about “busy work.”

Excellent discussions of writing course goals and learning objectives can be found in:


Both Brinkley, et al and Ko and Rossen suggest “beginning at the end,”1 thinking about the question of what you want students to know and be able to do at the end of the semester.

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1 Ko and Rossen, 53-57; Brinkley et. al. 2-4. See also Palloff and Pratt 130-132.
Once you have written your course goals and learning objectives, take a look at what you’ve written, specifically at the verbs you’ve used in describing them. Matching your goals and objectives with Bloom’s Taxonomy can be a good place to start figuring out what kinds of assignments will be appropriate for each goal or objective.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domains of Bloom’s Taxonomy</th>
<th>Verbs for learning objectives</th>
<th>Assignments and activities that work at this level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge/Remembering</td>
<td>recall, tell, show, match, list, label, define, cite, name, brainstorm</td>
<td>test, worksheet, quiz, labeling, table</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension</td>
<td>compare, contrast, demonstrate, identify, report, outline, summarize, review, explain, catalog</td>
<td>outline, summary, test, identifications, review, compare and contrast exercise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application</td>
<td>develop, organize, use, select, model, choose, construct, translate, experiment, illustrate</td>
<td>report, diagram, graph, illustration, project, video, case study, journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis</td>
<td>analyze, categorize, classify, distinguish, dissect, examine, differentiate, calculate, solve, arrange</td>
<td>model, report, project, solution, debates, case study with solutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthesis</td>
<td>combine, compose, solve, formulate, adapt, develop, create, validate, design</td>
<td>article, report, essay, experiment, composition, audio or video product, drawing, graph, design.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>assess, evaluate, determine, measure, select, rank, defend, discriminate, judge, justify, conclude, recommend</td>
<td>peer and self-evaluations, chart, critique</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ko and Rossen, 55-6.

Other things to consider as you plan your course goals and learning objectives:

- How many students will you have? Obviously, you may wish to assign a lengthy writing project in a course with an enrollment of 10 students, but a class with an enrollment of 50 students might pose some challenges, as would be the case in a traditional setting. The number of students will also influence a hybrid or online course in other ways, such as how many discussion postings you’ll need to read in the course forums each week.

- For hybrid courses, what activities absolutely must be done during the face-to-face portion of the course, since they require access to on-campus equipment, personnel, computer labs, etc.? Conversely, are there any activities that absolutely must be done on the students’ own time and are best suited for the online portion of the course?

- What kind of Internet access will students have? If you’re teaching traditional undergraduates during the fall and spring semesters, where the vast majority live on campus and have easy access to computers and high-speed Internet in their dorms and in the various campus buildings, this is not a large concern. However, if you are teaching an Immersion or Summer course, where students may actually be engaging in distance learning, or if you are teaching a PACE course at any time during the
year, be aware that a number of our students live in rural areas where they may have access only to dial-up Internet, or less-than-desirable connection speeds. Millikin, via our Information Technology Department, provides a list of minimal technical standards for students who want to enroll in hybrid courses, and we will be having further discussions about the best way to educate students in technology use so that they are prepared when they enter these courses.

Plan to share your course goals with your students, either in the syllabus or in some other form at the beginning of your course. Doing so will not only help set the proper frame and tone for the course, but it will also give students a clearer sense of the direction of the course and how much work will be required to get there; this is an area, where, particularly in hybrid courses or online courses, both studies and anecdotal evidence suggest that students tend to expect that these courses are easier and less rigorous than traditional face-to-face classes. Combating such beliefs and laying out expectations for both course achievement and technology use early on will go a long way in making your hybrid or online course more successful.

III. The Hybrid or Online Course Syllabus

Syllabi for hybrid and online courses are, in many ways, similar to the syllabi we produce for our traditional courses. Many elements that are included in a traditional syllabus can and should be communicated in a hybrid or online syllabus as well, such as:

- Instructor contact information, including any “virtual office hours” you plan to have;
- Required texts and other course materials;
- Course description;
- Course goals;
- Department or MPSL goals;
- Academic Honesty Policy;
- Disability Accommodations Policy;
- Course attendance policy (even if it is virtual attendance in some cases);
- Overview of course assignments;
- Course grading policy.

In addition to all of the above components, however, you will probably want to add some additional information:

- Expanded definitions of class participation.
  - What it means to “participate” in an online setting is not immediately obvious to most students. Will you be counting, assessing, and/or grading students’ posts in a discussion forum? Or will you be using
the reporting tools in Moodle to track how often students login to the course and read or complete various assignments there?

- You may also wish to provide your students with guidelines or instructions regarding proper tone and mode of address (“Netiquette”).

- Contact information for technical support. Unless you want your students to expect *you* to fix their computer, include contact information for Millikin’s IT help desk. (Note: Generally, students should *not* contact the Educational Technology Coordinator directly).

  - You may also wish to include a note about what students should do in the event that they encounter a campus network outage while trying to submit work, etc.

- Explanation of how Moodle and/or other software will be used in the course, and your expectations for how often students are to login and complete work.

  - If you’re using other technology sites beyond Moodle, you will want to include links to these sites in your syllabus, as well as instructions on how to use them.

- A course schedule, which may be weekly, rather than daily or focused around an individual course session. In a hybrid scenario, make sure you *clearly* identify what work will be conducted in person and what work will be conducted in the online environment. Also note whether those sessions will be synchronous (everyone is expected online at a certain time) or asynchronous (students do work on their own time and submit it by an established deadline).

- Explanation of your participation as the instructor in online discussion.

  - You will want to inform your students as to how often you will be online—visiting discussion forums, posting, etc.—and of response time for feedback (e.g. within 48 hours).

  - Initially, you may choose to respond to every student’s posting. Creating a sense of community and belonging in an online classroom is as important as in a traditional setting. However, continual response to every student’s comment is time-consuming and impractical. You will want to inform students as to how often you will be responding to them.

  - Students occasionally have private or personal matters to discuss with you, so you will want to inform them of how to send an e-mail to you and let them know how long it should take you to respond. The online class is a 24/7 work environment, but faculty do not necessarily work on a similar schedule. You should not feel obligated to respond immediately to student e-mails, but do so within a reasonable span of time (24-48 business hours). Inform students of your response time in your course syllabus and additional communications, as necessary.
For more information on syllabi for online and hybrid courses, as well as some examples, see:


**IV. Activities and Assignments for your Hybrid or Online Course**

There are number of activities you can use in a hybrid or online course. Some of them bear a strong resemblance to their classroom counterparts; others do not. Whatever you choose, remember to consider your course goals: what are the students supposed to be learning, and how is a particular activity or assignment helping them meet those goals? Also remember to think about activities and assignments with regard to your own workload.

Moodle will be your jumping off point for many of these activities. While you are certainly free to use other software as they meet the needs of your course, please keep in mind a few of the advantages of using Moodle.

First, using Moodle helps allay concerns about keeping student information and grades private and meets FERPA guidelines because it is a restricted, password-protected environment. If you choose to use other sites (personal websites, public wikis or blogs, sites run by textbook publishers, etc.), you should be judicious in your comments to students in these spaces, and you may not post any information regarding student grades there because these sites are public venues.

Second, Moodle helps us meet fair use and copyright guidelines. If you want to provide a copy of an article for students to read or a song for them to listen to, having the object in Moodle satisfies federal copyright restrictions that only students in the course be able to access the material, and only for the period of time that the course is in session. Also, student work submitted to some third-party sites (YouTube, Flickr, Blogger, Facebook, etc.) may require that students surrender their intellectual property rights to any content they upload, even if they do not read and/or sign a transfer agreement.

Finally, Moodle is hosted on our campus. Barring unforeseen technical emergencies, Millikin University’s Information Technology Department announces scheduled maintenance and upgrades. You shouldn’t worry that major maintenance to the software will be undertaken without prior notification or that Moodle will be sold or shut down without warning. The same is not true of free “web 2.0 tools” or of publishers’ websites.

What follows is a list of possible activities and assignments, along with some commentary about preparing them hybrid and online delivery. You may also find the readings at the end of this section helpful.

A. Readings

Readings are a staple of just about every class, whether traditional, accelerated, hybrid, or online. There is little difference in assigning readings in the hybrid or online environment and a traditional course. The most common source for class readings is an assigned course textbook or coursepack that students may purchase in the university bookstore or through another supplier. Additional readings, however, pose some challenges for students in accelerated, hybrid, or online courses. Those students may not choose to come to campus outside of scheduled course meeting times, making it difficult to rely on print library reserves. Staley Library can provide electronic, Moodle-based course reserves for any course upon faculty request. Instructions for placing items on electronic reserves can be found at: http://www.millikin.edu/staley/services/reserves/Pages/default.aspx#eres. You can also scan reading assignments and post them in Moodle. However, in order to be copyright compliant, you must make your Moodle course unavailable to students immediately at the end of the semester.

B. Lecture

Most scholarly treatments of hybrid and online learning will caution you against over-relying on lecture in the online environment. When students are not physically in a classroom, the potential distractions multiply quickly. The easiest way to combat this is to use shorter lectures and/or to break your lectures up into chunks. You will find that, without the give-and-take of a live audience, recorded lectures are often shorter than their classroom counterparts, regardless of the amount of content. No matter the total length of your lecture, the conventional wisdom is that each segment should be no longer than 10-15 minutes. Thus, if you need to give a 45-minute lecture, you may want to record it in three 15-minute segments. In addition to providing breaks for students, shorter lecture segments make it easier for you to record (there’s less to redo if you make a mistake!) and result in smaller file sizes, which are easier to upload and less likely to cause technical problems. Additionally, students are able to download these smaller files and engage with them more easily.

Beginning in the Fall 2011 semester, Millikin will offer three primary options for faculty to capture lectures for hybrid and online courses. Every member of the campus community will have access to Microsoft Lync (available from IT), which, along with a microphone (which can be checked out from Media Services) will allow you to record at
your desk. We also have plans to open a “podcast studio” which will have more advanced recording equipment, should you need it. Additionally, faculty may wish to use other audio and video recording and editing software to capture lectures.

If you record your own lectures, you will need to post them online. Smaller files may be hosted directly on Moodle. If you have a larger file (greater than 100 MB), IT has a streaming media server which can host the file (with a link in Moodle), which will ensure better playback than hosting the file on the Moodle server itself. Faculty interested in this option should contact IT. Additionally, you have the option of linking to existing lecture materials on the web, found on sites such as YouTube, TED: Ideas Worth Spreading, or iTunes U from within Moodle. Also, keep in mind that Moodle allows you to construct guided lessons for students, where they can read and interact with a “lecture,” rather than listening to or watching it.

C. Class Discussion

When instructors think about conducting class sessions online, they may wish to develop activities that cultivate the kinds of interaction that we might find in the traditional classroom. Often, our conception of online classroom discussion is based in asynchronous forums, where the instructor posts a question or prompt and students respond to it. In this arrangement, the spontaneity of the classroom is often lost, but, when the students are given clear instructions, discussion posts tend to be more carefully thought out than spontaneous classroom discussion.

However, another option, often not considered, is to conduct a live discussion using our online tools. Well-managed online chats can draw out students who might otherwise be reluctant to speak in a traditional classroom. Moodle has the capability to schedule and conduct a live discussion (using the “chat” function.) Just remember to tell your students they need to be online and ready to participate in a discussion a few minutes prior to the appointed time, especially those that are accessing the course via slower Internet connections. You will also be able to use Microsoft Lync to conduct a live session online.

It is the case, however, that asynchronous discussion tends to become the centerpiece of a hybrid or online course. Consequently, you should pay particular attention to the ways that you organize and manage your course’s discussion forums. You need to pick an organizational method for your discussion boards and do your best to use that same system consistently throughout the semester. You might organize your boards by week, by reading, by chapter, by concept, or by themes. Whatever you do, make sure your expectations to students are clear. For example, are they expected to post something in each discussion every week? Are they required to make a certain number of posts (primary and/or replies) each week? When must those posts be submitted?

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2 Palloff and Pratt 144-148.
Most instructors with experience in hybrid or online teaching will suggest these important guidelines:

1. **Give your students deadlines for posts.**
   a. If you simply tell them they must make three posts each week, you’ll find that the majority of students will make all of their posts near the deadline.
   b. But, if you tell students they must make three posts, with the first due on Tuesday, the second Thursday, and the third Saturday, you’ll get more consistent participation from your students, as well as insure they’re logging into the Moodle page at least three times a week.

2. **Explain your expectations for content.**
   a. Are students to make their first post a summary or critique of the reading and then respond to other students’ comments in their subsequent posts?
   b. Should they be looking to you to pose questions for them to answer, or are they responsible for generating their own topics for the week and then providing their own views, feelings, or interpretations?
   c. If you’re grading posts as part of class participation, what “counts” as a post that meets the minimum number for the week? If you’re only counting posts with substantive content, make sure to remind students in the syllabus that “I agree with Joe” does not count towards their post total for the week.
   d. You may wish to provide a sample or two of what you consider to be an appropriately substantive post, as this will vary from instructor to instructor and students will be looking for your guidance.
   e. You may also wish to provide your students with guidelines or instructions regarding proper tone and mode of address (“**Netiquette**”). Remind them that, though this is course discussion and not a formal paper, it’s also not a text message. You may want to include guidelines for appropriate focus and language when participating in online discussions, and you should model effective responses in your own communications with the students.

3. **Asking good questions.**
   a. You will want to frame your questions such that they encourage discussion. Open-ended questions, as opposed to those requiring simply a “yes” or “no” answer, will help create a variety of original and ongoing discussion within your class.
   b. Questions that can be answered easily by one or two students, with little substantive debate or discussion left for later posters, will frustrate students and discourage them from chiming in regularly.
In addition to setting up forums for discussion of the course material, we recommend that you add three additional discussion areas to your class.

1. **News Forum**: This forum is already in your Moodle course by default. Use this area as suggested – post any course-related news here, whether it be changes to a reading assignment, a cancellation or rescheduling of a face-to-face meeting or synchronous online meeting, changes to an assignment due date, etc. In addition to giving your students a single place to look for information in Moodle, all posts to the news forum are sent to students as e-mail within 30 minutes of being posted, which disseminates the message more widely than e-mail or Moodle alone and increases the likelihood that students will see it.

2. **Questions for the Instructor Area**: Use this as a place where students can ask course- and procedure-related questions throughout the course, such as clarification on an assignment, etc. These kinds of questions are best separated from weekly discussion so that everyone can refer to them throughout the semester.

3. **Non Course-Related Discussions**: We often discount the seemingly idle chatter that occurs in a classroom prior to the start of class each day, as students discuss who they saw at the latest party or how tough their other classes are, but such exchanges go a long way towards building community in the classroom. A forum for social chatter and personal news allows this community-formation to occur online.

   Optionally, you may wish to add a discussion forum where students can ask questions of their subject-area librarian and get assistance with course research assignments. You’ll need to enroll the librarian in your course as a non-editing faculty member for this to work.

   As the course instructor, students will watch your behavior closely in the opening weeks of the course and tailor their own response patterns accordingly. Don’t try to respond to every individual post. Not only will you find it impossible to keep up this pace throughout the semester (unless you have five or fewer students), but excessive interjection from the professor tends to make the students more hesitant to participate. If you find certain students making disruptive, intolerant, or otherwise inappropriate posts, then by all means step in (and you’ll probably want to contact that student privately by e-mail, as well). Otherwise, letting the students “drive” the discussion tends to encourage more participation. Make it clear at the start of the semester what they can expect from you. Will you comment only on selected posts each week? Will you be making a summary post each week?

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3 During the first week of the course, you may wish to respond to each student to let them know whether they are “on track” or not (e.g. whether or not their post meets your expectations for content and form). After the first week, as noted above, you may not wish to respond to each individual post.
D. Quizzes and Exams

Many of the kinds of quizzes and exams that we use in our traditional classes translate well to the hybrid and online environments. However, there are certainly several issues that we must consider when designing and administering such assessments.

Many instructors, both at Millikin and other institutions, express a number of concerns about online exams and quizzes, mostly related to exam security. It is true that giving exams and quizzes in an online environment presents opportunities for inappropriate student advantage (cheating). However, there are just as many ways for students to gain an inappropriate advantage in the classroom, from working out hand- or pencil-based signals for certain answers to hiding crib sheets in socks, water bottles, and on hand-held devices. In many ways, giving an online exam is akin to giving students a take-home exam or a paper assignment. A similar set of concerns about who really did the work and how much outside help was used or given apply to both situations.

The most important thing you can do to insure that students cannot gain an unfair advantage is to ensure that your course relies on multiple forms of student assessment. In a hybrid environment, schedule some of these assessments in class and some online. If you notice a vast difference in the performance of a particular student in the in-class vs. online portions of the assessments, that's a signal to take a closer look at that student's work. In a fully online environment, it is even more important to use multiple forms of assessment. Make sure you have multiple ways of assessing how well a student is mastering course materials. Multiple assessment forms not only make it easier for you to discern what students are learning, but they also level the playing field among students who have different learning styles and different strengths and weaknesses by giving each student at least one chance to complete their favored type of assessment.

Objective exam questions—questions for which there is one correct answer—are a fixture in many classrooms, particularly introductory courses where there is generally core vocabulary, basic tenets, and factual knowledge that we need to verify that students know before they can move on to higher-level courses. To make objective testing more successful online, here are a few things to keep in mind.

1. If you want the exam to be “closed book,” make sure you limit student time appropriately. If you give them four hours to take a 50-question multiple choice exam, they’re going to look up every answer, no matter what the directions say about the exam being “open” or “closed” book. A good rule of thumb for multiple choice questions is to give them time equal of half the number of questions (30 seconds per question) plus 5-10 minutes. So, for a 50-question exam, you would give them 30-35 minutes. This means they’ll have to work through the test at a fairly good clip in order to finish it in time. The faster students may have time to check an answer or two, but no one will have time to use their book on the entire test.
2. Consider what you’re really trying to get out of the assessment. Must the test absolutely be closed-book? If so, you might simply want to schedule it for one of the in-class meetings (in a hybrid situation). Are there other forms of assessment that may work just as effectively?

3. It cannot be emphasized enough: try not to rely on 2-3 assignments to form the entire basis of a semester grade, and make sure the assignments and assessments are varied in form.

Of course, objective questions aren’t the only option for Moodle-based exams. You may also use the tools to deliver a short answer or essay exam. The major considerations here are:

1. Do you want the students to take the exam in Moodle or would you rather they wrote the exam in Word and then e-mailed it to you?
2. Moodle will allow you to set time limits if you’re looking to more adequately replicate an in-class essay exam rather than a take-home.
3. Remember to remind students that Moodle does have formatting controls. In other words, they should use paragraphs and spell check when formulating their answers.

Moodle offers wonderfully robust tools for administering exams, though they are a bit tricky to understand and use for the first time. The Educational Technology Coordinator can assist you with the process of creating questions or uploading existing questions and set tests up in Moodle for the first time. Instructions for creating Moodle quizzes may be found at https://www.millikin.edu/staley/edtech/Pages/moodle.aspx. Included are instructions on how to establish opening and closing times, time limits, and submission instructions for examinations and quizzes.

E. Experiential Learning Activities

Experiential learning activities include a wide variety of activities that are central to Millikin’s performance-based learning model, such as rehearsals and performances, lab experiments, clinicals, field observation, and student teaching. There is some controversy regarding the efficacy of such activities as conducted in online, hybrid, and distance settings, and such concerns are not without merit. To what extent are electronic simulations worthy substitutes for actually participating in experiential learning activities? Simulations have been used with success in business education and in certain types of health/medicine training (such as CPR training) for quite a while, and they may be appropriate in certain situations. It may also be the case that many, if not most experiential learning activities can and should remain part of the face-to-face experience or be precepted at a distance site.

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4 Mood uses the term “quiz” to refer to quizzes, tests, exams, and any other assessment of a similar nature.
While some experiential learning activities may require face-to-face meetings, the hybrid environment offers great space for students to reflect upon their experiences, to submit written work, and to centralize pertinent course documents (release forms, evaluation forms, etc.). Furthermore, discussion forums provide another venue to engage students and to discuss ongoing concerns during and after the experience.

**F. Written Papers**

Assigning a written paper in a hybrid or online course is quite similar to doing so in a face-to-face course. Start by providing your students with instructions and guidelines posted in Moodle (the equivalent to handing out instructions in class). You have several options for collecting, evaluating, and returning graded written work to students:

1. **Using Moodle:**
   a. Using the “Advanced Uploading of Assignments” in Moodle, you can have students submit their written work (in a variety of formats, not limited to Word, Excel, and PowerPoint). You can then download, read, and comment on the students’ work. Once you are finished evaluating the work, you have the option of using the built in review & comment functions in Microsoft products and then uploading returning this document to the student via Moodle, as well as typing additional comments directly into Moodle. You also can enter the students’ grade, which will be displayed to them when they check for comments, as well as being entered automatically into your Moodle gradebook.\(^5\)
   b. If you are using Microsoft Word to provide feedback for students, resist the urge to “over-correct” or change every mistake in a student’s paper for them, particularly if you plan to allow for revisions. Studies have repeatedly shown that, when you do this, the student will simply say “accept all changes” and return the work to you, without really engaging in the intellectual rigor of revision.
   c. You may also wish to use the discussion forums to provide a space for peer review and critique. However, FERPA prohibits direct instructor comments and/or grades within this environment because forums are viewable by all enrolled students.
   d. Further instructions on using Moodle to collect and grade papers are available from Millikin’s [Educational Technology Coordinator](mailto:educationaltechnology@millikin.edu).

\(^5\) At this time, Moodle does not offer support for built-in rubrics. This is a feature that we hope to see in Moodle 2.0 (Summer 2012). You can, however, use a rubric generated in Word or Excel and return it to the student by uploading this document when you upload the paper with comments (see “b” above).
2. **Using Turnitin:**  
   a. Millikin University licenses access to [Turnitin.com](http://Turnitin.com). Although many people use it to check for student plagiarism, this program can actually do much more sophisticated analyses.
   b. When students submit a paper to Turnitin.com, they have the ability to view an “originality report” which allows them to see how much of their paper is made up of quotes, paraphrases, and cited material. If you have them upload a draft, and then have students make revisions based on their originality report, you can avoid chasing a number of academic dishonesty cases, as well as help your students to understand the differences between writing reports/summaries (in which all of their material is sourced) and critical arguments/essays, in which a significant portion of the material should be their own synthesis and analysis.
   c. Turnitin provides a sub-program called PeerMark, which allows students to engage in peer review and critique online, and produces one unified report for the student when reviews have been completed.
   d. Turnitin also provides GradeMark, a paperless grading system that allows you to create customized rubrics, and you can also “overlay” your comments with the originality report and student critiques created in PeerMark. Only the student and the instructor will be able to see this unified report.
   e. In Moodle 2.0 (Summer 2012), we should see tighter integration between Moodle and Turnitin (e.g. you’ll be able to place a link to your Turnitin course area inside of your Moodle course, rather than just a link to the Turnitin main page).
   f. For more information and step-by-step instructions on using Turnitin, contact your Educational Technology Coordinator.

3. **Blogs, Wikis, and Journals:**  
   a. Not every writing assignment needs to be a formal paper. Many faculty like to assign journals or other types of short writing assignments. Using Moodle (or other websites), you can assign students to blog, contribute to a wiki, or submit a journal written in Microsoft Word to Moodle or Turnitin (see above).
   b. Blog, wiki, and journal tools are available in Moodle. Alternatively, a number of free websites (not hosted at Millikin) exist that will allow students to perform these tasks. Keep in mind that there is a trade-off: third-party tools (e.g. Blogger and WordPress for blogs, or WetPaint, PBWorks, and Wix for wikis) are often more robust than the tools in Moodle, but FERPA regulations prohibit you from posting grades or comments that clearly indicate a grade on such websites, as they are public, and access is not limited to the students in the course.
4. **LiveText (School of Education only):**
   a. If you are teaching a course in the School of Education, remember that LiveText has the ability to do so much more than just collect and assess Candidate Assessments. See your Educational Technology Coordinator for more information.

**G. Group Work**

It may initially seem challenging to assign group work to students in a course where they don’t spend much time together in a particular room, but there are actually several ways to facilitate online group work. In addition to using the PeerMark program that comes with Turnitin (see the section on written assignments, above), you can also set up groups in Moodle to be used on some or all of your discussion forums. You can also have students contribute to a group document such as a blog or wiki. In the Spring of 2012, we hope to be adding more functionality to Microsoft Lync as well, which will allow students to initiate meetings and chats with one another (as it currently stands, only faculty can initiate these activities, though students can participate in them).

**H. Office Hours**

As you would with a face-to-face course, you need to make yourself available to students for one-on-one consultation. Since asking students in a hybrid or online course, who may live off campus, to physically come to your office, is not always a viable solution, you may wish to consider electronic office hours. Of course, you can deal with many student concerns asynchronously via e-mail. Other times, though, it is nice to be able to have a live talk with a student. There are a few ways to facilitate this. You can schedule a phone call or Skype meeting with a student. However, if you wish to make yourself available for drop-in office hours, the easiest way to do so is to either use the “chat” function in Moodle or Microsoft Lync. In either of these scenarios, you are opening an online “room” which students can log into and ask questions. Anyone in the room at the time can read the questions and answers, so be sure to avoid discussing confidential student information. There are also many free online chat services (GoogleTalk, AOL’s Instant Messenger), but you should remember that their user agreements do not meet basic FERPA guidelines, so you should be wary of using them to discuss grades with students.

**I. For Further Information**

There are number of books and manuals that have excellent ideas for course activities. Some of them focus directly on online learning, while others focus more generally on course planning.
Online Education Focus:


General Focus on Course Planning:


V. Assessing & Reflecting on Your Course

As with any traditional course, the need for assessment and reflection on the experience as a whole and as preparation for revisions in future semesters is important. There are a number of assessment and reflection methods that are available to you:

1. As with any Millikin course, evaluations will be administered to students enrolled in hybrid and online courses near the conclusion of the semester.
2. You have the ability to supplement the standard questions on Millikin’s course evaluations by creating your own survey, combining content-based questions (to evaluated what students really learned) with questions about the course environment. There are a number of programs you can use to construct such an evaluation, including
   - Google Documents – Forms: http://www.google.com/google-d-s/forms/
   - Millikin Surveys: http://surveys.millikin.edu/. You will need to contact the Educational Technologist set up an account
3. You may also wish to allow another faculty member to log into your Moodle course and observe your teaching, and then provide you with some feedback, either written or in a less formal manner.
4. You may also wish to create a rubric or checklist for yourself that you can use to systematically evaluate your course set-up and execution.

VI. Compliance with Federal, State, and Local Regulations

It is essential that instructors do their best to comply with federal, state, and local regulations. Hybrid and online teaching can raise several ADA, FERPA, and copyright compliance issues that the traditional face-to-face class might not. If you have questions about these regulations as they pertain to your course, consult the appropriate University official. As well, you may consult the following online resources:

- For accessibility (ADA):
  - Section 508: http://www.section508.gov
  - WebAIM: http://www.webaim.org
- For copyright:
  - Copyright.gov: http://copyright.gov
  - Know Your Copy Rights: http://www.knowyourcopyrights.org/resourcesfac/FAQ/
  - Creative Commons: http://www.creativecommons.org
• For FERPA:
  o Millikin University FERPA Guidance: 
    http://www.millikin.edu/registrar/Pages/FERPATraining.aspx

VII. Additional Resources

There are several rubrics and guides available online to help you develop, deliver, and assess your hybrid and online courses. Please feel free to consult any of the following:

• Colorado State University: 
  http://tilt.colostate.edu/coursedev/process/course_dev_checklist.doc
• Indiana State University: http://www.indstate.edu/cirt/id/tips/index.html
• University of Illinois at Springfield: 
  http://www.uis.edu/colrs/learning/pedagogy/index.html

We hope that you are excited about developing and delivering an accelerated, hybrid, or online course. This guidebook provides you with several resources, but additional questions may arise throughout the process. If you have suggestions for additional topics or resources for this guidebook, please forward them to the Educational Technology Coordinator.
Appendix A: Glossary of Terms

**Accelerated Course:** A course that covers *a full semester of material* in a condensed time frame. Examples of accelerated courses at Millikin include PACE courses, certain block courses, January Immersion courses, and summer courses. Accelerated courses can be offered in a variety of formats, including face-to-face, hybrid, and online.

**Asynchronous:** Occurring at different times, i.e. activities that students complete on their own time. All students are not “in class” (whether in person or online) at the same time.

**Course Management System (CMS):** Also called a *Learning Management System (LMS).* A computer-based application that provides an Internet-based space for a course and/or course materials. At Millikin, we use the Moodlem CMS.

**Distance Education:** Education that occurs when faculty and students are separated by physical distance. A variety of technologies can be used to overcome this distance, including computers, phones, and traditional correspondence. Obviously, the most common form is a computer-based course using a CMS. All hybrid and/or online students are *not* automatically distance students, as many of them live on or near campus.

**Face-to-Face Course:** Also called an “**F2F Course**” or a “**traditional course,**” a course in which students meet in a classroom with the faculty member present.

**Hybrid Course:** Also called a “**blended course.**” A course in which students interact both in a physical classroom and online, combining aspects of both a face-to-face course and an online course. Hybrid courses can take numerous forms: they can be a mostly face-to-face course that uses Moodle as a supplement outside the classroom, or they may have more substantial online components. For example, a hybrid course that takes place over a 16-week semester may have five in-person meetings. During the rest of the weeks, course work happens exclusively online.

**Online Course:** Also called “**eLearning.**” A course that takes place completely online, generally using a CMS for course interaction. Strictly speaking, online courses need *not* be distance courses – students who live on or near campus may enroll in them as well.

**Streaming Media:** Audio or video file(s) that are sent in continuous stream from a source computer/server to the viewer, who uses a “**player**” (software such as Windows Media Player, Quicktime, etc.) to view the file.

**Synchronous:** Occurring at the same time. All students are in class at the same time, whether that class be face-to-face or online. If the course is online, a web-conferencing tool is generally required.

**Web Conferencing Tools:** Software that permits students and faculty to meet in a virtual classroom at the same time and to communicate with one another via audio, video, and/or document sharing. Millikin currently licenses two such tools: Microsoft Lync and Cisco WebEx (MBA program online).