# Steps to Begin Transitioning to Self-PaceD course DESIGN

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## Self-Paced User Guide

**What is learning for a Self-Paced Course?**

Self-paced learning is not like instructor-focused learning. This method depends on students learning independently without interaction from the instructor or other classmates. This method of learning allows students to learn at their own pace without needing to follow a set schedule. Students will make progress in the course according to their own needs and timeframe.

For the course you will design, students will have 6 months to complete it after enrollment; therefore, due dates for course lessons and assignments are not necessary. All course material in a self-paced course should stand alone; you will not need to include discussion boards, meeting times, or other activities that would require interaction.

**Course Duration**

The course you design should cover the same amount of material as a long-semester class, so about 15 weeks of coursework. Keep in mind that some students will work at a much faster pace, so barriers to progression should be minimized (i.e., don’t structure the course so that it relies on instructor feedback in order to move forward).

## Next Steps

One of the benefits of developing a self-paced learning course is that it will be able to run continuously through the year with minimal maintenance. Once developed, you will not have to routinely update the course every semester. A benefit for students is that they will experience less pressure in the learning environment, as they will have control in setting their own pace for completion of the course.

**What happens now?**

You will begin working on the course development for your self-paced course, completing course development with your instructional designer within the set deadline. This guide and the other development documents will help you develop your self-paced course within the TTU eLearning framework.

Additionally, note that the target audience for these self-paced courses will not be Texas Tech students. The students who enroll in these courses will not have access to Texas Tech student services. Please keep this in mind as you develop content and provide self-paced students with additional resources for support.

## Working with Your Development Shell

1. A new Development Shell has been created for your Self-Paced course. When you have access to your Development Shell you will have two options to procced:
   * Option One – Course Copy content into your new self-paced development shell
     1. Benefits – You will not be starting from a blank space. Once you complete the course copy you will move through your course to make updates and adjustments as needed. This option is especially helpful if you have a highly organized course already and your content/materials do not need to be completely redevelopment or overhauled.
   * Option Two – Begin working in your developmental shell
     1. Benefits – You will have a blank space to work. This gives you the opportunity to develop your content in new ways. This option is especially helpful when your original course has excess materials that may not be relevant to your content anymore.
2. When you have selected your option, let your assigned instructional designer know. They will help you move forward as you develop your Self-Paced course and will be able to assist you no matter which development path you take.
3. The course shell you receive has the required default TTU Self-Paced template. The goal is to have a consistent look for all Self-Paced courses, which can improve the student experience by making it easy to find items of importance and have a clear understanding of course layout.

Suggestion: Before you start working in your development shell, you may find it helpful to draft out your course lessons. Below are examples of ways to plan out your lessons.

**Example of Lesson Outline to help with Development**

| Lesson | Topics | Reading/ Study Materials | Assignments/ Quizzes/ Other Activities |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Lesson 1 | * 1. Introduction to the course   2. Installing and Setting up Software | **Orientation**  Programming General Knowledge Pre-Assessment  **Video Tutorials**  [Arduino Setup](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fJWR7dBuc18)  [Tool Recognitions and their uses](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7-djg27lJyQ)  [Essential Electronics](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u4md32GMX28) | **Activity 1:** Install and setup Arduino IDE.  **Pre-Assessment** |
| Lesson 2 | * 1. Microcontrollers   2. Development Boards   3. The Arduino Board   4. History of Arduino   5. Arduino Family and Clones | **Video Tutorials**  [Characteristics of Arduino Board](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BtLwoNJ6klE)  [Arduino History](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D4D1WhA_mi8)  [History and Evolution of Arduino](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ujziuXj8IrA)  **Assigned Reading**  Chapter 1, pages 1-13  **Additional Resources**   * EX1: Arduino Board * EX2: Arduino Family Recognition |  |

Note that course discussions, student interactions, and synchronous or asynchronous meetings are not included in a self-paced course.

**Example of a Lesson Agenda**

| Lesson Agenda | Getting Started |
| --- | --- |
| A. Objectives | In this lesson, you will become familiar with the course and how to navigate and use Blackboard for different activities throughout the semester. You will use Blackboard to access the syllabus, lessons, and grades. You will also submit all assignments and quizzes within this system.  At the end of this lesson, you will be able to:   * Navigate the Arduino Programming Course * Install and configure Arduino IDE   Task:   * Review Syllabus * Arduino’s role with Robotics * C Programming Language |
| B. Study Materials | Monk, S. (2016). *Programming Arduino*. McGraw Hill Publications. 2nd Ed.   * [Arduino Setup](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fJWR7dBuc18)   Paul McWhorter (2019). New Arduino Tutorial Series. YouTube. Watch videos 1-3 prior to Lesson 2.   * [Tool Recognitions and their uses](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7-djg27lJyQ)   GreatScott! (2020). Essential Tools that you will need for creating electronics projects! YouTube.   * [Essential Electronics](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u4md32GMX28)   GreatScott! (2020). Essential Electronics Components that you will need for creating projects! YouTube.  (**NOTE:** *You are not expected to purchase any electronics (tools or components), these videos are for informational purposes only*.) |
| C. Assignments | Install Arduino IDE (Refer to video setup) |
| D. Quizzes | Complete Quiz I: Pre-Assessment  Scope: Pre-Assessment  Duration: 60 minutes  Format: 10 Multiple Choice  Location: You will use the "Assessments" tool to take the pre-assessment: Blackboard >> Assessments >> Pre-Assessment  Using the quiz tool, complete the following steps:  1. Access the Lesson Pre-Assessment  2. Complete the quiz in the allotted time |

**Note:** If you need help with the layout development of your lessons, please reach out to your instructional designer.

## Updating Your Development Shell

At this point in the guide, you can begin updating your development shell. Go through each of the items below to build your course and add or update course content.

* + **Course Home Folder**
    1. *Welcome Statement*: The description of the welcome statement provided in the course template gives you a good overview of what to include here. Consider it like your first day of class – what do you want students to know about your course when they walk in? You want to relay this same information to your distance students. Make sure to include the following:
       1. Course name and number
       2. Course delivery format – Self-Paced Online learning environment
       3. Who Developed the Course?
       4. Brief overview of what the student will cover in the course (a couple of sentences works great for this)
    2. Course Syllabus – You will use the Self-Paced Course Syllabus template and update it for your current course. This template is accessible for students who use a screen-reader and allows students to know where to find valuable information about your courses. You will notice some information missing from the syllabus which would normally be in a face-to-face class syllabus—this is because it was created to follow self-paced principles.
    3. *Contact Information* – Instructional Designers will provide this information.
  + **Getting Started Folder**
    1. Instructions for how students should start the course (What do you want students to do first?). Elements to include:
       - 1. Syllabus information
         2. Lessons – Tell students how to access the lessons and what they need to do within them. These can be general instructions, but if you use a consistent format for the lesson structure, you can let students know here.
         3. Major Projects and Assignments – This can follow what you have in your course syllabus that outlines the major components of grading. Give students a brief overview of the assignments and refer them to the syllabus for more information.
         4. Grades – Let students know how their work will be graded during this course.
         5. Exams – Will they need to complete exams? If so, remind students of any expectations and requirements for when they will complete exams.
         6. Any other elements specific to the course – Is there anything else that your students need to know to be successful in your course? (e.g., Are you using a specific software program? Do you have specific writing expectations?)
  + **Lessons Folder**
    1. *Lesson folders*
       1. Make sure there is a folder for each lesson in the course.
       2. Update lesson titles and descriptions.
       3. It is recommended that you include some sort of visual that introduces the lesson content and makes it visually appealing to students.
  + **Each Individual Lesson Section**
    1. *Lesson orientation content* 
       1. Put the title of the lesson at the top.
       2. Add in a paragraph or two introducing the lesson and what will be covered. Think of it like the start of your face-to-face class – how would you start the class to get students engaged in the material?
       3. Provide detail of the lesson content including:
          1. Lesson learning objectives (make sure that they are measurable – consult). You likely will have 1 – 3 learning objectives per lesson.
          2. Learning activities – What do students need to do to complete the lesson? Watch videos? Read articles? Something else? – Make it clear what needs to be completed.
          3. Assessments – What are the graded assessments for this lesson? Written assignments? Quizzes? Other?
    2. *Add content to the lesson* – Once you have outlined what students need to do to complete the lesson, ensure that all of the content is there.
       1. Consider adding items in folders (e.g., Read This; Watch This; Complete This folders for readings, videos, and assessments) or put each item in the order that it needs to be completed (e.g., Task 1. Read….; Task 2. Watch the video…; Task 3. Discussion…; etc.).
       2. If it is a content heavy lesson with multiple weeks, consider breaking it down into sublessons (e.g. Lesson 1.1; Lesson 1.2; Lesson 1.3).

*Suggestion: As you consider content for your lesson, refer to page 7 of this document for questions to ask yourself as you develop your lessons that will help you to consider how best to engage students and create a meaningful learning environment.*

## Gradebook

* + **Working on the Gradebook** 
    1. When all content and assignments have been built, you will need to ensure the gradebook is clear and reflects the correct information. To make it clear to students, ensure your grade center is set up the following way:
       1. Assignment grades are visible to students. If there is a red slash next to the name of an assignment, it is not visible to students. To correct this, click on the arrow to the right of the assignment name, and select “Hide from students on/off.” The red slash should then disappear.
       2. Put assignments in a logical order. This can be accomplished by going to **Manage** and selecting **Column Organization** in the Grade Center. Move assignments so that they show up in an order that makes sense (chronological, by assignment type, etc.).
       3. Check My Grades to make sure everything appears and the proper points are posted. As a last step, check the My Grades link that is available to students to ensure that all the assignments are listed, in the correct order, and with the proper points associated with them.
       4. Consult with your instructional designer if you have any questions.

## Accessibility

Following the University Guidelines for Accessibility, do the following:

* Use appropriate logical heading structures for documents (i.e., use the Styles ribbon).
* Use header rows/columns for tables (again, use the Styles ribbon).
* Use preset layouts for PowerPoint design.
* Include alternate text for images.
* Provide videos with correct captioning, transcripts, and appropriate audio description.
* Make course content easily navigated with keyboard for screen-reader users.
* Utilize appropriate color contrast and fonts without serifs (i.e., Calibri), and include an asterisk when stylizing text with color/bold/italics for emphasis.
* Utilize the built-in list styles for unordered lists (bullets) and ordered lists (numbers).
* When creating hyperlinks in your document, do not use the URL for the link or words such as “Here,” “Click Here,” etc. Write a descriptive name for the URL instead (i.e., [TTU Online Accessibility](https://www.depts.ttu.edu/elearning/accessibility/)). Set the link to open in a new window so that the user can easily navigate back to the course.
* Verify your document is accessible prior to uploading into the course (use the application’s accessibility checker). You can also check your Ally meter in Blackboard, which will give you a color level and a percentage to indicate how accessibility of your document. (Note: Ally meter results will also display on images.) See the example of an Ally meter below:



For more information regarding building accessible online courses, please visit the [Online Accessibility at TTU](https://www.depts.ttu.edu/elearning/accessibility/) website or contact [eLearning Accessibility Services](mailto:elearning.oa@ttu.edu).

## Lesson Content Development Reflection Questions

When you are ready to create your lesson content, you want to be sure you are considering how best to engage students with your content and provide them with a meaningful learning environment. Below are some questions to ask yourself as you develop the content for your lessons based on the OSCQR review[[1]](#footnote-2).

### Course Content & Activities

* Are there a variety of engaging resources available in the course?
  + Do these resources help students to learn from multiple angles (encourage communication/collaboration, deliver content, help students to learn and engage with the material?
  + Do these resources support diversity and inclusivity in the course?
* Think about [Bloom’s Taxonomy](https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/blooms-taxonomy/). Do activities in your course encourage students to develop and use the higher-order thinking skills (e.g., analyze, evaluate, create)?
* Is your text content accessible to students who need to use a screen-reader? (Look at your Ally meters to help determine this).
* Are all images tagged with an alternative text description?
* Are all videos properly captioned? *Note*: *YouTube auto-generated captions are not compliant with federal regulations.*
* Can images, text, and graphics be understood without color?
* Is text the primary method for delivering information?
* Are hyperlinks descriptive?

Instead of giving a web address like this: <https://www.depts.ttu.edu/elearning/>, use descriptive text and hyperlink it like this: [TTU eLearning & Academic Partnerships](https://www.depts.ttu.edu/elearning/blackboard/student/netiquette.php).

*Note: Make sure to check throughout the course for hyperlinks. Often, they are used in PPTs and other documents, and need to be updated as descriptive text.*

### Assessment & Feedback

* Are there frequent methods of assessing student content proficiency throughout the course/lessons?
* Have you provided criteria for assessments (e.g., rubrics, examples of exemplary work)?
* Are there opportunities for student to self-assess their own work (e.g., reflective assignments, practice tests, draft assignments)?

### Motivation and Managing Time

* Do you have built-in “check for understanding” moments to encourage continued self-motivation?
* Are you encouraging continued progress towards timely completion?
* Have you provided time management tips related specifically to your content that promote students successfully completing your course?

1. The Open SUNY Course Quality Review OSCQR. (n.d.). Retrieved from [OSCQR Rubric](https://oscqr.org/). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)