

BEST PRACTICES FOR ASYNCHRONOUS ONLINE (AO) LEARNING

Created by Jody Roginson,
Assoc. Professor of Practice, Texas Tech University
College of Media & Communication, MCOM Online
TLPDC Faculty Fellow 2020-21

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TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY
Office of the Provost

Teaching, Learning & Professional Development Center™

ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

.....
This document has been conceived as an asynchronous workshop for faculty who are transitioning to this online modality.

While the PDF has been designed (using Adobe InDesign), it is at its core, a text document that could have been created and output from a Microsoft Word or Apple Pages document.
.....

HOW TO ATTEND THIS WORKSHOP

The required reading for the workshop is contained in this PDF along with links to source material to allow for deeper investigation of any concept. Practical ideas for creating robust learning objects will be presented according to this legend.

1

LOW TECHNOLOGY APPROACH

For any idea provided one suggestion will feature a way to incorporate the concept that does not require more than an ability with a favorite word processing application or through using one of the tools that is baked into Blackboard (BB), the Texas Tech learning management system (LMS). When necessary to facilitate learning, illustrations will be included. These are meant for instructor learning and not to suggest images must be created.

2

MODERATE TECHNOLOGY APPROACH

Another suggestion will feature an approach that can be learned with moderate extra effort on part of the instructor. Those suggestions may include links to online tutorials or to other ways that a person can familiarize themselves with that technology (user manuals, how-to guides, etc.) Those links should be thought of as required reading IF the learner wants to use that approach.

3

HIGH TECHNOLOGY APPROACH

Finally, a high-tech approach will be offered that can be implemented by reaching out to others who already possess those high-tech skills (such as the Instructional Design team in eLearning) or are skills that can be learned outside of the expectations of this workshop. Links to sources of help for those suggestions can be investigated, but should not be thought of as required reading.

This workshop will be presented in a modular format including activities the self-directed learner should find practical and engaging. Participants will evaluate their own work and should be ready to implement those ideas they have found most useful.

WORKSHOP SECTIONS

MODULE 1, THE MINDSET SHIFT

Begins on page..... 4

MODULE 2, THE CLASSROOM SPACE

Begins on page..... 22

MODULE 3, BUILDING YOUR COURSE

Begins on page.....39
.....

While each section is presented as modules to emulate AO learning in higher-ed environments, the full workshop should be completed sequentially at your pace.

Please begin with Module 1, followed by Module 2. This is the final section of the workshop.

TABLE OF CONTENTS



An estimated time to complete is provided for learner convenience. You determine when to take a break.

MODULE 3 - BUILDING YOUR COURSE

*Estimated total time to complete: 2 hours**

BUILDING YOUR COURSE AND ACTIVITY (110 minutes)

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EP and TiLT (Transparency in Learning and Teaching)	42
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MODULE 3 ACTIVITY (10 minutes, *well to read, download and consider)

Building your course activity as the self-guided workshop concludes	52
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Please begin with Module 1, followed by Module 2.

For Module 3 you will need online access to a Blackboard course, preferably the one you've been planning for. If that course isn't available yet, you can use a development shell or an old course to do the work and then copy it over when the new course comes online.

*Depending on how much planning you did during Modules 1 and 2 and how seriously you take new activities introduced during Module 3, the time you spend on this module may vary.

BUILDING YOUR COURSE ACTIVITY BEGINS

.....
To build: “Construct by putting parts or material together over a period
of time” (New Oxford American Dictionary, 2020).
.....

1

THE SYLLABUS AS A BLUEPRINT

Find Laurie Richlin’s book* in the Texas Tech Online Library (from Wiley, the online version is available), and look in Chapter 16 (p. 63) at the “Cognitive Design Blueprint” Figure 16.1, for four elements we will consider now: Teaching Goals (TG), Learning Objectives (LO), Learning Experiences (LE), and Evaluation Plan (EP). See the example from her “Introductory Psychology Course” design. *Go ahead, I’ll wait while you find and read it. ;-)*

Note: This book has a number of resources, matrices, checklists, tables, etc. all with the underlying pedagogical information that can help any instructor improve, regardless of their experience level, and which can be used in the AO environment.

Pro Tip: In Chapter 10, “Styles of Learning and Teaching” figure 10.1 on page 35, to read the list of words which are presented as student descriptors of classroom behaviors of outstanding instructors. These types of descriptors should be among your teaching goals for any asynchronous online (AO) course you’re building, too. For a self-check take a look at the word clouds that are presented as part of your course evaluations—from SmartEvals—and see if at least some of those words don’t appear from student evaluations of your completed courses. This might help you identify teaching effectiveness gaps.

A good syllabus has the learning objectives stated so that the rare student who reads it can appreciate the point of the course but they more likely guide the instructor. To use the syllabus as a blueprint to plan our course, we should think about how our teaching goals connect to the learning objectives, about the learning experiences those require students to have, and about our evaluation plan for each LO. And, when considering teaching goals, an instructor should also reflect on the teaching strategies for each learning experience.

BUILDING YOUR COURSE BEGINS AS YOUR PLANNING CONTINUES

Either print the page that follows or draw similar tables on a piece of paper and follow the instructions shown there.

REFERENCES

Richlin, L. (2006). **Blueprint for learning : Constructing college courses to facilitate, assess, and document learning* (First ed.). Stylus.

EFFECTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS ARE:

Learner-centered	Knowledge-centered	Assessment-centered	Community-centered
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COGITIVE DESIGN BLUEPRINT (ADAPTED FROM RICHLIN, 2006).

TG
LO
LE
EP
TG
LO
LE
EP
TG
LO
LE
EP

Figure 16.1. Teaching Goals (TG), Learning Objectives (LO), Learning Experiences (LE), and Evaluation Plan (EP)

Add three learning objectives you have for your course. Add a teaching goal, considering your strategy formulas for each, and list an overarching learning experience you have planned that relates to each LO. Then, identify a way to evaluate (assess) students. (Note, see Richlin’s example completed in Chapter 18, on page 90. On a syllabus we might call this an assessment method.)

If you additionally want to add the “knowledge dimension” and “cognitive process” types as she shows, you may. (Use the Richlin resource if you want to review those concepts.) Your course may have more than three LO, but for this activity only three need to be identified and then you’ll use one of those in the next step.

REFERENCES

Richlin, L. (2006). **Blueprint for learning : Constructing college courses to facilitate, assess, and document learning* (First ed.). Stylus.

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BUILDING YOUR COURSE

“The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.” George Bernard Shaw

1

TRANSPARENCY IN LEARNING AND TEACHING (TiLT)

EVALUATION PLANS (HOW WILL YOU ASSESS?)

There are several great reasons to use the TiLT framework when developing your EP or assignments. “The Transparency in Learning and Teaching project aims to advance equitable teaching and learning practices that reduce systemic inequities in higher education” (TiLT Higher Ed website, retrieved November 2020, <https://tilthighered.com>).

Please watch these four short videos that describe the TiLT process:

1. *Unwritten Rules for College Success*, 39 second video
2. *Transparency Framework 1) Purpose*, 44 second video
3. *Transparency Framework 2) Task*, 25 second video
4. *Transparency Framework 3) Criteria*, 24 second video

 TILT VIDEOS

[Link to TiLT resources page.](#)

Note that the TiLT resources page has a number of links to other videos and articles that you can explore on your own for deeper understanding. *Transparent Design in Higher Education Teaching and Leadership* (Winkelmes., Boye, & Tapp, 2019) is an excellent book on the topic. **Yes, one of the co-editors is the TLPDC’s Suzanne Tapp and if you want to learn more, attend one of her TiLT workshops.**

BUILDING YOUR COURSE AND PLANNING CONTINUES

Read the **assignment** example linked to, where you’ll find a “Less Transparent” design example on page 1, a “More Transparent” design example on page 2, and a rubric prepared to help students understand the criteria on which the activity will be assessed.

 TILT ASSIGNMENT

Select one of your learning objectives and develop an **assignment** (EP) document by using the TiLT framework, that includes the task, purpose and criteria on which students will be evaluated (usually a rubric or a checklist). And, is there a way to create at least a few tasks in the **assignment** that are collaborative, thinking about the community-centered pillar? **At the resources page scroll to the bottom to find examples from several disciplines that you can use as a starting point. Note that this activity may take you some time to do it well.**

Create an accessible Word file or PDF that you can upload for this workshop, knowing that you can edit/replace it later.

EFFECTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS ARE:

Learner-centered

Knowledge-centered

Assessment-centered

Community-centered



BUILDING YOUR COURSE

“The first rule of intelligent tinkering is to save all the parts.”
Paul R. Ehrlich

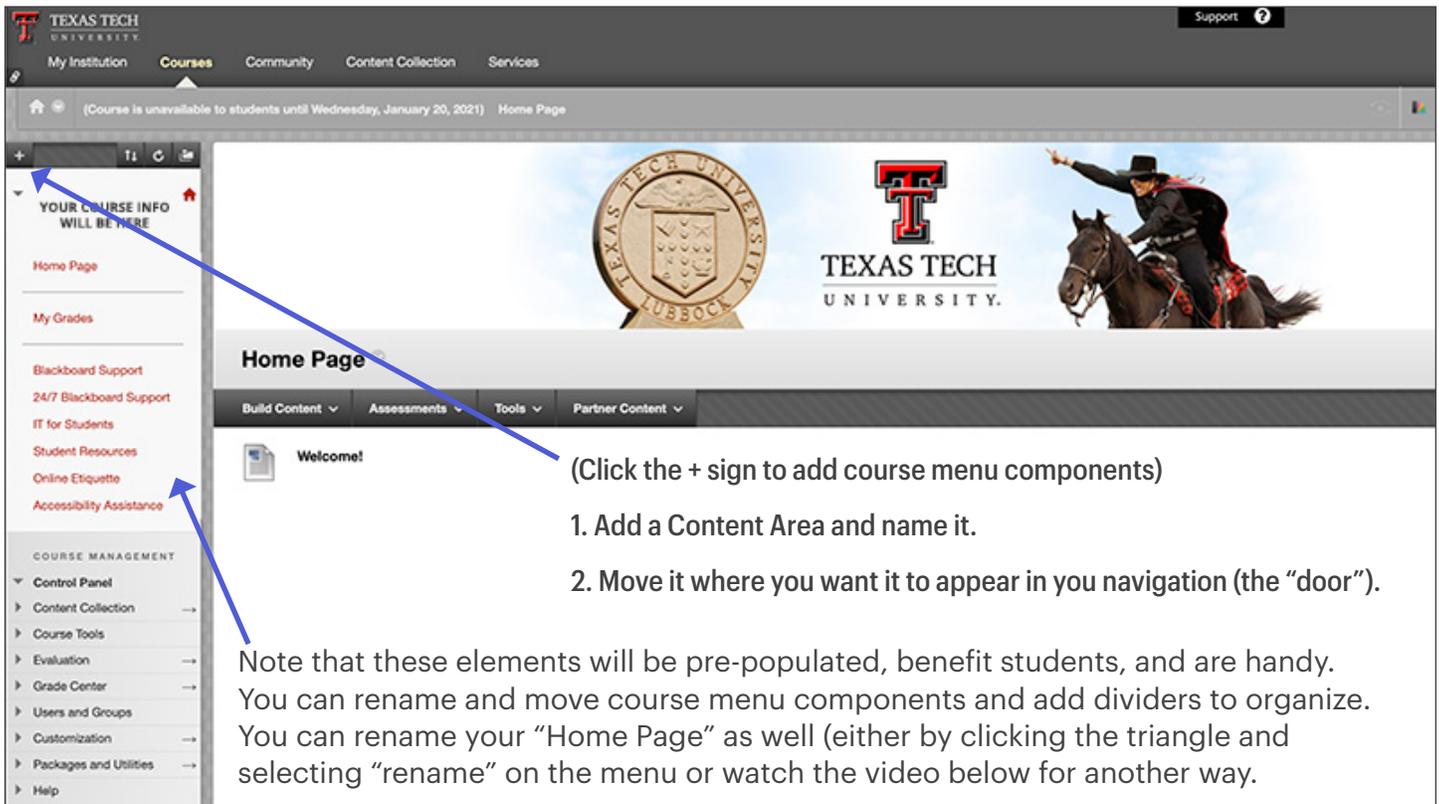
2

BUILD THE COURSE MENU

BUILDING YOUR COURSE AND PLANNING CONTINUES

Log in to Blackboard, using the course you’re planning for if it’s available or an old course to practice the skills. (You’ll be able to copy **Content Folders** later.)

Use the course menu plan you developed during Module 2 and build your menu now.



The screenshot shows the Blackboard course menu interface. On the left is a navigation sidebar with a plus sign at the top. A blue arrow points to this plus sign with the text: "(Click the + sign to add course menu components)". Below the plus sign are sections for "YOUR COURSE INFO WILL BE HERE" (containing Home Page, My Grades, Blackboard Support, etc.) and "COURSE MANAGEMENT" (containing Control Panel, Content Collection, etc.). Another blue arrow points to the "Home Page" link in the sidebar with the text: "Note that these elements will be pre-populated, benefit students, and are handy. You can rename and move course menu components and add dividers to organize. You can rename your 'Home Page' as well (either by clicking the triangle and selecting 'rename' on the menu or watch the video below for another way.)". The main content area shows a "Home Page" header with a navigation bar containing "Build Content", "Assessments", "Tools", and "Partner Content". Below the navigation bar is a "Welcome!" message.

(Click the + sign to add course menu components)

1. Add a Content Area and name it.
2. Move it where you want it to appear in you navigation (the “door”).

Note that these elements will be pre-populated, benefit students, and are handy. You can rename and move course menu components and add dividers to organize. You can rename your “Home Page” as well (either by clicking the triangle and selecting “rename” on the menu or watch the video below for another way.

 WATCH A VIDEO

 BLACKBOARD NAV

Remember the videos from Blackboard that can be useful, along with the help pages you **investigated in Module 2.** and use them as you need.

EFFECTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS ARE:

Learner-centered

Knowledge-centered

Assessment-centered

Community-centered

BUILDING YOUR COURSE

“Don’t quit. Suffer now and live the rest of your life as a champion.”
Muhammad Ali.

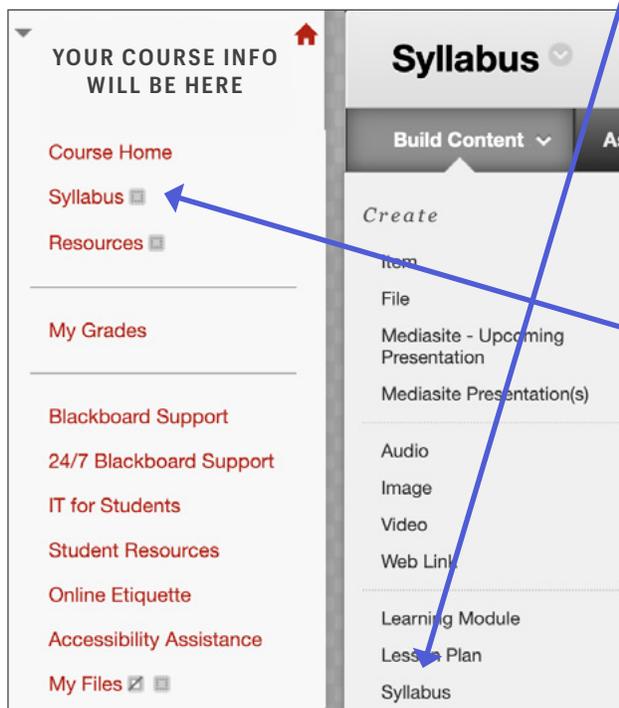
2

BUILD THE SYLLABUS PAGE

BUILDING YOUR COURSE AND PLANNING CONTINUES

Add a syllabus for your course. In this activity we’ll review two ways to accomplish it, the first is by using the **Syllabus Builder Page** and the second is by adding a file and both are shown on that page.

 SYLLABUS BUILDER



The **Syllabus Builder** is found under **Build Content** as shown at left. In it you input the information you deem most important. You can add the accessible Word file (select add “existing file”) you created in Module 2 from there, although note that is basically just creating an Item and adding the file. (See the syllabus builder page link for help.)

Pro Tip: Create a **Course Menu Component** and call it Syllabus. Then click on it and use **Build Content | Syllabus** to add it in whatever way you select. Your syllabus will now be easily accessible through the navigation (the door) regardless of where a student is inside the course.

Take time to **create a link on the course menu**—a **tool link**—select and name it **announcements**. (At the syllabus builder

help page (button above), scroll down the page to find “**create a link**” on the course menu, if you need help.) Write an announcement to welcome students when the class opens and add that message now, knowing you can edit it. **Pro Tip:** I usually send the same message as an email to students two weeks before classes begin with the syllabus and I often include a screenshot of what the course navigation will look like, to orient them to what they’ll see. This early communication jump starts my community with them and is always appreciated. **Learn more about announcements.**

EFFECTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS ARE:

Learner-centered	Knowledge-centered	Assessment-centered	Community-centered
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BUILDING YOUR COURSE

“Every small positive change we make in ourselves repays us in confidence in the future.” Alice Walker

2

BUILD THE MODULE 1 CONTENT FOLDER

BUILDING YOUR COURSE AND PLANNING CONTINUES

Shown, I'm in a Learning Modules **content area** and am about to select a **content folder** that I will name **Week 1**.

Item added to course menu

Learning Modules

Build Content ▾ Assessments ▾ Tools ▾ Partner Content ▾

Create	New Page
Item	Content Folder
File	Module Page
Mediasite - Upcoming Presentation	Blank Page
Mediasite Presentation(s)	Mashups
Audio	Flickr Photo
Image	SlideShare Presentation
Video	Blackboard Open Content
Web Link	lynda.com Course
Learning Module	Mediasite - Link to Presentation(s)
Lesson Plan	Mediasite - Link to Catalog
Syllabus	
Course Link	

From your course design plan (from Module 2)”

1. Select Content Folder and name it (whatever you've chosen)
2. Add your first component, welcome Flipgrid (use Web Link) or Mediasite video?
3. Add any documents you made accessible
4. Select Web Link and add the YouTube video you found or use item and add the link into the item (see page 34, Module 2) ...

5. Add all the planned components into the **content folder** for your courses' first module. (*Link to the content types again from Blackboard Help.*)

CONTENT TYPES

6. Add a **Discussion Board** if you've planned one. (Link to the discussion board from Blackboard Help.)

DISCUSSIONS

EFFECTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS ARE:

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Assessment-centered

Community-centered

BUILDING YOUR COURSE

“Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty.”
Henry Ford

2

BUILD AN ASSIGNMENT, WITH A RUBRIC, ACCORDING TO YOUR EP

BUILDING YOUR COURSE AND PLANNING CONTINUES

7. Add the TiLT **assignment** you created (from page 42).

8. Add a **rubric** for the **assignment** (from page 42, criteria).

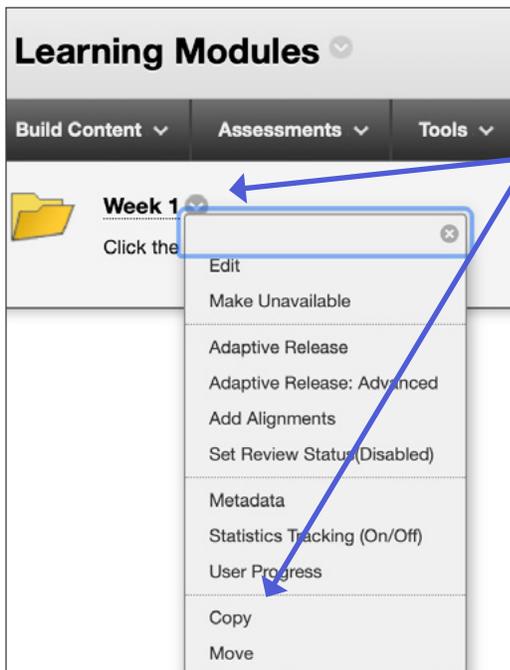
Help for those are linked to from the buttons.

ASSIGNMENTS

RUBRICS

REVIEW YOUR BUILD TO THIS POINT

Take some time to investigate what you’ve built and pat yourself on the back or grab a reward beverage!



Of course, if you are working in a Blackboard space that isn't the new course you are building, you'll need to rebuild your course menu in the new shell, and you will be able to copy any **content folder** you've built, such as **Week 1**, into the new course when it is ready.

Author's note: I always find it easier to copy **content folders and items** rather than to copy an entire course. However, with newer versions (Ultra) of Blackboard on the way (as of November 2020), the **course copy** may become less problematic.

Learn more about course copy here.

EFFECTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS ARE:

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Community-centered

OTHER CONCEPTS TO CONSIDER

.....
"When it comes to privacy and accountability, people always demand the former for themselves and the latter for everyone else." David Brin.
.....

1

FERPA

"FERPA, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, is a federal law that pertains to the release of and access to educational records. The law, also known as the Buckley Amendment, applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the US Department of Education.

FERPA protects the privacy of student education records, including personally identifiable information derived from student conduct records. Generally, schools must have written permission from a student in order to release any information from a student's education record" (Retrieved online, November 2020, from TTU.edu FAQ at: https://www.depts.ttu.edu/registrar/Academic_Information.php).

For a deeper dive into how FERPA affects virtual learning, see the information that the U.S. Government provided in March 2020, linked to in the button.

 U.S. GOVT. FERPA

FERPA CONSIDERATIONS FOR ONLINE COURSE DELIVERY (VIRTUAL LEARNING)

While Blackboard has features that allow an instructor of record to find and add users to their courses, Texas Tech has an added layer of protection for faculty so that FERPA rights of students are not unintentionally violated. If you want to add other faculty to your course, for example in the role of observer, course builder or co-instructor, you need to email the help desk for Blackboard at Texas Tech to request such an addition: Blackboard@ttu.edu.

EFFECTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS ARE:

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A TLPDC QUICK TIP SHEET

Here are some questions and answers and important resources about fair use and copyright, especially as it relates to the online environment.

A BRIEF Q&A

Do I need author permission to provide PDF copies of reading materials in Blackboard?

It is recommended that you get author permission if you are providing a full chapter of, or when using up to 20 percent of, a complete textbook.

 [SEE FAIR USE](#)

What needs to be included on a provided PDF in Blackboard?

We recommend that, for any reading provided that exists behind a pay wall, the instructor indicates on page one, along with a complete citation for the work, that the material is intended only for student use at that time and may not be copied or transmitted via electronic means to other people not enrolled in the class. Also, each page of copyrighted materials provided should carry a notice of copyright, e.g., "NOTICE: This material may be protected by copyright law (Title 17, U.S. Code)."

 [FOR PERMISSIONS](#)

 [COVID-19 POLICY](#)

What about using materials that are provided free online?

If the work you want to provide is open sourced, including publicly available links or materials that are available on Google Scholar, or which could be accessed and downloaded by anyone, then you are merely providing a convenience rather than having students conduct their own search for that information. Of course, if a citation for the author does not appear on the material, the instructor should provide those details either on the work (PDF) itself or within Blackboard.

 [TEACHING ONLINE](#)

OTHER IMPORTANT PRIMARY RESOURCES AND LINKS:

The TTU policy is found at:

<http://www.depts.ttu.edu/opmanual/OP30.22.pdf>

The TTU Library's outstanding collection of resources and information:

<https://guides.library.ttu.edu/copyright>

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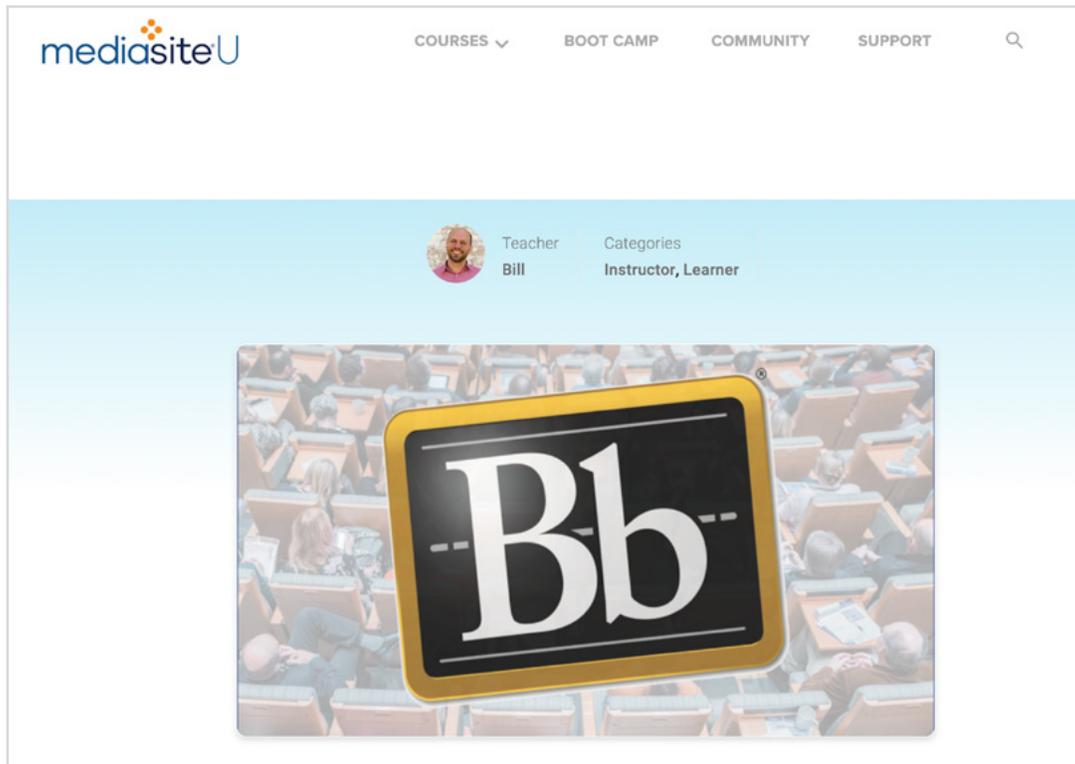
A TLPDC QUICK TIP SHEET

Mediasite is the Texas Tech IT-supported video content delivery, recording studio solution. Do you know how to use it? Take the tutorial course to help you get started.

THE LEARN MEDIASITE U COURSE:

“At many colleges and universities, the Blackboard LMS is the main online hub that students, instructors and faculty use to create and manage their course material. Now that video is heavily used in many classrooms as well as in flipped or microlearning scenarios, the integration of the Mediasite Video Platform and the Blackboard LMS have become a critical piece for many universities” (Learn Mediasite U website, November 2020, Retrieved from <https://learn.mediasite.com/course/using-mediasite-with-blackboard/>).

The 90-minute course features bite-size learning for instructors who want to use Mediasite with our current version of Blackboard. (Click the image to launch the course website.)



EFFECTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS ARE:

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PlayPosit in Blackboard

PlayPosit InteractiveVideo

PlayPosit allows you to create interactive videos in which you can insert questions for students to complete to check comprehension as they watch the video. A “Bulb” is PlayPosit terminology for an interactive video, and the comprehension questions within the Bulb are called “Interactions.”

There are two steps to create your PlayPosit video (Bulb): **Step 1: Create a PlayPosit Bulb and Set Bulb Link**; and **Step 2: Edit Bulb Link and Grading Preferences**.

Step 1: Create a PlayPosit Bulb and Set Bulb Link

1. Go to the Content Area in the course (e.g., Homepage, Unit 1, etc.) where you want to add the PlayPosit video.
2. Click the **Build Content** menu and select **PlayPosit2**.



Click the image to learn more about the PlayPosit set of tools.

EFFECTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS ARE:

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SOURCES OF HELP

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"When I was younger, so much younger than today, I never needed anybody's help in any way. But now these days are gone, I'm not so self assured. Now I find I've changed my mind and opened up the doors."
(John Lennon & Paul McCartney)
.....

1

ELEARNING & ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIPS & THE TLPDC

2

Access the Texas Tech Worldwide eLearning website and its variety of self-guided or consultation resources for faculty who are transitioning to online delivery. There are a long list of training courses, both live and recorded, that can help you improve skills and competencies as you move into AO learning.

 ELEARNING

3

And, to grow even in your use of Blackboard, check out this link:
<http://www.depts.ttu.edu/elearning/blackboard/instructor/>
.....

"It is our primary mission is to support the university's commitment to excellence in teaching and learning, whether that be online or face-to-face. If you've never taught online and need some guidance, we would love to point you to resources, talk with you and help in any way that we can. Maybe you are an experienced online teacher and want to lend a helping hand to others? Let us know and we would love to connect you with others on campus who would benefit from your expertise" (Suzanne Tapp, retrieved from the TLPDC website, November 2020, from <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/tlpdc/About/index.php>).

Ongoing program offerings, resources and consultation services are updated at the website as well.

 TLPDC

EFFECTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS ARE:

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MODULE 3 SELF-ASSESSMENT: COURSE DESIGN CHECKLIST

.....
**“At the end of the day we are accountable to ourselves.
 Our success is a result of what we do.”**
Catherine Pulsifer

As this self-directed workshop draws to a close, you know that you have more work to do to plan and build your course. Hopefully, you have a great start with your first module built at least in a draft stage.

Click on the image below to link to the eLearning Design website where you can download a Word document called **“OSCOR” Course Design Rubric**. Use the categories provided to review what you’ve built and to plan for the rest of your course design as you continue thinking about creating AO learning with the mindset shift you’ve embraced and remembering to curate content, assess and collaborate with novice learners until you can help them move up the continuum toward expertise.

Thank you for your commitment to this process!



Open SUNY Course Quality Review (OSCQR) 3rd Edition

1. COURSE OVERVIEW AND INFORMATION

	Criteria	Estimated time needed for revision:					
		Sufficiently Present	Minor Revision ½ hour or less	Moderate Revision ½ to 2 hours	Major Revision 2+ hours	Not applicable	
1.	Course includes Welcome message and Getting Started content.						
2.	An orientation or overview is provided for the course overall, as well as in each module. Students know how to navigate and what tasks are due.						
3.	Course includes a Course Information area that includes overview information about course design.						
4.	A printable syllabus is available to learners (PDF, HTML).						
5.	Course syllabus includes links to relevant campus policies on plagiarism, computer use, student grievances, accommodating disabilities, etc. (TTU OP 32.06)						
6.	Course provides access to campus resources (e.g., technical help, orientation, tutoring, and accessibility lab).						
7.	Course information states whether the course is fully online, blended, or web-enhanced.						
8.	Appropriate methods and devices for accessing and participating in the course are communicated (mobile, publisher websites, secure content, pop-ups, browser issue, microphone, webcam).						
9.	Course and module objectives are clearly defined, measurable, promote higher-order thinking, and are aligned to student learning activities and assessments.						
10.	Course provides contact information for instructor.						