Tips for Building a Successful Course

Best Practice Checkpoints:

1. Check your course frequently and monitor student communications closely.
2. Communicate with students regularly using discussion, course mail, announcements, and other Bb tools. Show up and teach.
3. Define course outcomes in the syllabus and learning objectives in the content and make sure they meet department/accreditation standards.
4. Provide meaningful, well designed content that ties directly to module learning objectives and assessment.
5. Include activities and assessments that foster interaction among students.
6. List special software requirements in the syllabus and on the course welcome page (PowerPoint reader, media player, Microsoft Office Word and PowerPoint, etc.)
7. Define student performance expectations in the course syllabus (i.e. how many hours per week should they be working in the class, assignment late penalties, expectations with regard to quality of work and quality of interaction.)
8. Tell students in the syllabus how often you will be logging into the course and how quickly you will respond to their questions.
9. Make certain instructional pages (content pages) match learning objectives and assessments tied to the content.

Basic ADA Compliance Checkpoints

1. Avoid the use of Roman numerals.
2. Use bullets instead of dashes.
3. Use Arial, Times New Roman or Verdana as your font and be consistent.
4. Use a 12 point font or the standard font and be consistent.
5. If using a colored font, be sure there is a high contrast with the background.
6. Avoid large sections of bold and / or italicized text.
7. Avoid the use of decorative images.
8. When selecting media, try to find versions that have closed captions or transcripts.
9. Include the ADA Accommodation Statement in the course syllabus.
10. Name tables and ensure each column is named.
11. Use the name of web sites to link them, not their URL (http://www.pbs.org).

MSU Online "Basic" Beta Test Checklist

1. Build your course in the modular style.
2. Keep the standardized style of the MSU homepage intact. Think consistency and ease of access for students.
3. Use the Course Menu for students to access content, not the course home page.

4. Avoid placing due dates in content. Instead, use the course schedule and/or calendar.
5. Plan for using meaningful images, graphics and charts in your course to support content.
6. Each course must have a minimum on one high stake, engaging activity S2S and S2I.
7. Each module must have a minimum of one form of assessment students must complete before moving on the next learning module.
8. Module content goes beyond text-based information and includes multiple resources to assist students in mastering department mandated learning objectives.
9. Do not post documents in Microsoft Office Word.
10. Design content pages so that there is consistency with regard to font, heading size and color.
11. Include rich media in each course module. Chose media that already has closed captions or a transcript when possible.
12. When feasible, use reinforcement exercises in your course modules.
13. Keep assessment methods in their associate learning module.
14. Include SMART learning objectives in each learning module.
15. PowerPoint is not standalone content for an online course; however, when supplemented by voiceover, it can be used as primary content.
16. Ensure your syllabus includes information about the help desk, academic honesty, response time to student communications, technology and software requirements.
17. Do not use folders in your course, use learning modules when feasible.