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Best Practices for Online Student-Centered Teaching and Support

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This document serves as a guide for faculty teaching online. Please review the Handbook for Part-Time faculty for teaching expectations and information about Aurora University policies, procedures, and processes. You can locate that information at SpartanNet, under Faculty Resources: <https://www.aurora.edu/au/documents/handbook/part-time-faculty-handbook.pdf>

Part-time online faculty will play an integral role in student learning and success. Students will expect you to offer instruction, facilitate online discussions, provide actionable and meaningful feedback in a timely manner, and offer appropriate student support. They should also expect to be held to the same high academic standards that characterize the expectations of all Aurora University students. Please keep in mind that online students often benefit greatly when their instructors are prepared and willing to support adult learners who must manage work, family, and life obligations, while seeking optimal higher educational experiences and college degrees. (Read more about adults’ learning styles under Pedagogy vs. Andragogy below.)

Instructional Strategies: Pedagogy vs. Andragogy

The term “pedagogy” was derived from the Greek words “paid” (meaning “child”) and “agogus” (meaning “leading”). Thus, it is defined as the art and science of teaching children. The term “andragogy” was coined by researchers of adult learning in order to contrast their beliefs about learning to the pedagogical model. Malcolm Knowles first introduced the concept in the US in 1968. The concept of andragogy implies self-directedness, active student roles, and solution-centered activities. It was derived from the Greek word “aner” (with the stem andr-) meaning “man, not boy.”

Differences between children and adults as learners:

Children	Adults
Rely on others to decide what needs to be learned	Decide for themselves what is important and needs to be learned
Accept the importance of what is being presented at face value	Need to validate the information based on their beliefs and experiences
Expect what they are learning to be useful in their long-term future	Expect what they are learning to be immediately useful
Have little to no experience upon which to draw—are relatively “clean slates”	Have much experience upon which to draw—may have fixed viewpoints
Little ability to serve as knowledgeable source for teacher and classmates	Significant ability to serve as a knowledgeable source to teacher and fellow learners
Are dependent on teachers and enjoy dependence	Expect and enjoy independence
Expects teacher to be dominant in determining what, when, and how something is to be learned	Expect teacher to encourage and nurture the process of self-direction
Accepts what teacher tells them they must learn to pass the class	Need to know why information is important before they invest in learning

Adult Learning Principles

1. Focus on “real world” problems
2. Emphasize how the learning can be applied
3. Relate the learning to the learners’ goals
4. Relate the materials to the learners’ past experiences
5. Allow respectful and courteous debate and challenge of ideas
6. Respect the opinions of other learners
7. Encourage learners to share knowledge with the instructor and classmates
8. Treat learner like adults
9. Facilitate self-directed learning

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[https://www.ncjrs.gov/ovc_archives/educator/files/chapter3.pdf]

Online Presence and Engagement

Aurora University is a student-centered university, where we strive to provide exceptional learning experiences for our students. To that end, you are strongly encouraged to be fully present and engaged in all courses by doing the following:

1. Log into courses at least four days a week
2. Return graded work within 7 days of submission
3. Respond to student emails within 24 hours during the week, and 48 hours on weekends
4. Facilitate online discussions as an active and guiding participant
5. Provide feedback that will identify strengths of the submission, in addition to areas that require more work and attention
6. Provide instructional and informative posts, messages, and videos, each week that facilitate learning and promote critical thinking and engagement
7. Hold optional synchronous events, when and where appropriate (Note: Student attendance at synchronous events is always optional)

Syllabus

There is a standard syllabus used across the university. It will serve as a contract between you and your students.

AU Email

All online faculty and students use AU email accounts to for course-related communications.

Moodle

Moodle is AU's online learning management system. Courses are automatically created for all AU classes. See Faculty Resources (page 7 of this document) for additional information about this learning management system (LMS).

Faculty Profiles in Moodle

Personalized classroom spaces help students connect with faculty and enhances the learning experience. To that you, you are strongly encouraged to provide a full profile in your Moodle courses. Consider including a picture and biographical information for your students.

Teaching Expectations and Teaching Evidence can be found on page 11 of the Handbook for Part-Time Faculty

Online Student Attendance

Please make sure students are participating in online course activities and submitting work in a timely manner. You are encouraged to be vigilant in ensuring that students are making satisfactory progress in each course. If a student is struggling in your course, you will want to outreach the student and offer support and guidance. In addition, Learning House advisors are available to collaborate with faculty to determine the best way to help students who are struggling in this area.

Copyrighted Material

Online faculty should model appropriate academic behavior and acknowledge use of all third party resources and information. Please be vigilant in attributing and citing any and all resources used.

Academic Integrity information can be found on page 16 of the Handbook for Part-Time Faculty

Faculty Support

Aurora University

Portia Ransom, Ph.D., Academic Dean of Online Programs: 630-844-5618,
pransom@aurora.edu

Registrar, 630-844-5462

Learning House

Aurora University has partnered with Learning House to provide the following services: advising, course development, faculty training, and 24/7 technical support.

Course Development Support

Lauren Dexter, Course Design Team Lead: ldexter@learninghouse.com, 502-815-0526

Lucy Bruenderman, Senior Course Designer: lbruenderman@learninghouse.com, 502-815-0446

Faculty Technical Support

Hannah Stoltz, Faculty Support Specialist: hstoltz@learninghouse.com 502-815-0535

Help Desk

Learning House (Moodle issues): 800-985-9781, support@learninghouse.com

AU (log in issues/password reset): 630-844-5790, itshelp@aurora.edu

Faculty Resources

The following are links to information resources for instructors.

Instructional Resources Online—Aurora University and Moodle

<http://aurora.learninghouse.com/course/view.php?id=906>

moodle.aurora.edu/moodle

www.turnitin.com

<http://libguides.aurora.edu/databases>

<http://libguides.aurora.edu/ForFaculty>

www.aurora.edu/academics/resources/learning-center

Faculty Resource Center The Faculty Resource Center is a place for instructors and course writers to learn more about online instructional design and teaching. In the center, you can find articles, videos, and other resources that cover topics, such as effective online teaching strategies, rubrics, universal design learning, how to use discussion boards to offer knowledge and build community in your online course, writing measurable outcomes, and using Moodle, to name a few.

Moodle is AU's online learning management system. Courses are automatically created for all AU classes and are ready for instructor's use.

AU is a licensed user of **Turnitin**, an online plagiarism detection tool that has a number of other features.

Phillips Library subscribes to a large collection of **online databases**, available to authorized users from both on and off campus.

Phillips Library has an **online guide to library resources and services** specifically for faculty.

The **Academic Support Center** provides tutoring and other forms of assistance to

students who have encountered academic difficulties.

See an overview of services for online students on pages 6-7

Academic Information Sources and Tools—Aurora University

www.aurora.edu/academics/resources/academic-calendar.html

The **Academic Calendar** page contains information on important semester dates and holidays.

www.aurora.edu/classes

The **Class Schedule pages** contain listings by department of current and upcoming classes. These tables are updated nightly.

www.aurora.edu/academics/resources/final-exams.html

This page contains the official **final exam schedule** and details of the final examination policy.

[WebAdvisor](#)

WebAdvisor is an AU portal that can be used to place requisitions for textbooks for your classes—through the AU bookstore, submit grades, access class schedules, and conduct other important activities.

Learning House Training Opportunities and Professional Development

Learning House offers many professional development and courses. In order to remain current about online pedagogy and other aspects of distance learning, AU Online faculty are expected to take full advantage of these training opportunities.

You can review Learning House's offerings, and register for courses at the following link:

<http://forms.learninghouse.com/view.php?id=46>.

*You should use your Aurora email to register.

Student Support

Aurora University

Amy Gray, Assistant VP for Student Life (Medical Leaves): 630-844-5467, agray@aurora.edu

Julie Hall, Director of Academic Support Center and Disability Resource Officer: 630-844-5454, jhall@aurora.edu

Academic Support Center

The Academic Support Center offers free remote tutoring to online students. The center provides support that helps students develop their skills and confidence. You can reach the center at 630-844-5520.

Learning House

Chelsea Selby, Academic Advisor: cselby@aurora.edu, 800-993-5761, ext. 6414

Additional Faculty Resources

Adobe Connect

<http://thelearninghouse.adobeconnect.com/adobeconnectinstructions1/>

Benefits of Online Discussion Boards

<http://thelearninghouse.adobeconnect.com/onlinediscussionboards/>

Creating Sense of Instructor Presence

<http://thelearninghouse.adobeconnect.com/auonlinearticle4/>

Eight Ways to Increase Social Presence Online

<http://thelearninghouse.adobeconnect.com/auonlinearticle5/>

Effective Feedback Strategies

<http://thelearninghouse.adobeconnect.com/effectivefeedbackstrategies/>

Ensuring Student Success

<http://thelearninghouse.adobeconnect.com/ensuringstudentsuccess/>

Establishing an Online Teaching Presence

<http://thelearninghouse.adobeconnect.com/auonlinearticle2/>

Strategies for Effective Online Teaching

<http://thelearninghouse.adobeconnect.com/auonlinearticle7/>

Teaching and Facilitating Online Courses

<http://thelearninghouse.adobeconnect.com/auonlinearticle8/>

Teaching the Gap

<http://thelearninghouse.adobeconnect.com/teachingthegap/>