Do's and Don'ts for Student Success in Online Classes

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Overview

- Characteristics of online classes
- Common fallacies
- Role of the advisor
- Do's for students
- Don'ts for students
- Resources

Characteristics of online classes

- Over 60% of schools offer fully online courses
  (Sloan Consortium, 2005)
- Over 70% of public institutions offer "hybrid" courses
  (Allen, et al., 2007)

Hybrid classes

- At least some resources online
- May include online discussion or team work
- May have substantial amounts as self-study material
- May include lecture notes and recorded lectures
- Almost all faculty can be contacted by email
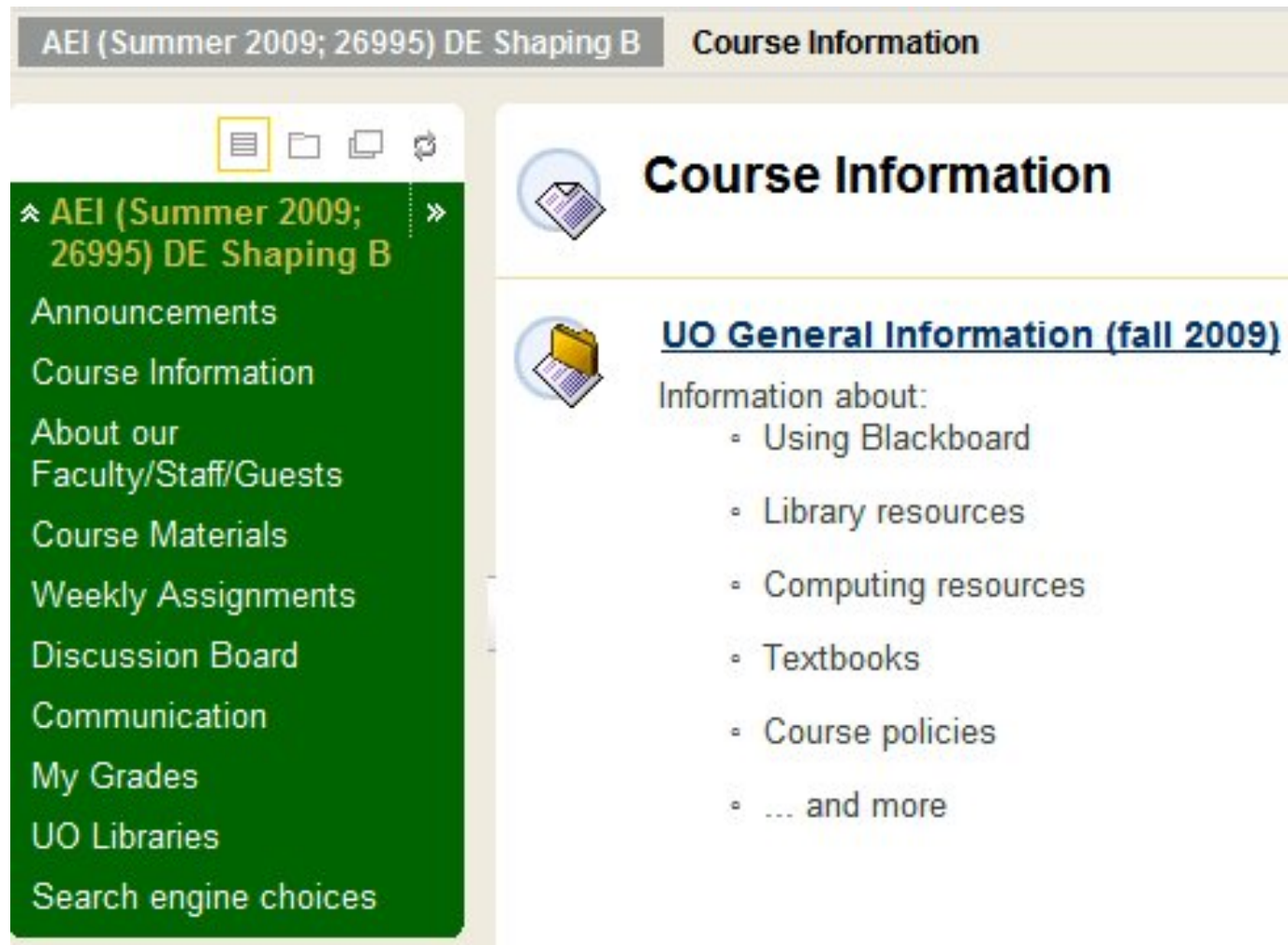
Course management systems

- Blackboard, Moodle, Sakai
  - Integrated portals for each student
  - Customized by the institution
  - Easy to administer
  - Maybe less flexible for teaching
  - Commercial (Blackboard) = expensive

Blackboard screen

Blackboard – Course options

Weekly assignments

Weekly Assignments

READ THIS BEFORE YOU BEGIN THE COURSE: Weekly Expectations and Assignments for the Term

This folder contains a list of weekly expectations and assignments.

1) Weekly Expectations and Assignments:
Read and review this, as needed, so you can read through some important guidelines as you prepare for the start of the course. It is up to you to set your own daily routine for checking your email, completing readings, and doing other assignments.

2) Discussion Details: In addition, regularly review the details about posting to discussions. Discussions will be an important part of your learning and networking process throughout the course.

THEN, BEGIN THE COURSE HERE: Week 01, Orientation to and Beginning the Course

Click on the black "Orientation to and Beginning of the Course" link above to look inside this folder for further instructions and links to orientation activities.

Deadline: Please complete all items on this list as soon as possible and no later than the end of your day on Sunday of Week 1.

Discussions

Date		Thread	Author	Unread Posts	Total Posts
6/17/09 8:40 PM		What makes a good discussion?	Deborah Healey	0	16
6/17/09 8:37 PM		"Shaping" Introduction video	Deborah Healey	0	23
6/17/09 8:4		Introduce yourself!	Deborah	0	33

	What makes a good discussion?	Deborah Healey	6/17/09 8:44 PM
	RE: What makes a good discussion?	A	6/23/09 12:47 PM
	RE: What makes a good discussion?	R	6/23/09 2:28 PM
	RE: What makes a good discussion?	B	6/24/09 12:15 AM
	RE: What makes a good discussion?	Deborah Healey	6/24/09 9:54 AM
	RE: What makes a good discussion?	A	6/24/09 8:37 AM
	RE: What makes a good discussion?	M	6/24/09 9:30 AM
	RE: What makes a good discussion?	I	6/24/09 3:25 PM
	RE: What makes a good discussion?	B	6/24/09 3:37 PM

Common fallacies

- Digital natives
- Multitasking
- Chat-speak
- Privacy

"Digital natives"

- Students who have grown up with computers
- Very familiar with web surfing, email, chat, social networking...
- But not the Web for academic purposes
  (Katz & Macklin, 2007; Bauerline, 2008)

"Multitasking"

- Widespread
- Students assert that they can do several things at once
  - But they're wrong
- The reality…
  - They do not function as well when multitasking as when focused on one thing at a time (Hamilton, 2008)

"Chat-speak"

hi! i missed ur class. cu in ur office?

- Students are comfortable with informality online
- This may not be appropriate in an academic environment
- Appropriate tone and form are important

Privacy

- Students believe that email is private
- They believe that faculty and prospective employers don't look online
- Posts can come back to haunt them in future

Role of the advisor: helping students...

- To understand what they are likely to encounter
- To understand expectations in the classroom and online
- To be self-directed

Do's for students

- Use good time-management skills
- Read the course description & assignments carefully
- Post early in discussions
- Look back later to see what others (and the teacher) have said

Do's for students

- Use good grammar and spelling in class posts
- Cite your sources!
- Email the teacher with questions

Don'ts for students

- Don't wait until the last minute
- Don't use chat-speak in class posts
- Don't think that you can copy and paste (plagiarize) without getting caught
- Don't be afraid to ask for help

Ideas from the audience

- Have a clear subject line in your email.
- Need for a computer: You need to check at least a few times a week.
- To know if there is something you need to do, be sure you pay attention to when the teacher tells you assignments will be posted or due – pay attention to the weekly assignments and course syllabus.
- It takes longer to write than to speak – plan ahead.

Ideas from the audience, cont.

- Remind students that this is writing – there are no nonverbal cues like when speaking. Sarcasm and humor don't work well online.

- Observe proper etiquette – you do not know who is reading. Be clear and specific in email messages.

- Watch the use of acronyms – make sure you define the acronym the first time you use it.

Ideas from the audience, cont.

- For vocabulary help, use an online dictionary. There are dictionaries for specific fields, too. You may want to use an online translation tool to give you a rough idea. Use a study group.
- Professional mailing lists can be helpful
- It's hard to find the right type of online program – there are few sites that evaluate fully online programs.

Resources –handout

- Learner autonomy
- Learning styles
- Online learning
- Plagiarism
- Time management

It's not so different…

Students need to remember:

- Good study habits and time management skills work online and face-to-face
- Help is available – ask for it

Your suggestions

- Take a writing course in your own language to improve your skills – writing and reading skills transfer.

- Learn to type with the new language keyboard.

- Make friends and use them to help you succeed in a course.

- Take it seriously – you need to have enough time to do the work in an online class. Online doesn't mean easy.

Your suggestions, cont.

- Accreditation
  - Double-check to be sure the program is accredited and the accrediting body is appropriate. Do a Google search.
  - The State of Oregon keeps a list of diploma mills – for all of the US.
  - REAC office can help check the status of the program