DIGITAL EDUCATION STRATEGIES

GUIDE FOR ONLINE COURSE DEVELOPMENT

THE G. RAYMOND CHANG SCHOOL OF CONTINUING EDUCATION AT RYERSON UNIVERSITY
Our Mission

To be a leader in innovative quality lifelong learning that empowers adults to reach their life and career goals.

Our Vision

To be the leading continuing education provider for adult learners and partner organizations. As leaders, we will be known for our passion for lifelong learning, the relevance and responsiveness of our programs, our ground-breaking work in quality approaches to adult education, the strength of our people, and our teamwork.

Our Values

Accessibility • Flexibility • Innovation • Quality • Relevance • Respect • Responsibility • Teamwork and Collegiality
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Introduction

Welcome to the *Guide for Online Course Development*! This is a partner publication to the *Guide to Online Teaching for Instructors*, issued by The G. Raymond Chang School of Continuing Education, Ryerson University. Please consult both resources as part of professional development in developing and delivering online courses at The Chang School.

The Chang School is committed to providing students with an effective and engaging online learning experience that supports their personal and professional learning goals. Each Chang School Program Area is responsible for administering the development of online courses in their respective areas, while Digital Education Strategies provides the technical and instructional design support to the online development process.

This Guide highlights best practices for the development of online courses as adopted by The Chang School. It contains five parts:

- Part 1. Best Practices & Creative Possibilities
- Part 2. Digital Education Strategies – Partners & Process
- Part 3. Purposeful Design of Online Course Elements
- Part 4. Assessment of Online Students
- Part 5. Technology

In addition to improving student learning and instructor teaching experiences and outcomes, these guidelines will help ensure that your online development is in compliance with University policies, including those concerning course management, academic integrity, and academic appeals.
Part 1: Best Practices & Creative Possibilities

The DES Approach

Digital Education Strategies (DES) has been supporting collaboration between The Chang School Program Areas and Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) in the development of online courses for over ten years. Providing a team rich with online learning expertise in instructional design, audio, and video production, the development of learning objects, instructor support, and the management of online courses, DES looks forward to every opportunity to share our knowledge, make recommendations, and to learn from our partners. Our mutual goals of successful student outcomes and engaging learning make DES and SME/Academic Coordinator (AC) partnerships valuable and rewarding. The many lessons we have learned over the years about online learning and the highly collaborative nature of our development framework allows us to work across all Ryerson University disciplines effectively.

Why Online? The Benefits for Students, Instructors, and Institutions

How does the option of well-designed online learning provide benefits to students, instructors, and institutions?

For students, the option to learn anytime, anywhere is highly valuable in a busy knowledge economy. Online learning is delivered through the use of secure and private learning and content management systems, emphasizing practice in collaboration, communication, research, analysis, and problem solving. The development of these skills through learning and practice represents a strong advantage for students. In the development of online courses, special attention is given to adult learning theory and pedagogy as well as accessibility and life-work-learning balance. Online students at The Chang School represent a diverse population of adult learners at all stages of professional development. This diversity creates engaging opportunities for online community building through use of course discussion boards.

As part of “anytime, anywhere” access for teaching online courses, instructors also experience benefits. They can access and moderate discussion boards asynchronously; communicate clearly with students through the use of
announcements; and develop and add materials that supplement the core course notes and keep courses current. Online teaching allows for increased interaction with students that might be logistically challenging in a lecture hall, especially with large classes. The content for online courses is developed in advance of course delivery, leaving more time for facilitation, interaction, and assessment as the course is running.

For institutions such as The Chang School, the availability of high quality, instructor-led online courses expands opportunities to serve a wide variety of students who cannot, or do not wish, to take courses face-to-face on campus. Students are requesting online certificates and degrees at an ever-increasing rate, and The Chang School strives to meet the requests of these students with well-designed online learning choices.

Setting the Stage for Student Success

What are the recommended elements of a high-quality online course?

Several articles and research findings on online education literature discuss the quality of online courses from an instructional design perspective. The Chang School practice in online course development aligns with adult learning and constructivist theories. These theories indicate that learning should be student-centred and activity-based so learners may construct and co-construct knowledge for themselves with the expert guidance of an instructor.

While the success of an online course rests in part with the quality and experience of the instructor, the design of the core materials and activities significantly impacts student success. Elements such as the management of instructor and student workload, instructor and student engagement, the currency and relevance of materials to professional practice, academic rigour, clarity of expectations, and the efficacy of examples and practice opportunities all contribute to positive student experiences and outcomes.
Seven Principles for Online Course Development

The principles below, based on Chickering and Gamson’s *Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education* (1987)\(^1\), offer recommendations that set up course instructors and learners for success through effective course design.

**Principle 1: Maximize learner-instructor contact**

Courses should be designed to encourage as much support and communication as possible between learners and instructors.

- *Clarify communication channels*. Using multiple locations (e.g., the Course Outline and introductory module), clearly describe the way(s) that learners can contact their instructor directly following Ryerson University’s policies regarding student and instructor privacy.
- *Use discussion boards*. Design discussion forums to allow maximum learner-learner discourse with appropriate opportunities for instructor facilitation, feedback, and motivational support for student learning.
- *Allow opportunity for content enrichment*. Individual instructors teaching the course should be able to add personal content and unique learner resources to enrich the course delivery.

**Principle 2: Support peer-to-peer contact, teaching, and learning**

You can help learners to build a strong learning community, which will allow them to feel connected and provide opportunities for them to learn from each other.

- *Empower learners* with peer-to-peer teaching opportunities by including collaborative activities and assessments such as learner-moderated discussion forums, wikis, and group projects and presentations that include a peer evaluation component.
- *Provide clear guidelines*. Ensure participation guidelines are clearly articulated in the Course Outline, including netiquette. If learner participation is to be evaluated, a rubric or details about assessment criteria should be articulated.

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Part 1: Best Practices & Creative Possibilities

Principle 3: Emphasize active learning and applied practice

Learners need to work on activities that allow them to practice what they are learning as it is applied in the real world of their discipline. Ensure that there are targeted learning objectives, content, issues, and activities relevant and current for the specific learners.

- Incorporate professional practice. Provide opportunities for instructors to discuss their professional practice and use applied practice examples (e.g., case studies and short narrative).
- Support learners in emulating current professional practice by including activities and assignments that require them to practice, demonstrate, research, explore, and problem solve.
- Encourage connections. Provide learners with strategies to increase face-to-face interaction with practitioners in their community or workplace.

Principle 4: Provide prompt feedback

Learners need to know if their comprehension matches course expectations.

- Design interactive self-assessments that provide immediate feedback.
- Design discussion forums, to be used on a week-by-week basis, with opportunities for the instructor to participate and provide formative and summative feedback.
- Design graded assessments for effective online use and ensure that they can be returned quickly with constructive feedback from the instructor.

Principle 5: Hold learners responsible for course tasks and timelines

Support learners in establishing professional standards for time and project management.

- Clearly and frequently communicate course requirements and deadlines for assignments, activities, and discussion board participation.
- Clarify student support opportunities at The Chang School, such as course FAQs or Q&A discussion forums, online help, email, or phone.
- Include a recommended course workflow for learners, with time management advice for large or multi-stage projects.
Principle 6: Expect high-quality work and comprehension

Adult learners will work to the standards modeled in the course.

- *Test prior knowledge.* Provide an opportunity for learners to test their prior knowledge at the start of the course.
- *Clearly articulate the scope and focus* of the course so that learners may know if this course fits with their abilities.
- *Provide learning objectives* that articulate the work and level of performance learners should be able to acquire at the completion of each module.
- *Communicate expectations.* Clearly articulate assignment expectations and include high-quality examples in the Course Outline and content.

Principle 7: Respect diverse experiences and support different learning styles

Ensure that course materials and activities support learner diversity.

- *Draw on learner experiences.* Encourage learners to reference prior knowledge and life experiences in discussion and assessments.
- *Provide opportunities.* Offer learners options regarding research methods and topics, presentation formats, and collaborative project outcomes.
- *Use different learning approaches.* Course content should address a variety of learning approaches with a mix of images, diagrams, text, audio, video, analytical and tactile exercises, and activities.

Consult with your ID for additional information about these principles and additional recommendations for online course quality.
Part 2: Digital Education Strategies – Partners & Process

Partners in Online Course Development – Roles and Responsibilities

Digital Education Strategies (DES) is a Chang School team working in collaboration with Ryerson University stakeholders. Every online course offered by The Chang School is produced and delivered through DES.

The following are the roles that are part of a typical online course development.

Principal Partners

There are three principal participants in every online course development. Clear communication between these three experts ensures that online course development project management progresses smoothly toward deliverables.

Subject Matter Expert (SME)

A SME is hired under a non-teaching contract by The Chang School Program Area to develop all pedagogic aspects of the online course. This means that you, the SME, agree to provide content for the course in the form of selected readings, learning objectives, course materials, rich media, and assessments that exemplify effective teaching in your discipline. You will create and submit all materials to be posted in the online course, typically 12 modules of content and module 13 as a final exam or final due date for essays or projects. Please note, Intellectual Property is addressed in the development contract and can be discussed further at the initial Kick-off Meeting. You will collaborate with your Academic Coordinator (AC) and Instructional Designer (ID) to ensure that the online course represents relevance, currency, and best pedagogical practices. SMEs who develop an online course will normally be offered the opportunity to teach the course the first time it is offered. Throughout the balance of this Guide, a fictional SME named George will be used to demonstrate typical questions and issues that arise in the development of online courses with DES.
Academic Coordinator (AC)

The AC is the liaison between the faculty-based school/department at Ryerson and The Chang School. Your AC works in partnership with the Chang School Program Area to oversee Program Area needs for the course with respect to learning objectives, course content, and alignment with classroom versions (if any) of the course. Your AC should work directly with you to support the delivery of content milestones. Often, ACs support and assist SMEs in decision-making regarding readings and other content choices. ACs are responsible for ensuring that required course textbooks are ordered and that term-to-term permission for course readings and copyright materials are renewed. ACs submit final approval of all milestones in the development process. For the purposes of our fictional development, mentioned above, a fictional AC, Mary, will be supporting the development of the online course. Mary’s responsibilities, concerns, and guidance represent an amalgamation of AC experiences in our process.

Instructional Designer (ID)

DES assigns an ID to every online course development. The ID is the main point of contact for you and your AC for all aspects of the development. IDs have expertise in adult learning principles, best practices for student engagement, use of technology, learning activities, assessments, writing style for online courses, online instruction, and project management. An ID can act as a guide through new technologies, pedagogies, and sources of open content for you. An ID will support you throughout course planning as well as the creation of course content. To support an illustration of DES processes, the ID working with George and Mary in the case examples for this Guide will be David. His advice and support are typical of those provided by DES in each online course development.

Supporting Roles

There are many important supporting participants in every online course development. All of those listed below may or may not be involved in every course development, but they each contribute daily to the production of highly-engaging, top-quality online course offerings.
The DES Team

**Administrative Coordinator** – This member of the DES team is responsible for the receipt and management of Course Development Request Forms (CDRFs) from Program Areas and all subsequent contracts related to the course development once it is underway. The Administrative Coordinator receives signed contracts and works with University systems to ensure you are added to the Human Resources system and acquire a Ryerson ID, which provides access to Ryerson email, the Ryerson Library and courses under development. Among other course development support services, the Administrative Coordinator works in partnership with IDs and DES Managers to lead milestone date tracking and process milestone payments based on Program Area approvals.

**Instructor Support Specialist** – This member of the DES team is responsible for ensuring you and your AC receive training as well as access to tutorials and resources for Ektron (the CMS or content management system to which course content is uploaded) and Blackboard (the LMS or learning management system).

**Production Editor** – This member of DES assists with Course Readings organization and the acquisition of copyright permissions for images, diagrams, and third-party rich media materials. The Production Editor also conducts a Quality Assurance review of every module developed and uploaded.

**Web Editor** – This member of the DES team is responsible for the upload of Course Outlines and modules. The Web Editor may also be involved in the upload of images, diagrams, audio, video, and learning objects.

**Video Production Editor** – This member of the DES team is responsible for audio and video recording and editing. You may request rich media options for your courses, such as video interviews, voice-annotated PowerPoint, or Screen Capture options and simple audio interviews, to achieve learning objectives and enhance content. The addition of video interviews is a valuable, but time-intensive process. You and your AC must be certain you understand the process and requirements of accessibility for rich media before deciding to create original audio or video materials.

**Web Developer** – This member of the DES team may assist with the development of learning objects or special web design components of course content. When SMEs describe a need for creative instructional strategies in the form of interactive learning objects, the developer may be consulted to determine what is possible. If the scope of a learning object development is longer than one term, the project may still move forward to enrich future deliveries of the course or other courses that might benefit from the development. Reusable
learning objects (activities that may be repurposed for other courses and disciplines) are the best choice for web development.

Program Area Participants

Similar to the DES team, the following Program Area representatives are actively involved in some, but not all, course developments.

Program Directors – All online courses are developed based on requests from the Program Directors. They serve as representatives of The Chang School in 6 program (or academic) areas (Arts, Business, Communication and Design, Community Services, Engineering, Architecture and Science, and Gateway) and work with ACs in their Program Area to manage the academic and business affairs for their Area.

Faculty Reviewer/Mentor – Some DES online course developments involve undergraduate degree electives that require increased faculty review and involvement to ensure that Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations (UDLEs) and classroom versions of the course are in alignment. In a similar role to the AC, the Faculty Reviewer or Mentor will be involved at the milestone stages for feedback and approvals. He/she will be copied on all course development communication.

Resource Specialists

Readings and resource materials are key elements of every online course. DES liaises with two key units to support you and your Program Area in this aspect of your course development. As your readings are sent to our Production Editor, they are forwarded to the Ryerson Library.

Ryerson Library – A staff member at the Ryerson University Library (reserve@ryerson.ca) is available to assist with developing “Course Readings” (formerly called E-Reserve), which are links to articles and digital media content either held in the library collection or obtained from other sources, with due consideration of copyright. The Library also arranges the printing of Course Readers (also known as Course Packs or Reprotexts).

Ryerson Bookstore – Required texts and Course Readers are sold through the Ryerson Bookstore. Students may purchase required materials either in person or online through the Bookstore website. Details of the required course materials are found in the course shell once it is released (typically one week prior to course start). Your AC is responsible for ordering required texts just
Part 2: Digital Education Strategies – Partners & Process

after the Draft Course Outline Presentation milestone. Any delay in ordering materials may result in a delay for students obtaining them at the course start.

George’s Story

George is a part-time instructor with an MA in History, who has been teaching at The Chang School for two years. He has been approached by the Director of the Arts Program Area to develop an online version of the course he currently teaches in the classroom, called History of Aboriginal Peoples in Newfoundland and Labrador. George has never taught online or developed an online course, but he has a solid understanding of classroom teaching and basic technology. George is interested in online instruction as part of his professional development and wishes to learn more about online technology and pedagogy in his field of expertise. Note: The characters George (SME), Mary (the AC), and David (the ID) are fictionalized to represent typical partners in Chang School online course developments.

George’s Perspective about the Team

George asks, “Will I have to be in contact with all of these people and resources?” David assures George that, as the ID, he is George and Mary’s main point of contact for all course development issues. George and Mary may need to work with the Production Editor on copyright, the Ryerson Library or Bookstore to organize readings issues or the Video Production Editor if there will be original audio or video, but David is his primary DES liaison. All communication with David is conducted through dehelp@ryerson.ca.
Online Course Development Process and Deliverables

The Chang School uses a rapid online course development model to meet the high demand for online courses while ensuring compliance with adult education best practices. This model pairs an ID with a SME to develop content and delivery methods, to which your AC provides academic advice and school/department approval of all content and materials. Figure 1 represents a diagram of the process.

Figure 1. The online course development process at The Chang School.
Key Elements of the Course Development Process

Kick-off Meeting

In consultation with you, your AC, and any additional stakeholders, the ID arranges a date and time for the course Kick-off Meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to establish a plan for the development of the course and review of the online course development process details.

Course Planning Meeting

This meeting typically takes place between you and the ID approximately one week after the Kick-off Meeting. Your AC is always welcome to attend course development meetings. The purpose of this session is to review the broad topics of the modules for the course and discuss the learning objectives to be covered in each. Methods for presenting content, as well as online assessments, will be reviewed. The Draft Course Outline Template is the document that supports course planning and is provided to you by the ID. The template provides space for you to articulate topics, learning objectives, readings, and instructional strategies to be approved by your AC.

Draft Course Outline Presentation (Milestone 1)

This is a key presentation meeting for you, your AC, the ID, and any other stakeholders in the course development, such as Program Directors or Faculty Reviewers. This is your opportunity to present the road map of how the finished course will be developed with respect to course and module learning objectives, teaching strategies, readings, rich media, and assessments. Your AC must approve the Draft Course Outline.

Course Readings Request Form

An important document that is due with the approved Draft Course Outline is the Course Readings Request Form, which must be completed by you and submitted to the ID. Reading requests will be forwarded to the Production Editor to coordinate requests for course readings with the Ryerson Library, to check links for validity and to determine whether there are any copyright challenges.
Rich Media: Videos, Audio, Learning Objects

In some cases, if your online course development requires the addition of rich media or learning objects, the details of these requests should be finalized by the end of Milestone 1.

Two Modules (Milestone 2)

Two modules, not necessarily modules 1 and 2 in the sequential course plan, are developed by you, sent to the ID for feedback and online recommendations, and then sent to your AC for any academic feedback. Once the modules are fully revised by you, they are forwarded to the ID for upload.

First 50% of Content (Milestone 3)

As you complete each module, it should be forwarded to your AC for feedback, then revised if necessary and forwarded to the ID for upload.

Copyright Permissions Form

For each individual third-party image, diagram, audio, or video clip that you wish to include in the course materials, a copyright permissions form must be filled out and forwarded to the ID by this milestone. This form is used by DES to seek permissions for such materials.

Final Review and Approval of Completed Online Modules (Milestone 4)

The final review of a finished course is conducted by the DES Production Editor (a Quality Assurance check for typos, formatting issues, broken links, or incomplete information). The uploaded course materials will also be reviewed by your AC and/or a Faculty Reviewer to examine for academic issues. An AC Checklist that provides an evaluation rubric for well-designed online courses can be obtained from DES. A copy of this checklist is found in Appendix F.

Remaining 50% of Content, Assignment Details and Final Course Outline

At this milestone, you will continue to forward modules to the ID as they are finalized. Details for each student assignment, including quizzes and exams, must be organized into individual assignment documents to be reviewed by the ID and your AC prior to course approval. The final Course Outline is the document that students will rely on for scheduling and assignment details.
Workflow – Project Management

The milestone dates in the contracts signed by you and your Reviewers must be adhered to in order to keep the development process working effectively. The agreed-upon deadlines allow DES enough time for copyright clearance, uploading of all modules, and Quality Assurance prior to the start of the course.

George’s Concerns

After the Kick-off Meeting, the email summary from David outlined the next steps for George in the course development process. David included the Draft Course Outline Template, so it’s clear that George needs to fill out the “road map” for what will happen in each module. George is feeling overwhelmed by the amount of planning and writing he will need to do to get the course completed. It seems much more complicated than he realized, and he has never written down his full lectures. He just has weekly outlines, PowerPoint files, handouts, and the course textbook to rely on!

David schedules the Course Planning Meeting with George to walk through these and many other details and to develop a time management workflow with George that will help George deliver all the materials needed within the timelines of the development.

David will assist George to determine the amount of content needed for each module, after considering how George may rely on rich media, images, diagrams, audio, video, and third-party materials (George does not need to reinvent the wheel on every topic in his specialty). He will also suggest ways that George can apply his expertise and use the course notes to elaborate on topics covered in the textbook and readings. Mary also has extensive experience in History and can provide academic support and advice about assessments and resources, and she represents the needs of the department.

The use of the discussion board, with well-framed topics and activities is one of the best ways for students to learn in an online course. George needs to consider how to use this new medium for student learning, and David is here to help.
Part 3: Purposeful Design of Online Course Elements

Fully Online Versus Hybrid Course Development

There are two different types of developments in The Chang School’s online courses. The first is a fully online development. In fully online developments, it is assumed that students will not be required to attend face-to-face sessions. All content and participation takes place in the online environment. Final exams may be delivered either fully online, in person at the Ryerson University campus, or through arrangement with remote proctors (if the students reside more than 100km from Ryerson University).

When a Program Area determines it is a key instructional strategy for the students and instructor to meet face-to-face, at least some of the time, a hybrid course will be developed. The number of face-to-face sessions that occur may vary over the term but represent between 12 and 24 hours of a typical 39-hour course.

For additional information about hybrid courses, review the Hybrid Model document at https://de.ryerson.ca/portals/de/resources.html

Learning Objectives

Topics are typically a brief list of information that will be presented in a module. Learning objectives, on the other hand, are the measurable skills students should be able to accomplish once they have completed readings, a review of materials and the module instructional activities. Learning objectives are a frame around which you can build your content. Once a learning objective has been set, it is easier to find suitable content and activities to support learning. Clearly stated learning objectives also make it easier for instructors to assess student work.
TIP - Topics ≠ Learning Objectives!

Learning objectives are:

- Specific
- Observable
- Measurable

Writing Learning Objectives

When writing learning objectives, it is important to remember to include three major components:

1. Condition(s): the condition(s) under which the student will perform the task
2. Action verb: a description of what the student will be able to do
3. Standard: the criteria for evaluating student performance

Examples of Well Written Learning Objectives

- After completing the required readings (condition), you will be able to correctly diagnose (action verb) a patient with acute gastroenteritis within five minutes (standard).
- After reading through the module case study (condition), you will be able to plan (action verb) a marketing campaign following the formatting guidelines and due date provided by the instructor (standard).
- After exploring the module and taking part in the discussion (condition), you will be able to apply the strategies (action verb) to handle complaints in a business environment to the case study and provide written internal and external service protocols similar to the instructor’s example (standard).
George’s Learning Objectives

As part of George’s work on the Draft Course Outline, he is thinking hard about learning objectives. In his classroom course, he has listed topics for each module’s lecture, but never explicitly stated what students should be able to do after participating in learning at the end of each module. Below are a list of George’s topics and learning objectives for module 1. They are reworded with David’s support.

Topics:

1. The Geographic and Native History of Newfoundland and Labrador
2. First Peoples
3. Media Portrayal of Natives

Learning Objectives:

1. Given a series of readings and maps, students will use the discussion board to describe the geographic aspects of Newfoundland and Labrador that have impacted the migration and settlement patterns of Natives in those regions.
2. Utilizing research methods and writing style as described by the instructor, students will list and profile four different tribes in the Newfoundland and Labrador region as phase one of the regional profile project.
3. After watching the video “How to Build an Igloo,” students will use the discussion board to describe the positive and negative portrayal of Inuit people in a 1949 documentary.

It is becoming clear to George that the development of carefully worded learning objectives helps identify the content and materials needed in the module. The objectives also indicate how students may be assessed. George now has a model to use to write learning objectives for the overall course and for the other modules.
Readings

Depending on the discipline, the use of readings in online courses, as in classroom courses, may be a strong addition to course materials. Readings may be drawn from a required course text with supplemental articles and public web links to present a variety of perspectives and sources. The Ryerson Library has an extensive collection of electronic reading resources that should be considered before any print-based options in online courses. All readings must have full copyright clearance in order to be included in online courses. In addition, you should ensure that any reading choices are fully accessible for students with disabilities. If you are unsure how to achieve this, Digital Education Strategies (DES) or the Ryerson Library can provide you with guidance. A description of readings and their relevance should be referenced in module course notes, activities, and assessments.

For assistance with building course readings, a Course Readings Request Guideline and Course Readings Request Form is available from your ID. You submit the Course Readings Request Form to DES by the third contract milestone. The form is forwarded to the Library for copyright clearance and posting to the Blackboard shell. Any requests for print course packs must be made by Academic Coordinators (ACs) to the Library at reserve@ryerson.ca at least four weeks prior to semester start-up.

You can search the Ryerson Library online, or use the services of subject area librarians to identify relevant copyright-cleared electronic Course Reserves. For more information, see: www.ryerson.ca/library/info/reserve/ereserve.html. For any course readings-related inquiries, please contact reserve@ryerson.ca.
George’s Readings Requests

George has a required text as part of the course, which he has discussed with Mary. Mary will ensure that the text is ordered by contacting The Chang School Bookstore liaison. As part of his instructional strategy, George will use one chapter per module from the required text.

George has an extensive list of supplemental readings (some required, some suggested) that he has used in the classroom. In the past, he has arranged for readings at the Ryerson Library to be held for his students. He also has a large collection of maps of Newfoundland and Labrador as handouts. He is looking for some guidance from David about online readings and handouts.

David advises George to consider two issues when selecting readings for his course, instructional strategy, and student workload. Questions George may consider are: Does this reading support the learning objectives? Do I elaborate on the reading and help the students see its relevance through the use of course notes? If the answer is no to either question, he should probably leave the reading out. George may also consider the number of tasks students must complete on a module-by-module basis. The DES Instructor Resources page contains a Student Workload Calculator that may assist George’s decision-making.

Readings that can be accessed electronically (e.g., journals that the Library subscribes to, electronic books, and collections of audio and video files that can be streamed to online students) are the first and best choice for online students. There is no additional fee for these materials, and they are accessible to students in remote locations. George is in favour of saving students money.

Public web links in George’s discipline are widely available. Native issues are frequently discussed in Canadian current events, and many government and Native rights organizations maintain websites with resources. Web links can be copied and pasted right into module course notes so students can immediately view the content as part of workflow.

George’s maps will be reviewed by the DES Production Editor to determine options for obtaining copyright permissions. Alternatives may be suggested, based on ever-increasing web resources. Google Maps and Google Earth may also provide George with options.
Module Content – How to Write for Online Courses

According to usability expert Jacob Nielsen, 79% of people scan web pages. Eye-tracking visualizations show that users typically scan them in “F” or “Z” shaped patterns, reading the top heading, some text in the middle and then scanning the page in a vertical stripe.

Users scan pages because:

• reading on a screen is tiring for the eyes and 25% slower than reading on paper
• the nature of the web is such that users quickly get the information they need and move on
• for these reasons, students often miss out on important information if they do not print out the pages. Taking the time to write effectively for an online reading environment contributes to student success and is a recommended practice

Making the Learning Experience More Pleasant and Productive

To ensure that students get the most out of their learning experience, it is a good idea to:

• highlight keywords (hypertext links serve as one form of highlighting)
• use meaningful headings and sub-headings
• develop one idea per paragraph (users will skip over any additional ideas if they are not caught by the first few words in the paragraph)
• use the inverted pyramid style (start with the conclusion)
• use very clear and concise writing (e.g., short paragraphs)
• show numbers as numerals, which often stop the wandering eye
• use space to reinforce the organization of a text by chunking
• use lists sparingly, so the page does not look cluttered
• use the active voice (narrative uses direct, action verbs to convey information)
• use an informal tone
• use storytelling, analogies, and examples for engagement
Examples of Texts Formatted for the Web

**Text before:**

Financial planning is the development and implementation of a comprehensive plan designed to achieve established financial objectives. This process concentrates on your current financial requirements for funds and the establishment of a targeted financial position and outcome. Further, it provides a monitor of your progress, allowing revisions to be made when necessary.

**Text after (more concise and conversational):**

Financial planning involves balancing your day-to-day needs with your long-term goals, and monitoring your progress along the way.

**Text before:**

Several of the nursing interventions for the client with fatigue are based on the teaching principles of pacing, priority setting, and energy conservation. Pacing (Carpenito 2000) involves planning the activities for the day to allow short rest periods so that fatigue produced by over-activity is prevented. An example of pacing is to teach the client to lie down for twenty to thirty minutes after arriving home from work in the late afternoon, before starting dinner for the family.

In priority setting, the client is taught to prioritize tasks that must be accomplished each day and pace themselves so that these can be accomplished. At first, the client may overestimate the number of tasks, but eventually they will learn to be more realistic. Teach clients to plan to complete high-priority tasks when their energy level is at its peak.

Energy conservation includes rearranging home and work environments to minimize obstacles in performing tasks and to consolidate similar tasks. One example is arranging items in home or office work areas to have items used more frequently closer to the workspace.

**Text after (a table provides organization and highlights key concepts):**

Several of the nursing interventions for the client with fatigue are based on the teaching principles of pacing, priority setting, and energy conservation.
### Teaching Principle | What to Tell Client | Example
---|---|---
**Pacing** | Over-activity produces fatigue. Plan activities for the day to allow short rest periods. | Lie down for 20 to 30 minutes after arriving home from work. |
**Priority Setting** | Prioritize tasks that you have to do each day and pace yourself so that these can be accomplished. At first, you may overestimate the number of tasks, but eventually you’ll learn to be more realistic. | Plan to complete high-priority tasks when your energy level is at its peak. |
**Energy Conservation** | Rearrange your home and work environments to minimize obstacles in performing tasks and to consolidate similar tasks. | Arrange items in your home or office work areas to have items used more frequently closer to the workspace. |

### Instructional Strategies and Activities

#### Instructional Strategies

Instructional strategies are the way SMEs present the content students must learn in order to meet the stated learning objectives. They represent the “how” of course content delivery. In traditional classrooms, the how of content delivery has often been the instructor delivering a lecture, possibly with activities and facilitation. In the online environment, there are many rich opportunities to engage students in your subject area.

Online instructional strategies may include:

- use of a required course textbook and/or supplemental readings
- course notes
- use of the discussion board to engage community-building, research skills, and critical thinking
Part 3: Purposeful Design of Online Course Elements

• interactive learning objects that provide exploration of a topic
• activities or short, ungraded tasks that reinforce terminology and concepts
• online role-play (DES has its own online role-play software called Lake Devo)
• video and audio examples
• rich media (images, drawings, diagrams, animations, and/or maps)

You are encouraged to discuss how you teach in your classrooms, what teaching techniques you believe work well in your discipline and how those techniques might work in the online environment.

Activities

Activities are a subset of instructional strategies, which present opportunities for students to apply and practice what they are learning through the use of brief, often ungraded tasks. Activities may be shared with the instructor or peers or act as self-assessments. In self-assessment activities, students can determine whether or not they are approaching the successful completion of learning objectives. Activities are sometimes grouped as part of a participation mark (differentiated from individually graded assignments or exams). Activities represent formative evaluation for concepts, terminology, and the development of critical thinking and analysis skills.

Activities may include:

• use of the discussion board to explore concepts student-to-student
• blogs or reflection journals
• short self-assessments such as multiple choice or True/False quizzes embedded in course notes
• polls or surveys where class results are immediately shared
• use of graphic organizers (PDFs or tables) to guide readings or student reflection
• games or matching exercises with instant feedback (assessment learning objects)

Appendix D contains options for reusable learning objects (interactive activities) that online course developers may include to support learning objectives.
Part 3: Purposeful Design of Online Course Elements

George's Instructional Strategies

As part of his course planning, George has listed instructional strategies for Module 1. They include:

- Video presentation: NFB video “How to Build an Igloo”
- Discussion board topics related to the video and readings
- Course notes addressing the learning objectives
- Historic map series of Newfoundland and Labrador for student review
- Description of research practices related to Phase 1 of Assignment 1
- Readings: Chapter 1 of the text and two required articles

David finds this list comprehensive and well aligned with the learning objectives for the module. He suggests that George might consider a self-assessment activity for students based on the historic geography of the regions. It may be possible for DES to assist George with a map-based, interactive learning object with rollovers or clickable features that reveal additional information.

Rich Media

Rich Media – Images, Diagrams, Audio, Video, and Interactive Learning Objects

One of the key goals for DES is to help create online learning that is an immersive, engaging experience for students and instructors. The tools we use to accomplish this goal are only as effective as the instructional strategies they support. Through the use of rich media – audio, video, images, diagrams, and interactive learning objects – we invite students to become involved, to learn through demonstration and storytelling and to show what they have learned through interaction, critical thinking and community practice.

When and how to use rich media must be tied to course learning objectives, the type of content presented and the assessment methods that maximize constructive student learning. The following sections provide guidelines for the use of rich media in online course materials. We welcome discussion and exploration of all possibilities with you.
Part 3: Purposeful Design of Online Course Elements

Please see the Rich Media guide available through the Instructor Resources section at http://de.ryerson.ca. This resource provides detailed advice on how to choose and implement rich media in your course.

Copyright

Third-party materials such as images, tables, graphs, videos, or text can enhance an online course. However, laws governing use of copyrighted material in the classroom do not necessarily apply to online use. For this reason, written permission must be obtained from the copyright holder before any third-party content is uploaded to Ektron or Blackboard.

Copyright may also apply to material found on the Internet. Although a website may be openly accessible, use of the content itself may require specific permission.

DES will work with you to secure permission from the copyright holder for third-party materials to be used within your online course that do not constitute course readings (e.g., tables, figures, and images). You should complete and submit the copyright permission form, available at de.ryerson.ca, if you would like DES to assist in seeking permission. The process of obtaining permission can take time – sometimes several months. It is important to submit permission forms to DES as early as possible (at least eight weeks before course start-up is recommended). If there are any issues in obtaining permission, or if the copyright holder will not grant permission, you will be notified and asked to provide alternative material.

The following materials may require explicit written permission for online use:

- Photographs – may vary with the source; e.g., with Canadian photos (photos taken after 1948) copyright is based on the age (or date of death) of the photographer +50 years and therefore requires permission to use
- Drawings, paintings, illustrations, or cartoons (including those found through Google image search)
- Original graphics (flow charts, diagrams, schematics, or maps)
- Lengthy text excerpts (a copyright holder or publisher may set limits)
- Supplementary materials included with the required course textbook (special permission must be granted by publisher)
- Documents downloaded from the Internet, particularly from member or password-protected sites
The following materials do not require permission for online use:

- Tables created by the SME, based on third-party data
- Simple graphs (e.g., basic histogram or pie chart)
- Photographs in the public domain – may vary with the source, but Canadian photos taken before 1948 may not be covered by copyright
- Images in most government-produced documents
- Documents published by the Ontario Government
- Any image explicitly declared to be in the public domain
- Any original drawing, photo, or other image created by the SME (requires written agreement to use)

If you intend to secure copyright permissions for third-party materials yourself, please ensure:

- copyright permission is given to Ryerson University and not to you;
- written consent from the copyright holder includes the item title, the name of the author/copyright holder, the terms of use (e.g., for online use, for x number of years, etc.) and any fees involved;
- the written consent and any hard copies of third-party material are sent to DES at dehelp@ryerson.ca or faxed to 416-979-5148; and
- DES is provided with an electronic copy of such third-party material.

For more information on copyright, go to de.ryerson.ca, select Instructor Resources in the top navigation menu, and read the Copyright FAQs and Tips document.
As part of his classroom teaching practice, George has been using maps, images, diagrams, and videos in his instruction. As part of online copyright management, George has to consider where he gathered these materials, whether or not they are royalty- or copyright-free and, if not, how to get permissions.

Some questions posed by David may help George’s decision-making:

- Are the materials a valuable enhancement toward achieving the learning objectives?
- Can substitutions be made where the source is known (e.g., images that can be purchased through iStockphoto)?
- Will the rights to use materials be expensive to obtain (e.g., Hollywood movies cannot be obtained)?
- Does the Ryerson Library already own the rights to a resource that might work?
- Are there publicly available links as alternatives?
- Can students purchase materials directly for a reasonable fee (e.g., rent a movie)?

The search for these answers does involve some research time for George, but both David and the DES Production Editor can support and advise.

The Integrated Accessibility Standards of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) impacts course design, as online courses are expected to be usable for all members of The Chang School community.

You are responsible for the following tasks to maximize accessibility for students with visual, hearing, or physical barriers to online course content:

- A short description (10-20 words) must be provided for all images and diagrams used in your course
- A descriptive summary of a table must be provided (10-20 words) as well as clear column and row headings
- Audio and video files must be transcribed and the transcription included with your module
• Images of video files must be described (included in the transcription)

For more information on accessibility guidelines:

• Please visit the Accessibility section under Ektron: Course Materials in our online help guide at de.ryerson.ca/help/instructor for advice in Ektron editing.

• Please visit the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services website at http://www.mcss.gov.on.ca where you will find the Accessibility Standard for Information and Communications.
Part 4: Assessment of Online Students

Planning student assessment is a matter of ensuring that students have achieved the stated learning objectives, either module by module or for the overall course through an appropriate method. Assessments are differentiated from activities by the fact that they are part of the course grade. Typically, the Course Outline will include a rubric or Marking Scheme that defines the weight of each assessment.

Common forms of learner assessment are tests, quizzes, and multiple choice exams, but these shouldn’t be the sole means of online assessment. It is a good idea to use a variety of techniques, both formative and summative, to measure online learner performance.

Assessment Best Practices

The following are general best practices to consider:

- Use (grading) rubrics and provide high-quality examples for your assignments in order to establish learner performance expectations, e.g., what class participation, assignments, projects, etc. will look like and how much each component is worth.

- Consider using peer-to-peer evaluation for small assignments or assignment components. Ensure that you provide learners with guidelines for appropriate, positive feedback practices.

- Ensure your assessments include clear guidelines and expectations, e.g., what, when, where, and how to submit. Furthermore, you should provide a reasonable amount of time for students to work on the assignment. All instructions should be posted in both your Course Outline and the Blackboard Assignments area.

- Use the Blackboard Assignments drop box, rather than a personal or Ryerson email address, for the submission of assignments, term papers, projects, etc. See our online help guide for instructions on setting up the drop box.
Options for Assignments

The following options may be considered:

Collaborative Projects

Many online students at The Chang School are pursuing education as part of their individual professional development plan. Since collaborative work is an integral part of most working environments in today’s knowledge economy, the use and practice of collaborative skills (e.g., teamwork, project management, communication, personal and team responsibility for deliverables, peer-to-peer feedback and improvement processes and individual and team creativity) provide exceptionally rich opportunities for student learning.

Well-designed collaborative projects present clear expectations, instructions for the task, and examples of high-quality results. Best practice includes guidance for students on how to work well as a group, including key aspects such as respecting diversity, examining individual strengths, assigning roles, and communicating clearly.

Some examples of collaborative assessments include:

- **Real-World Problem Solving** - These types of activities allow learners to apply knowledge to real-world settings. Learners work under similar conditions using similar materials to those used in the field. Examples: simulations, role-playing, and group case studies

- **Project-based Assessment** - These require learners to create a group product (e.g., video or PowerPoint presentation). The assessments should require teamwork, the adoption of roles and responsibilities, learner time and effort, and demonstrate higher order thinking and problem solving skills. Examples: group presentations and wikis

Media Projects

As an alternative to traditional assignments such as essays, you may consider audio, video, images, diagrams, concept maps, newsletters, website designs, and many other media examples as output for assignments. Careful consultation with students to ensure that they understand how to use the tools to accomplish a media task is key, as well as ensuring that the tools do not present barriers to students. Not all students have a camera or access to a scanner, recording equipment, or video cameras. Often within groups, however, one or more students will have the equipment needed to support the project plan and
be able to share files with other group members. Giving students creative choices for their final output can address most barrier concerns and encourage participation and engagement of group members.

**Essays and Narrative**

Essays or narrative (e.g., short or long, journalism-style articles, poetry, or short stories) can often be strong, creative examples of student comprehension, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. As with collaborative projects, setting clear expectations for length, writing-style, and academic referencing, with examples of high-quality work, enable student success. Peer-to-peer evaluation of writing assignments (at one phase or another) allows students to see alternate perspectives and styles. When they provide each other with feedback, they are also teaching one another, which is one of the strongest possible factors affecting knowledge retention.

If you are concerned about academic integrity in your course, you should:

- Use performance-based or real-world-based assessments; it is difficult to plagiarize or purchase an assignment based on real-life situations known only to the learner.
- Encourage progressive testing. Ask learners to submit a series of shorter assignments or sections of their work as it is developed if the final assignment is an essay or large project. This will both help your learners to manage their time on the final project and help you to become more familiar with their writing style.
- Use the Turnitin tool for written assignment submissions. If you need assistance in setting this up in your course, please contact us at dehelp@ryerson.ca.
- All graded online assignments must comply with academic integrity principles for online assignments. Make sure that your students are aware of “Ryerson’s Student Code of Academic Conduct and Academic Integrity,” which can be found at ryerson.ca/ai.

**Online Tests and Exams**

Digital Education Strategies (DES) has a number of best practices–pedagogical, administrative and technical–for graded online quizzes and exams. For technical and administrative best practices, please see our Guide to Online Teaching. Some of our pedagogical best practices are listed here. These apply to courses offered both in person and online through Blackboard.
Pedagogy

In order to ensure your tests and exams are well implemented, please consider the following:

- All online tests and exams should be tied to course learning objectives and follow the seven principles for online course development outlined earlier in this Guide.
- Ensure test and exam instructions are clear, the time limits are reasonable and realistic, and the vocabulary is consistent with course materials.
- Consider including short activities in the course, like practice tests/self-quizzes, to promote a review of the materials as well as familiarize your learners with the types of questions and terminology that will be used in the test or exam.

If you are concerned about academic integrity in your online test or exam, you should:

- View online tests or exams as take home tests. By writing effective questions that test learner understanding at a higher cognitive level, you can effectively make collaboration, online searching, or an open textbook of little value to learners during an exam.
- Build the test or exam using pools of randomly chosen questions, to address the potential for collaboration or exam-sharing.
- Configure the test or exam to not release correct answers that could be communicated to other learners.
- Include The Chang School’s Academic Honesty Agreement in your test or exam. This agreement is similar to an “End User License Agreement.” It presents learners who will be taking part in online tests or exams with an abbreviated version of the Ryerson Learner Code of Academic Conduct. Learners can be asked to electronically “sign” their agreement to comply with this code before they proceed to their actual assessment. If you would like to include this feature in your test or exam, please contact dehelp@ryerson.ca.
- All graded online tests and exams must comply with academic integrity principles for online test and exams. Make sure that your students are aware of “Ryerson’s Student Code of Academic Conduct and Academic Integrity.”

For more information, please visit https://de.ryerson.ca/help or contact the Instructor Support Specialist at dehelp@ryerson.ca.
Part 4: Assessment of Online Students

George’s Assessments

George’s assessment rubric in the Course Outline looks like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation/Discussion Board</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Continuous (all modules)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic Profile (Group)</td>
<td>20% (15% project, 5% peer)</td>
<td>Assigned Session 2, Due Session 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Essay</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>Assigned Session 4, Due Session 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Session 13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During development of the details for these assessments, George asks David and Mary for some advice about discussion board rules, group work, and the amount of grading he (or another instructor) might be facing. He discusses the fact that his course sections will likely be large (50+ students) and needs some advice on instructor and student workload issues. David and Mary offer the following advice:

- DES has two documents that describe netiquette and discussion board rubrics found in the Instructor Resources section of the DES Portal (http://de.ryerson.ca). George can review and modify the documents based on his specific course/discipline needs.

- David also advises that students can be asked to prepare a discussion board reflection paper at the end of term to highlight their “best” five postings based on quality and their experience using the discussion board.
George’s Assessments (continued)

- From a student workload perspective, immediately placing students in smaller, random groups sets them up for smaller discussion forums (rather than full class) and gets them lined up for the Historic Profile Project.

- The Historic Profile Project should include a peer-to-peer evaluation mark where students rate each other’s participation in the final object (a map and some narrative). George should clarify student expectations by communicating how he may utilize this information in his own grading consideration. Students should also review each other’s projects in the discussion board and ask questions of other groups about their work.

- The Major Essay is a key component of the course from Mary’s view, representing the History Department’s academic standards for students. She will provide information and any support documents that will provide students with academic expectations.

- The final exam will be built in Blackboard, based on a large pool of questions. George (or another instructor) can monitor the discussion boards, pull from the required text and readings, and use publisher-provided questions (if available) to build the pool over the course of the term. The final exam does not need to be fully in place until close to the end of term. It is recommended that questions be revised frequently and presented randomly to reduce the possibility of academic misconduct. Alternately, Mary may advise that the exam be conducted face-to-face, on campus.
Part 5: Technology

The Learning and Content Management Systems

Digital Education Strategies (DES) delivers its courses using Blackboard, the learning management system (LMS) licensed and managed by Ryerson University. An LMS is software for delivering, tracking, and managing courses.

The online content (weekly “content”) and Course Outlines at The Chang School are housed and delivered using Ektron, the content management system (CMS) licensed and managed by DES. A CMS is a system used to manage the content of a website. Ektron enables you to organize, edit, and publish web-based instructional materials. Ektron also ensures consistency of navigation structure and design from course to course, and provides a platform that supports the delivery of multiple course sections through the use of a master course upon which additional sections are copied (see Figure 2).

Ektron supplements the very basic content creation and management tools built into Blackboard by providing an easy-to-use text editing interface that is similar to most word processor functionality, as well as customized teaching and learning tools built by DES, including a self-test tool, a poll tool, a drag-and-drop tool, and others. The Blackboard and Ektron technologies are integrated and easy to use for course developers and instructors who may need to add content or make edits to existing online course content. Please note that you need Academic Coordinator (AC) approval to edit Ektron content. It is important that any changes to your course content or Course Outline be made in Ektron. More on the teaching and editing tools in Ektron is available on de.ryerson.ca.

It is expected that, as online course developers, both you and your AC will be proficient in using Blackboard and also complete training in the use of Ektron. To assist you in becoming proficient in the use of Ektron, your online course development contract will include CMS training as a milestone. Please contact dehelp@ryerson.ca to arrange your in-person training session with the DES Instructor Support Specialist. For SMEs in remote locations, phone training is available and arranged by contacting dehelp@ryerson.ca.
Figure 2. Ektron enables multiple sections to be delivered from one master course.

Technology – External Options – Web 2.0

Web 2.0

The term Web 2.0 is associated with web applications that facilitate participatory information sharing, interoperability, user-centered design, and collaboration on the World Wide Web. A Web 2.0 site allows users to interact and collaborate with each other in a social media dialogue as creators of user-generated content in a virtual community. This is in contrast to websites where users are limited to passive viewing of content that was created for them. Examples of Web 2.0 include social networking sites, blogs, wikis, video sharing sites, hosted services, web applications, mashups, and folksonomies. (Wikipedia, 2011, retrieved from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_networking_site)
While Web 2.0 is a worthwhile discussion in the context of changing educational landscapes, external tools, i.e., tools not licensed at Ryerson, cannot be required in Chang School online courses.

**Student Privacy** – This is the primary reason for excluding Web 2.0 for course requirements. In order to access most third-party social media websites, students are required to give their email address and additional personal information to the provider. This cannot be required as part of a course, as many students do not wish to share personal information and cannot be required to do so as part of their grade. Student information posted to any of these sites is subject to public viewing and use according to the provider’s discretion outside of the influence of Ryerson University policy. In addition, information shared or co-created between students in external sites is not part of the Ryerson course archive.

**External tools are not necessary** – With respect to instructional design opportunities, most of the activities listed in Wikipedia’s description above can be accomplished within the Blackboard and Ektron systems. Interaction, collaboration, social dialogue, and user-generated content can all be engaged through the careful design of courses using the tools we have available.

**Technology – Internal Options – Web 2.0**

**Journals** – These allow students to post self-reflective information about their personal learning journey, in a place where only the instructor can view and provide feedback.

**Learning Objects** – Learning objects in Ektron may be designed and delivered to include interactivity – students click, drag, match, guess, or branch their way through content information and self-assessments. When aligned with learning objectives, the use of learning objects can result in higher instructional value, as there are opportunities for choice and immediate feedback.

**Examples of Social Opportunities in Blackboard**

**Discussion Boards** – These allow students to engage in social and academic discourse with each other and the instructor about readings and rich media. Weekly topics and questions may be posed in the course materials or by the instructor to generate meaningful interactions between students and in student groups as part of collaborative work. Learners can be graded on their postings, which can be both based on responding to defined questions from the instructor or commenting on their peers’ posts.
**Blogs and Wikis** – Although similar to discussion boards, these can be designed as an individual student’s tool, a course-wide tool, or as part of Groups (once students have been assigned to smaller groups). These social media tools are used to socially construct knowledge. Each tool is further explained here:

- **Blogs** – these are online web logs or journals, where material is posted in a chronological fashion. Others can only comment on individual posts. Blogs are either individually or team-built.

- **Wiki** – these are collaboratively created web pages, which allow for editing by the group. Wikis are almost always team-built.

**Portfolios** – These allow students to upload and organize documents, images, and other rich media in order to develop a personal portfolio to be shared with the instructor and peers. These are used to demonstrate the learner’s best work over a period of time. They can show progress or measure performance, and are a means to showcase papers, projects, journal/blog entries, etc. Options for assessing a learner’s portfolio include self-reflection with guiding questions, peer review/feedback, or instructor-learner dialogue regarding the learner’s achievement of outcomes. Different types of portfolios include:

- **Growth portfolio** – this shows change over time; identifying the learner’s strengths and weaknesses
- **Showcase portfolio** – this is a sample of the learner’s perception of their best or favourite work, and is an end of semester accomplishment
- **Evaluation/proficiency portfolio** – this documents the learner’s progress towards a standard; it shows their achievement of outcomes
- **Project portfolio** – this documents various stages of the project towards completion, as well as the end-product itself
- **Professional portfolio** – this showcases important aspects of the individual’s career, containing their resume or CV and cover letter, as well as supporting career artifacts like professional presentations

**Collaborative Tools** – Students working in groups will often choose the social and communication tools they prefer, but they should be encouraged to stay within Ryerson-protected environments out of respect for students who may face technology barriers. Not all students have cell phones, Skype, or want to use Google groups. Asynchronous use of Blackboard tools should be encouraged. Students may coordinate a common time to be logged in to the course as needed. Within a Blackboard shell, each group has their own dedicated discussion board and File Sharing options. The output of any collaborative project is by its nature user-centred, user-generated content.
References Used in this Guide


Appendices

Appendix A: Resources

1. DES Portal

Digital Education Strategies (DES) has developed numerous resources to support you (and George!) as you develop your course materials. The following resources can be downloaded from the DES Instructor Resources area of the DES Portal, found at https://de.ryerson.ca/portals/de/resources.html

DES Technical Guides

- Instructors’ Guide – A guide to using Ektron and Blackboard.

DES Information Sheets – These address issues such as:

- Instructional Design
- Discussion Board Forums
- Learning Objectives
- Copyright
- Student Workload Calculator
- Ektron Learning Activity Tools

2. Online Course Developer Training

Technical training in the use of Ektron and Blackboard is available through DES. For more information, contact the DES Instructor Support Specialist at dehelp@ryerson.ca.

3. Ryerson Library

The Ryerson Library provides a wide array of services and training for instructors on the use of their systems and electronic resources. Visit the Services for Faculty page at http://www.library.ryerson.ca/services/faculty.
4. Contact Information

If you have academic questions about your course development, including those related to your Course Outline or content, please contact your Instructional Designer (ID) or Academic Coordinator (AC).

If you require training in or experience difficulties with the use of Blackboard or Ektron or have any questions regarding DES services and support, contact us at dehelp@ryerson.ca or drop by 297 Victoria St. (Heaslip House), 4th floor. After hours, see our Instructor Guide at https://de.ryerson.ca/help for answers to any Blackboard or Ektron issues.
Appendix B: FAQs about Online Course Development at The Chang School

Do I need special software to develop online courses?

A current web browser, a reliable Internet connection, and a current version of Microsoft Word should be all you need. For updated technical recommendations, we suggest you visit the Ryerson University Computing & Communication Services website at ryerson.ca/ccs.

What type of technical skills do I need in order to develop online courses?

You should be capable of using Ektron, the content management system used for all online courses. In addition to Ektron, you will need to know how to use Blackboard, the learning management system used at Ryerson University. If you require training, please schedule a session with us by emailing dehelp@ryerson.ca.

How do I access my course content in Ektron?

You may access your course content for editing through a link provided by your ID or the DES Instructor Support Specialist.

How do I set up an online exam in my course?

If you are reusing an existing exam that has been created by you or another instructor, all you need to do is check the exam and reconfigure the release date. If you are creating a new exam, you should submit your questions to DES Instructor Support at dehelp@ryerson.ca, with the correct answers, at least two weeks prior to the exam. The questions and answers must be in a specific format called Respondus in order to be uploaded to Blackboard. Information for Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) and ACs is available in the Instructor Guide, under the Blackboard: Course Management section.
Is copyright law the same for online courses as for classroom courses?

No. Although this may depend upon the material you wish to use, generally, permission is required from authors or publishers before posting any items into online courses.

How much time should I set aside for online course development?

The online course development process is typically scheduled for an eight-month period from Kick-off to final approval of materials. Workflow over that time period is a valuable discussion with the ID to ensure comfortable achievement of milestones.
Appendix C: Recommended Reading

In recent years, many useful articles and books have been published regarding the development of online educational materials. Below are a few recommendations from DES:

**Adult Learning Theory**


**Online Teaching**

Appendices

E-Journals

- The Canadian Journal of Learning and Technology
- The American Journal of Distance Education
- Asian Journal of Distance Education
- Distance Education
- Distance Education Report
- International Journal of Distance Education Technologies
- Journal of Distance Education
- Quarterly Review of Distance Education
- The Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education

Writing for the Web


General Online Teaching and Learning

- Educause: http://www.educause.edu/
- Sloan Consortium: http://sloanconsortium.org/
Appendix D: Learning Objects

Available Ektron Tools for Instructional Strategies

There are a series of tools in the Ektron editor that support a variety of instructional strategies in course development. Each of these tools supports a different strategy. The tools and their recommended use are described below. The tools are:

- Quiz Questions
- PopUp Windows
- Polls
- Custom Icons
- Add Note
- Drag and Drop
- Click and Reveal

**Quiz Questions**

This tool can be used to generate multiple choice (A through E) or True/False self-assessment questions. The questions can be highly challenging or a simple gauge for students to determine whether or not they are absorbing new terminology. The tool provides immediate feedback to the student with options for the developer to add “Correct” and “Incorrect” response information for each question. Immediate feedback is flagged as a key opportunity for student engagement and encouragement.

This tool cannot be used to develop a graded quiz. Graded quizzes must be developed in the Blackboard course shell and tied to the Grade Center.

Recommended use of the Quiz Question tool:

- Keep the quiz short, at a maximum of 10 questions
- Provide information in the “Correct” and “Incorrect” response areas as immediate feedback for student progress as well as elements of content they might review if they answered incorrectly
- Keep the questions relevant to the module content in support of the learning objectives
- Provide specific recommendations for further study if students do not do well on the quiz
- One quiz per module is typically sufficient
**PopUp Windows**

The PopUp Window tool can be used to link a web page or web image to a word or phrase on an Ektron content page. It can be used to link to videos with an accompanying URL, e.g., YouTube. The PopUp window may also be linked to images in the Ektron Library.

The use of PopUps saves the student from navigating away from the content they are reading or working through and allows the developer to provide supporting rich media in context.

The use of PopUps can also solve some copyright issues (however, a careful reading of any copyright restrictions on a page or image with respect to linking must be conducted) by using a link rather than embedding the image or video in the Ektron page.

**Recommended use of the PopUp Window tool:**

- Ensure that the PopUp item is needed to support the text, context, and learning objectives of the module and that its relevance and expected contents are described
- Carefully read the web page, web image, or video links to ensure that the owner has no objection to linking
- Use the PopUp editor carefully to ensure the window opens in the expected way, correctly sized with any web-based navigation features required enabled (e.g., if the window should pop up and play a video, it does so)
- Periodically check PopUp links to ensure they are still working
- Do not use this feature too often (it can end up being distracting for students to continually click on links when reading)

**Polls**

The Poll tool allows you to present students with a quick snapshot of how they feel about a certain issue. Students may be asked for their opinion from a list of choices, use a Likert scale agree/disagree model, or cast a yes/no vote. Results can be viewed immediately.

Typical instructional strategies for a poll are to provide information to students about each other (demographic- or opinion-based) and to gather student opinion, agreement, or disagreement regarding discipline-specific issues.

Voting on class-based polls helps to build social community among students, e.g., “We, as a group of students, represent the following data.”
Recommended use of the Poll tool:

- Support the poll with an explanation of the purpose (relevance to the content) before voting and provide information about what students should consider from results.
- Use the poll as a launching point for a discussion board question or as a “quick check” for collective student comprehension within a module.
- Ensure that the materials presented in the poll are appropriate for a poll (opinion- or demographic-based information, yes/no, or agree/disagree).
- Polls should be explicitly tied into learning objectives and content material.
- Polls can work well as an icebreaker or for fun social/community building.
- Polls can work well to illuminate student differences and similarities and to begin a point of debate.

**Custom Icon**

The Custom Icon tool is a simple but effective way to highlight key points and ensure that students see reflection, videos, audio files, and other activities clearly and distinctly from other text in the module content. As Ektron contains no option for text colour, the Custom Icon tool can be used creatively to improve reading flow and navigation on any given page. It is nothing more than a highlight box of various colours with small icons, e.g., Activity, Think, Read, Video, Audio, or Case Study.

Recommended use of the Custom Icon tool:

- True to its name, it can be customized with images and text within the borders of the highlight box, so be creative.
- Use sparingly to enhance high-level concepts and activities within a module page.
- Use consistently, e.g., if a journal activity is described in module 1 using a journal icon and box, use the same box throughout the course.
Add Note

The Add Note feature in Ektron allows users to provide additional “rollover” information (such as definitions) to words or phrases in the content. As an instructional strategy, the use of Add Note can replace the need for a glossary, allowing students to navigate uninterrupted through passages with new terms and concepts. Add Note provides the developer with the opportunity for additional information without interrupting a paragraph’s topic or flow.

The Add Note appears as a highlighted yellow text box when students roll over a term.

Recommended use of the Add Note tool:

- Provide a rollover definition for terminology that may be new or complex for students
- Provide an alternate view or opinion for students to consider
- Add a bit of text-based humour to content, used sparingly in this context

Matching

The Drag and Drop matching tool in Ektron is a more interactive tool than the Quiz Tool. Students click and drag a term or concept with their mouse into the main text area to “match” the items (making it a visual-tactile task). Students will receive immediate feedback, e.g., “Incorrect Answer” or “Correct Answer,” depending on the match. The tool will tally the number of correct responses that the students achieve and can be reset for them to try the task again.

As with all self-assessment tools, this tool should be used to support and reinforce concepts and terms from the readings and module notes as an instructional strategy to support learning objectives.

There is a character limit in each editing box of the tool (200 maximum), so terms and concepts need to be concise.

Recommended use of the Drag and Drop tool:

- Correct identification of terms and concepts (vocabulary test)
- Practice making subtle distinctions among concepts (higher level matching skills, e.g., “Which of these most closely matches…”)
- Relate the task to specific learning objectives and content covered in the readings or other resources
**Click and Reveal**

The instructional purpose for Click and Reveal is to encourage students to complete a task, whether it is a reflection or writing down a list of terms, before revealing the expert-recommended answer or choices.

This allows students to try out the task for themselves first, while knowing they have some guidance to confirm their understanding or point to options for further study.

Recommended use of the Click and Reveal tool:

- Keep questions (or task assignments) and Reveal responses concise
- Describe the purpose of the task (relevance) before students begin
- Relate the content of the task to learning objectives and module or readings content
Appendix E: Assessment and Evaluation Tools

Sample Participation Criteria

*Online Participation (%)*

Your participation in online discussions is crucial to your success in this course. It is my expectation that you will post and respond regularly to course-related topics and questions in the Discussion area. Your posts must be substantive (“I agree” or “me too” are not substantive) and your posts should be supported by the readings or research (not just personal opinions). Your participation in this area will comprise ___% of your final grade. So that you better understand what is expected of you when posting or responding, see the rubric below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mark</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 9-10 | • You participate frequently and regularly (30+ substantive posts).  
• Your contributions address the topic and offer new viewpoints or analysis, are well supported by the readings or your own sources, and are consistently on time.  
• Your responses to others are constructive, and indicate your understanding of their viewpoint. |
| 8    | • You participate often (25-30 substantive posts).  
• Your contributions address the topic, are supported by the readings or your own sources, and are on time.  
• Your responses to others are generally constructive, and indicate an attempt to understand their viewpoint. |
| 7    | • You make many relevant contributions (20-25 substantive posts).  
• Your contributions are on topic, occasionally offer a few new ideas, are minimally supported, and are usually on time.  
• Your responses to others are often negative, or show a limited understanding of their viewpoint. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mark</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 6          | • You make some relevant contributions (15-20 substantive posts).  
             | • Your contributions are mostly on topic, occasionally offer some new ideas, are often unsupported, and are usually on time.  
             | • Your responses to others are often critical, or show no attempt to understand their viewpoint.                                      |
| 5          | • Your contributions are inconsistent (10-15 substantive posts).  
             | • Your contributions are only tangential to the topic, offer few new ideas, are poorly supported, and may or may not be on time.  
             | • Your responses to others are usually critical, and show no attempt to understand their viewpoint.                                |
| 4          | • Your contributions are very infrequent (5-10 substantive posts).  
             | • Your contributions do not adequately address the topic, are generally unsupported, and are seldom on time.  
             | • Your responses to others are dismissive or combative, and show no attempt to understand their viewpoint.                      |
| 3 and under| • Your contributions are negligible (fewer than 5 substantive posts).  
             | • Your contributions are habitually off-topic, unsupported, contribute little, and are late.  
             | • You do not respond to others unless coerced to do so.                                                                      |
Student Self-identification of High-Quality Discussion Board Posts

This template provides students with a document to gather their top 6 discussion board postings over the course of the term and submit them to their instructor for a final participation assessment. It provides an opportunity for students to self-identify what they believe is their best work, based on instructor-described criteria.

Sample General Criteria

High-quality postings represent:

• Content that is well researched, insightful, or beneficial to the group and posted on time.
• Concise observations that present new ideas and move discussion forward.
• Narrative that encourages reflection.
• Questions that deepen the topic under discussion.
• Positive critical feedback that supports peer learning.

Possible Specific Criteria

High-quality postings represent:

• Student’s clear understanding of the specific use of social media for marketing.
• Consistent, progressive discussion of questions and issues past initial answers.
• Clear evidence of the student’s contribution to building a strong social learning community.

Template may include:

• Student name
• Student email
• Criteria for high quality

Copy and paste top 6 postings here, based on the instructor’s criteria for high quality.
## Group Participation Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Description (Quality of Involvement)</th>
<th>Scoring (Comments are required to justify scores)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance at Scheduled Work Sessions</td>
<td>Peer was rarely or never present at scheduled work sessions.</td>
<td>/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peer was present at most scheduled work sessions.</td>
<td>/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peer attended all discussions and responded promptly to emails.</td>
<td>/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fulfilment of Role During Planning</td>
<td>Peer made little contribution to team and did not fulfil his or her role.</td>
<td>/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peer made some contribution to team and fulfilled his or her assigned role.</td>
<td>/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peer made a strong contribution to team, fulfilled his or her duties, and supported others in fulfilling their roles.</td>
<td>/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution to Final Product</td>
<td>Peer made contribution to the final product.</td>
<td>/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peer completed most of his or her tasks and supported the overall quality of the final product.</td>
<td>/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peer completed all of his or her tasks and ensured that the final product was of the highest possible quality.</td>
<td>/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>__/10 __/10 __/10 __/10 __/10 __/10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Decimal scores, e.g., 1.5/2, are acceptable.
## Readings Reflections Blog Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Strong - 4 Points</th>
<th>Proficient - 3 Points</th>
<th>Developing - 2 Points</th>
<th>Beginning - 1 Point</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparation of blog entry</td>
<td>Blog entry shows evidence of thorough preparation through reading or reflection. Author speaks as one who has knowledge to share.</td>
<td>Blog entry shows evidence of preparation through reading or reflection. Author speaks as one who has knowledge to share.</td>
<td>Blog entry shows little evidence of preparation through reading or reflection.</td>
<td>Blog entry shows no evidence of preparation through reading or reflection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of content</td>
<td>Blog entry contains substantial information for reader. The entry addresses the focus question(s) completely.</td>
<td>Blog entry contains substantial information for reader. The entry addresses the focus question(s).</td>
<td>Blog entry contains minimal information for readers. The entry addresses the focus question(s).</td>
<td>Blog entry contains minimal information for reader. The entry does not address the focus question(s).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal reflection</td>
<td>Blog entry conveys extensive evidence of a personal response to the focus question(s): demonstrates the author’s growth through reflection on learning.</td>
<td>Blog entry conveys evidence of a personal response to the focus question(s): demonstrates the author is capable of reflecting on learning.</td>
<td>Blog entry conveys little evidence of a personal response to the focus question(s).</td>
<td>Blog entry shows no personal response to the focus question(s).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments on others’ entries</td>
<td>Comments to two classmates’ blog entries. Reply shows careful thought given to other students’ comments and they reply in a manner that promotes conversation. New reply challenges peers to think critically.</td>
<td>Comments to two classmates’ blog entries. Reply shows some thought has been given to other students’ comments and new reply promotes some conversation.</td>
<td>Comments to two classmates’ blog entries. Reply shows little thought has been given to students’ comments and new reply promotes little conversation.</td>
<td>Comments to classmates’ blog entries are not submitted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conventions</td>
<td>Blog entry shows few, if any, errors in standard written English that do not interfere with understanding.</td>
<td>Blog entry may have some errors in standard written English that rarely interfere with understanding.</td>
<td>Blog entry has several kinds of errors in standard written English that interfere with understanding.</td>
<td>Blog entry has frequent and severe errors in standard written English that interfere with understanding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requirements</td>
<td>All written requirements outlined on the assignment sheet were met on time with clear expression. Answers were comprehensive.</td>
<td>All written requirements were met on time with clear expression.</td>
<td>All written requirements were met.</td>
<td>Requirements were not met on time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Score: __________ /24 __________%

Source: PBWorks [http://pbworks.com](http://pbworks.com)
## Wiki Collaboration Rubric 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Exemplary</th>
<th>Above Average</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Below Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparedness</td>
<td>All group members have accessed the wiki practice page and have resolved all connectivity and browser issues.</td>
<td>All group members have accessed the wiki practice page, but some have not resolved connectivity and browser issues.</td>
<td>Some group members have accessed the wiki practice page and resolved connectivity and browser issues.</td>
<td>None of the group members have accessed the wiki practice page or resolved connectivity and browser issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness</td>
<td>All group members display a positive attitude toward online group collaboration and alternative approaches to learning.</td>
<td>All group members display a positive attitude toward group collaboration, but some members display resistance to alternative approaches to learning.</td>
<td>Some group members display a negative attitude towards online group collaboration and alternative approaches to learning.</td>
<td>None of the group members display a positive attitude toward online group collaboration or alternative approaches to learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Timeline</td>
<td>Group independently develops a reasonable, complete timeline describing project deliverables and completion dates. All students in the group can independently answer questions about the timeline.</td>
<td>Group independently develops a timeline describing most deliverables and completion dates. All students in the group can independently answer questions about the timeline.</td>
<td>Group independently develops a timeline describing most deliverables and completion dates. Most students in the group can independently answer questions about the timeline.</td>
<td>Group needs instructor assistance to develop a timeline and/or several students in the group cannot independently answer questions about the timeline.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roles</td>
<td>Each student in the group can clearly explain what tasks need to be completed by the group, what his/her role(s) are, and what contribution he/she is making toward group goals.</td>
<td>Each student in the group can clearly explain what tasks need to be completed by the group, but some students are unclear regarding their roles.</td>
<td>Each student in the group can, with minimal prompting, explain most tasks needing to be completed by the group, but none of the students can identify their individual roles.</td>
<td>One or more students in the group cannot clearly explain what tasks are needed by the group to reach goals.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Wiki Collaboration Rubric 2

**Exhibit 2.5**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Exemplary</th>
<th>Above Average</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Below Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prewriting Activities</strong></td>
<td>All group members consistently engage in brainstorming, outlining, discussion, and other prewriting activities in the wiki.</td>
<td>All group members engage in some discussion or other prewriting activities in the wiki.</td>
<td>Some group members engage in discussion or other prewriting wiki.</td>
<td>There is no evidence that group members have completed prewriting activities in the wiki.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Integrity of Contributions</strong></td>
<td>All group members are working toward the completion of project goals, making informed contributions, and fulfilling agreed-upon roles.</td>
<td>All group members are working toward the completion of project goals, but some members are falling behind in fulfilling agreed-upon roles.</td>
<td>Most group members are working toward the completion of project goals, but some members are not making contributions.</td>
<td>Few group members are working toward the completion of project goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-Organization</strong></td>
<td>Group members actively seek feedback from each other, resolve project challenges and problems as a group, and accept group responsibility for solutions.</td>
<td>Group members seek feedback from each other and attempt to resolve project challenges and problems, but will sometimes rely on a single member or instructor to make decision.</td>
<td>Group members work independently, but then seek problem resolution, confirmation, or approval from a single member or the instructor.</td>
<td>Group members work independently and do not seek feedback, confirmation, or approval from others.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Wiki Collaboration Rubric 3

### Exhibit 2.6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Exemplary</th>
<th>Above Average</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Below Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constructive Process</td>
<td>All group members made frequent and constructive additions and revisions to elaborate, refine, and improve the project outcomes.</td>
<td>All group members made occasional constructive additions and revisions to elaborate, refine, and improve project outcomes.</td>
<td>Most group members made some constructive additions and revisions to elaborate, refine, and improve the project outcomes.</td>
<td>Most group members made constructive additions, but few attempts were made to make revisions to refine, improve, and elaborate on the project outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balanced Contributions</td>
<td>All group members worked to complete project goals and fulfilled agreed-upon roles.</td>
<td>All group members worked to complete project goals, but some members have to step in and complete tasks and roles originally assigned to another to meet project deadlines.</td>
<td>All group members worked to complete project goals, but some members’ tasks were not complete by the project deadline.</td>
<td>One or more group members did not work toward the completion of the project goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>All wiki entries are clearly written and well-organized with pages, sidebar content and links that are easy to navigate.</td>
<td>Most wiki entries are clearly written and well-organized with pages, sidebar content, and links that are easy to navigate.</td>
<td>Most wiki entries are clearly written and organized, but pages, sidebar content, and links are difficult to navigate.</td>
<td>Most wiki entries are clearly written, but are not well-organized. Wiki pages are difficult to locate and navigate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohesion</td>
<td>The final wiki project demonstrates outstanding cohesion and consistency in concept, organization, style, and format.</td>
<td>The final wiki project demonstrates outstanding cohesion and consistency in concept and organization, but has some inconsistencies in style and format.</td>
<td>The final wiki project demonstrates some cohesion, but has a number of inconsistencies in concept, organization, style, and format.</td>
<td>The final wiki project lacks cohesion and has several inconsistencies in concept, organization, style, and format.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix F: DES Online Course Development Quality Assurance Checklist

The following is a tool provided to your Academic Coordinator (AC) in their review of your course development for approval purposes.

Course name/code: __________________________________________

As a key part of its support for quality online learning at The Chang School, Digital Education Strategies (DES) partners with Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) and ACs to ensure the following elements of Quality Assurance:

- The SME is fully supported in meeting his or her contractual deadlines for the development by the Instructional Designer (ID) and the AC. This may include reviewing Draft Course Outline elements and draft modules, working collaboratively to support online learning recommendations. A key issue in contractual deadlines is ensuring that all modules are reviewed and approved prior to contract milestone dates.
- The Course Outline complies with the academic department’s expectations and aligns with University policy.
- The course materials represent the department’s expectations for the specific discipline, including instructional strategies, readings, assessments, and scheduling, and represents recommended practices for effective online learning.
- Additional Quality Assurance checks will be conducted by the DES Production Editor to ensure course materials are as error-free as possible (addressing elements such as typos, grammar, formatting, links, and clarity and consistency of student instructions). Any findings will be forwarded to SMEs and ACs and should be reviewed and corrected prior to course start-up.

The following checklist of course elements may support stakeholders in the Quality Assurance process. They are a combination of University policy and literature-based recommendations for online course design. The comments area provides space for recommended improvements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Outline</th>
<th>Description of Quality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Outline</td>
<td>Description of Quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Course Description matches The Chang School web page description.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Any pre-requisites, co-requisites or anti-requisites for the course are listed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Course Outline is compliant with Ryerson’s Course Management policy (<a href="http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/pol145.pdf">http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/pol145.pdf</a>) with regard to Course Outlines, and includes, at minimum, a clear description of the course and course objectives, a marking scheme, a list of required and supplementary readings, required course materials, the weekly course schedule, and a link to Ryerson Senate policies (<a href="http://ryerson.ca/senate/">http://ryerson.ca/senate/</a>).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If the instructor will be using Turnitin or other academic integrity service, the procedures for students are clearly stated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Course Outline provides students with clear information regarding what will be expected of them with respect to participation, readings, assignments details, due dates, and exams.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The auto-generated Course Schedule is in place and students will be aware of weekly events. Key events are highlighted including location of final exams (if on campus or online).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Marking Scheme articulates the weighting of activities, assignments, quizzes, exams and participation that include individual and group opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Course Outline Assignment Details communicate the number and types of assignments that will be used for student assessment (e.g., exams, quizzes, essays, group work, discussion board, etc.). Specific criteria are described in the Assignments area of the Blackboard Shell, the assessments align with the course and module learning objectives, and exemplars or rubrics are provided. (N.B. – The SME and AC are responsible for reviewing the Blackboard course shell prior to course launch to ensure its accuracy.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The course textbook(s) and readings support the learning objectives and instructional strategies that have been identified for the course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The course text(s) links and all Course Readings content (Ryerson Library course readings in ARES, website links within content) have been requested, arranged, and tested prior to course start.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments on the Course Outline:
## Appendices

### Pedagogy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Quality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The SME provides an overview on “How to approach this course” that provides students with clear strategies for success with the specific navigation and materials used in the course design.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The SME uses different teaching/learning strategies and rich media to suit a variety of learning styles (e.g., group work, discussion, interactive learning objects, audio/video clips, images, diagrams, etc.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The SME uses a conversational tone and voice in any written materials for modules.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The rich media (e.g., images, diagrams, audio, video or interactive objects) used in the course are appropriate to the material being covered, add value to the course, and are tied to instructional strategies. The chosen media have been made accessible according to AODA standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The instructional strategies implemented in the course encourage students to use the discussion board to collaborate and exchange ideas with peers and/or the instructor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The presentation of content shows intentional instructional design and adult learning-recommended practices through the use of clear student expectations, clear module navigation and well-written learning objectives covered in the content and confirmed by assessment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The content is engaging, interactive, relevant, and current. The content uses real-world examples that bridge theory and practice together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The course represents the academic rigour of a university-level course.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Comments on the Pedagogy:

---

### Assessments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Quality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The instructional strategies implemented in the course encourage students to use the discussion board not only for factual presentation, but to collaborate and exchange ideas with peers and/or the instructor–building a social learning community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions to be answered or debated in the discussion board are linked back to course or individual module objectives and align with instructional strategies and content presentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projects/assignments in the course encourage students to express and apply their prior knowledge and life experience and engage their day-to-day workplace or community as part of practice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Quizzes, mid-terms and final exams are compliant with University policy and discipline-specific expectations.

Online assessments are based on stated learning objectives and are well-designed for the online environment as reviewed and agreed-upon in course planning.

**Comments on the Assessments:**

**Chickering and Gamson: Principles of Undergraduate Education**

The checklist below, based on Chickering and Gamson’s (1987) *Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education*, offers recommendations that set up course instructors and students for success through effective course design.

**Principle 1: Maximize learner-instructor contact**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The way(s) that students contact an instructor directly are clearly described in multiple locations, (e.g., the Course Outline, Blackboard Announcements area and in module content) and follow Ryerson University policy regarding privacy.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion boards are designed to allow maximum student-student discourse with appropriate opportunities for instructor facilitation, feedback, and motivational support for student learning.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities for individual instructors to enrich the course delivery with personal content and unique student resources are available.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Principle 2: Support peer-to-peer contact, teaching, and learning**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative activities and assessments have been included to empower learners with peer-to-peer teaching opportunities such as learner moderated discussion forums, learner presentations, and peer evaluation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A social discussion forum has been included to encourage community building. It may be called the Coffee Shop, Social Café, or use a similar title to distinguish it from weekly academic discussion forums.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participation guidelines are clear, including "netiquette"—proper etiquette for interacting in online forums. If learner participation is to be evaluated, a rubric, or details about assessment criteria have been articulated.

### Principle 3: Emphasize active learning and applied practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities for instructors to discuss their professional practice are available.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Applied practice examples (e.g., case studies and short narrative) are used in the course.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities and assignments that require students to practice, demonstrate, research, explore and problem solve in ways that emulate current professional practice have been included.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggestions for strategies to increase face-to-face interaction with practitioners in the student’s community or workplace have been provided.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targeted learning objectives, content, issues, and activities that are relevant and current for the course discipline are available.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Principle 4: Provide prompt feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Course Outline and course content clearly articulate assignment expectations and include high-quality examples. Feedback timelines are given.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion forums, to be used on a week-by-week basis, are designed with opportunities for the instructor to participate and provide formative and summative feedback.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graded assessments are well-designed for online use, aligning with course planning recommendations, and can be returned quickly with constructive feedback from the instructor.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Principle 5: Hold learners responsible for course tasks and timelines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course requirements and deadlines for assignments, activities, and discussion board participation are articulated clearly and frequently.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student support opportunities such as course FAQs or Q &amp; A discussion forums, online help, and The Chang School student support page are described and easily available.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A recommended course workflow is described for students, including time management advice with respect to large or multi-stage projects.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Principle 6: Expect high-quality work and comprehension

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An opportunity for students to test their prior knowledge is available at the start of the course.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The scope and focus of the course is clearly described so that students may know if this course fits with their abilities.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The learning objectives articulate the work and level of performance students should be able to achieve at the completion of each module.

**Principle 7: Respect diverse experiences and support different learning styles**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities for students to reference prior knowledge and life experience in discussion and assessments are provided.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students are provided with choices regarding research methods and topics, presentation formats, and collaborative project outcomes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course content addresses a variety of learning approaches with a mix of images, diagrams, text, audio, video, analytical and tactile exercises, and activities.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Comments on the development’s alignment with Chickering and Gamson’s Principles:

Consult with your ID for additional information about these principles and additional recommendations for online course quality.

Additional Comments or Concerns:

For any support or questions about this checklist, please consult with the ID assigned to the course development, or send an email to dehelp@ryerson.ca.
Notes
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>Area of Knowledge</th>
<th>Email or Telephone Number</th>
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</table>
| Instructor Relations                         | For questions regarding your Chang School teaching contract, obtaining Ryerson identification (the OneCard), changing personal information, RAMSS access for your Class Roster and submitting grades.                                                                                                                                                               | Email ceinstructor@ryerson.ca  
Visit ryerson.ca/ce/instructor |
| Academic Coordinator or Program Director     | For academic questions about your course, including those related to your Course Outline, content, or student issues.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | See the Instructor Handbook at  
ryerson.ca/ce/instructor      |
| DES Instructor Support                       | If you…                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Email dehelp@ryerson.ca  
Drop by 297 Victoria St.  
(Heaslip House), 4th floor  
Visit de.ryerson.ca |
| Additional Resources                         | For answers to any Blackboard- or Ektron-related questions after hours.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Visit http://de.ryerson.ca/help |
| The Chang School                             | If your learners have questions concerning registration or access to the course.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Email ce@ryerson.ca  
Email distance@ryerson.ca  
Call 416-979-5035 |
| Learning and Teaching Office                 | If you would like additional assistance in teaching practice.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Email lto@ryerson.ca  
Visit ryerson.ca/lt           |
“Compared to my experience in other online teaching environments, I can’t help but praise the knowledge and professionalism of The Chang School in helping instructors create online courses that are engaging, creative, interactive and collaborative for teacher and student alike.”

**Boyd Neil, MA, MBA, Instructor, The Chang School**

“The DES team is a group of people whose first priority is to proactively seek and understand student needs and then adopt them in the design and delivery of online coursework. The base of resources that they have created for their SMEs reveals not only their engagement with scholarship on adult and online education, but their devotion to move above and beyond expectations. They provided me with continuous support, creating a working environment that was open to debate and discussion about innovative teaching methodologies.”

**Dr. Michal Kasprzak, PhD, Instructor, The Chang School**

“Over the last ten years, I have developed about 30 courses with DES... I believe that the pedagogical support, technical insight and instructional design and development support that I received from this team has resulted in my ongoing growth and ability as an online course developer and, more importantly, as an educator within the university.”

**Dr. Diane Pirner, RN, MN, PhD, Associate Professor, Daphne Cockwell School of Nursing**

“The DES team, through their creative products, use of technology and exemplary level of service to both faculty and students, has gone above and beyond to assist Ryerson in advancing their mission. I used their online role-play tool, Lake Devo, in the classroom and believe the positive feedback I received as well as the seamless integration of this tool in my class were due to the support I received from DES. I look forward to working with them in the future and I am keen to use any new products they bring forward. The team has without a doubt proved that ‘everyone makes a mark’, and they certainly have.”

**Donna Bell, MA, Instructor, Ted Rogers School of Retail Management**

“I had the opportunity to work very closely with the Instructional Designer at The Chang School over several months to adapt my classroom course to the online medium. It was truly a collaborative venture, and in rethinking my learning objectives and discussing the ways in which I could visually and interactively convey my course material, I believe that my classroom teaching was also strengthened.”

**Susan Laskin, MA, Associate Professor, Department of Geography**