Key Steps to Planning Your Online Course:
1. Define and refine student outcomes
   - Develop 5-7 learning outcomes per course: 1 ultimate followed by mediating and foundational goals.
   - Outcomes can relate to the cognitive, affective, or psychomotor domains.
   - Use active verbs that relate to Bloom’s Taxonomy to ensure assignments can be matched to the appropriate cognitive level.
     - Ex: “demonstrate” or “examine” rather than “understand” or “learn.”

2. Determine if the course will be synchronous or asynchronous.

3. Design assessment opportunities that align with student outcomes.

4. Determine the technology that will help the students complete assessments in order to achieve learning outcomes successfully.

5. Plan development time so that the course materials are completed with time for a thorough review before the semester begins.

6. Assess personal technological knowledge and capabilities related to computer hardware, software, Internet usage, and basic troubleshooting.

Questions for Application:
Q: How can I match course content, assessments, and communication style to my students’ needs?
A: Gauge your learners’ needs based on your experience with the students, a survey, and/or student introductions.

Q: What platform should I use?
A: After deciding whether your course will be synchronous, asynchronous, or hybrid/blended, use University-approved course tools such as an LMS, Google Sites, or WordPress to create and house the materials.

Q: Why are learning outcomes important to me?
A: Create learning objectives prior to writing content or assessments to help ensure all activities relate to the learning. Providing your students with the learning outcomes gives them a roadmap to follow.

Q: When does my course go live?
A: Develop a schedule for yourself to write units and assessments. Leave enough time for a final walkthrough and testing before the course is offered.
DEVELOP: Key Takeaways

Developing your course includes creating assessments, writing content, choosing readings, and picking multimedia elements. Remember to keep statutory regulations in mind. Once all the parts are complete, you’re ready to test the course and prepare it for its first offering. Testing not only helps to squash bugs, but it also helps you familiarize yourself with the completed course.

Align assessments with your student learning outcomes.

**Types of assessments:**
- Multiple choice
- Matching
- Fill-in-the-blank
- Short response
- Essay
- Wikis
- Case studies/branching tree scenarios
- Discussion board/blogs
- Drag and drop
- Ordering
- Surveys/polls

- Diagnostic: Identify existing knowledge
- Formative: Demonstrate understanding and receive feedback
- Summative: Final evaluation of learning
- Graded vs. ungraded
- Choose an assessment creation tool that matches your assessment goals, is easy to use, and is supported by your University

**Best practices for writing course content:**
- Be conversational
- Address the student as “you”
- Keep page formatting simple
- No excessive use of bold or italic words or elaborate fonts and distracting colors
- Support with readings (think of creative options like anthologies, scripts, speeches, etc.)

**Multimedia includes:**
- Graphics
- Videos
- Audios
- Text
- Images

- It can be purchased, accessed from the public domain or Creative Commons repositories, or created by you

**Legal requirements:**
- The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
- Click-wrap agreements
- Citing copyrighted sources

**Questions for Application:**
- Do my assessments align with my student learning outcomes?
- Are my assessment tools, multimedia, course writings, and readings relevant and accessible to students?
- Have I tested links, activities, and overall functionality of my course?
Strategize the best ways to communicate with students.

**Communicate through:**
- Announcements (same message to all students)
- Email to individuals or groups
- Video
- Audio
- Discussion boards (students can read your replies to individual students)

The key with each of these communication tools is to be consistent and not overwhelm the students.

**The discussion board is a tool for students to:**
- Express their opinions
- React to readings
- Engage with one another
- Ask questions of the instructor and each other

Set word limits for posts and replies. Create a separate due date for the original post, and another for their responses to each other.

Monitor and enhance student engagement. Check on students' participation through course analytics, discussion board posts, grades, completion of ungraded activities, and a mid-course evaluation. Reach out to students or adjust material accordingly.

Remember it’s about “high-touch,” not “high-tech.”

**Questions for Application:**

Q: What are my expectations of the students, and of myself?
A: Share your expectations early, either by syllabus, through introductions, a video, etc.

Q: How will I manage communicating with students through this course?
A: Find the time management system that works best for you. Set a turnaround time for email responses and assignment feedback, and communicate this to the students at the beginning of the course. Then stick to it.

Q: Will I respond to each student individually?
A: To save time and avoid repeating yourself, you may make announcements or post a video so students can all get the message at once, if it pertains to the whole class. For individual issues, respond to students via email or in their assignment feedback.
EVALUATE: Key Takeaways

With each offering of your course, review the elements you’ve included: content, page layout, tools, technology, etc. After you’ve evaluated the various elements of your course through surveys or other methods, you’re ready to react to your findings.

Make course adjustments on an as-needed basis.

4 times to evaluate your course:
- Pre-semester
- Mid-semester
- Post-semester
- Emergency

A few elements you can include in your evaluation process are university-provided class evaluations, student grades, and course statistics.

Survey tips:
- Ask 10 questions or fewer
- Ponder the answer options carefully to ensure all possible responses are represented.
- Free response questions provide the opportunity for students to share their thoughts.

After conducting a survey or other type of evaluation method, react to your findings:
- If it’s not an emergency, keep an ongoing log of possible changes.
  - Creating a list will help you think about the problems and find effective solutions to implement after the semester.
- Don't change portions of the course while it's live, especially if it's not for a critical update.
  - This can be confusing for you and for students.

Questions for Application:

Student experience:
- How did my students perform?
- Are there consistent areas in which they struggled?
- In what ways did students truly master the content?
- What are students saying about the course website itself?
- What trends can I identify from the evaluations?

Self-Reflection:
- Did I dedicate enough time in my schedule to work on this course?
- Can I streamline my workflow in future semesters?
- Can I successfully troubleshoot technology-related issues and content-related issues?

Content and Design:
- Does my content have any gaps?
- Are there any new topics I could incorporate to interest students or provide a different perspective?
- Does the course site look like how I envisioned?