

**Loma Linda University**  
**OFFICE OF EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS**

**Best Practices for Online Education**

**I. Loma Linda University Mission-Focused Learning**

1. Have prayer (phone, videoconference, text-based discussion board), etc.
2. Make use of Bible-centered video clips, verses, stories, worship thought, devotional ([www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com)).
3. Make use of Ellen G. White selected quotes from her inspired writings ([www.whiteestate.org](http://www.whiteestate.org)).
4. Make use of Seventh-day Adventist Health Heritage (stories, ideas, tips, experiences, resources) ([www.adventisthealth.org](http://www.adventisthealth.org)) .
5. Make use of LLU pioneers' stories ([www.llu.edu](http://www.llu.edu)) .
6. Make use of LLU missionary stories, community experiences
7. Link to [LLU 360 videos](#).
8. Make use of inspirational stories.
9. Remember, the student is the center of the teaching-learning process.
10. Employ the highest of ethical standards.
11. Use community-applied learning activities (service-learning, community outreach, family and workplace) in the spirit of LLU's mission.
12. Employ student journals with self-reflections about how the course impacts student life. (Video or text-based format).
13. Keep wholeness in mind is when selecting learning activities (visit to the portal, activities, journal, videos, resources) - [LLU Center for Spiritual Life and Wholeness](#).
14. Have students participate in self-assessment exercises on course content.
15. Encourage or require students to view online University@Worship services ([Wednesdays and recorded sessions](#)). There may be opportunities for online students to participate in live University@Worship services via Zoom. If interested, contact one of the LLU chaplains: [Chaplain Swenson](#) or [Chaplain Brooks](#).
16. Develop instructor videos and make available via the learning management system (Canvas).
17. Create online conversations/discussion items of selected topics around the LLU and Adventist values.
18. Provide links to selected external Seventh-day Adventist resources in areas of health, family relations, spiritual life, etc.) - [LLU Center for Spiritual Life and Wholeness](#).
19. Use a consistent module design with specific item/section about Mission-Focused Learning (LLU Course template, see "example course" in Canvas).
20. Show empathy, pray with students, ask about how things are going, etc. Show kindness and interest for the well being of the student with uplifting encouragement. Use phone, Skype, or other digital video media.
21. Provide online communities/social media spaces (for interactions around impacts in life, prayer, coaching, inspiring each other) - [www.llu.edu/social](http://www.llu.edu/social).

**II. Learning Styles**

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1. Focus on specific student needs.
2. Engage students towards higher levels of thinking, promote active learning by promoting active student involvement.
3. Encourage students to draw upon their own experiences.
4. Use problem-solving exercises.
5. Build options for students to work individually as well as work together.
6. Explore the theory of adult learning styles and incorporate them into the course.
7. Define and list learning outcomes: ILOs, PLOs, and CLOs.
8. Build activities that include hands-on experiences with individual and group activities in ways that student's life experiences can be explored and connected to the course goals and outcomes.
9. Involve the learner actively in all course components.
10. Have students get to know each other through photographs, biographies, teleconferencing, and, when possible, face-to-face.

**III. Self Training**

1. Be pro-active with faculty training and support on campus.
2. Work with other faculty to build courses.
3. Find a mentor who is familiar with online education; either an on-campus or remote mentor.
4. Use your own experiences and reflection to improve the course over time.
5. Expect to benefit from multiple roles as an online instructor through your own transformative learning by reflecting constantly during the course and after the course.
6. Do not be afraid or hesitate to ask questions during exploration and discovery of new online approaches.

**IV. Social Presence**

1. Employ multiple technologies to communicate with your students:
  1. Use the phone.
  2. Use video conferencing.
  3. If possible, employ a face-to-face component in your class.
2. Include a faculty biography, complete with photographs and videos about your personal life—don't forget the personal touch.
3. Initiate contact with your students; students often will not initiate contact with you.
4. Be timely with giving feedback.
5. Set a clear policy for faculty and students regarding behavior in the online course.
6. Encourage contact between students, and also between student and faculty.

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7. Have specific office hours and a phone number where faculty can be contacted. Consider having a Zoom<sup>1</sup> office where students can come.
8. Let students know how when faculty will be present, and how much time students are expected to put in each week for class participation.
9. Employ an anonymous polling survey during and after the course (i.e., SurveyMonkey, polleverywhere.com).
10. Be prepared to provide basic technical assistance to students.
11. Interact with students to mentor, encourage, and support. Seek out those who are not active in the course. Interaction is essential.

**V. Knowing Technology**

1. Do not rely upon just one technology for communication.
2. Know the bandwidth capacity or geographical location of your students. Do not build an object that requires high bandwidth if all students don't have it.
3. Be flexible with educational technologies—successful teaching can be achieved with any technology.
4. Build content in the proper format: HTML for online viewing, PDF for downloading and printing, Rich Text (.docx) for editable documents.
5. Don't rely on technology to keep students happy. Real student satisfaction is increased with the personal attention they receive from the instructor.
6. Master the use of any technology you expect students to use.

**VI. Collaboration**

1. Use cooperative learning with group projects. Planning successful cooperative learning projects takes extra effort on your part but increases successful student learning in the long run.
2. Foster a feeling of community and camaraderie.
3. Remind your students that learning is social in nature and technical tools can enable social interaction.
4. Show students you care about them and their success in the course. Caring online is a reciprocal process that requires commitment to teaching and learning by both students and teachers.
5. Build collaboration by validating the importance of past experiences of students.
6. Convey your experiences as an online teacher. Let students know it is common to have trouble familiarizing themselves with online programs.
7. As an instructor, be clear about your expectations and how you will respond to questions and postings.
8. The instructor can demonstrate their commitment and caring by actively commenting when appropriate.
9. Have the students get to know you personally with your teaching experience and personal life.

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<sup>1</sup> Contact the Office of Educational Effectiveness to set up such an office that does not require you to send students an invitation: [assessment@llu.edu](mailto:assessment@llu.edu).

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**VII. Feedback/Assessment**

1. Be sure to give specific and timely feedback. The faster you give it, the more beneficial it is to the student. The longer feedback is delayed, the less it impacts student learning.
2. Tell your students how quickly they can expect replies from you.
3. Ask students about the course as they progress through it. When you find out about problems, confusion, or just good ideas, implement them during the course, if possible.
4. Employ an anonymous polling survey during the course (i.e., Qualtrics, SurveyMonkey, polleverywhere.com, etc.).
5. Request<sup>2</sup> to have an online instructor to do a peer-review of your course.
6. Refine your next online courses by listening to your previous students.
7. Use rubrics.
8. Set up online course student evaluations to be sent out at the end of the quarter.

**VIII. Active Course Management**

1. Have early course availability when possible.
2. Establish clear expectations.
3. Use one email application for communication; either the internal course email in Canvas, or regular email.
4. Communicate high expectations.
5. Use a variety of large group, small group, and individual work experiences.
6. Use rubrics for assignments for clear grading and grading criteria.
7. Show up and teach.
8. Use links to current events applicable to the learning module.
9. Emphasize how much time students are to commit for the class.
10. Be present and active in online discussions.
11. Determine a reasonable response time, and communicate this with students.
12. Set the example by timely feedback, interest in student work, and building relationships.
13. Have a “Plan B” when things don’t go as expected; be flexible, whenever possible.
14. Use the ‘Student View’ feature available in most Canvas to get the student perspective of what the course looks like.

**IX. KIS/Course Design**

1. Be consistent in the overall course design. Provide a basic structure for the course.
2. Do not use any technology that you cannot teach students how to use.
3. Test drive the course by using the ‘Student View’ to assure things work as expected.

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<sup>2</sup> Contact the Office of Educational Effectiveness: [assessment@llu.edu](mailto:assessment@llu.edu); ext. 15042

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4. Use technology appropriately; make sure your students have sufficient Internet capabilities for content creation.
5. Course design should have a clear and easy path to navigate through the class. Do not radically change the Canvas course design elements.
6. Do not bury content several layers deep with links.
7. Have virtual office hours, or communicate to students how and when they can contact the instructor. Set up a Zoom office.
8. Have a plan and policy for times when students declare Internet or course availability problems, because students are known to constantly declare electronic issues.
9. Design the syllabus as a roadmap through the course.
10. Show up and teach—good teaching matters.
11. Remember: most online courses use Word and PDF documents, PowerPoint, audio files, and video, email and phone for communications. But not all courses need every new technology for the sake of technology. Simple beats complex.

**XI. Academic Integrity**

1. Provide guidance to students from the institution, school, program, and course perspectives and policies.
2. Have each student acknowledge, agree and understand an academic integrity policy.
3. Guide discussion and brought forward in course guidelines/syllabus.
4. Ask students to create a class policy of academic integrity.
5. Include a lesson on avoiding plagiarism.
6. Include links to guides on plagiarism.
7. Monitor course and deliverables closely.
8. Use Turnitin or similar service.
9. Use proctored exams when necessary.

**X. University Support**

The University should provide:

1. Complete support for online students:
  1. Admissions
  2. Registration
  3. Financial aid
  4. Online library resources
  5. Courseware platform
  6. Technical support
  7. Library access
2. Professional development opportunities for online instructors that specifies techniques to integrate active learning pedagogy into online courses.
3. Just-in-time training resources for online instructors.
4. Technology support and course design support.

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**For more information contact:**

- Office of Educational Effectiveness
- [assessment@llu.edu](mailto:assessment@llu.edu)
- Ext. 15042
- <http://www.llu.edu/assessment>