

POI: Course Activity and Assessment

Submission Method:

Canvas

Statement of Purpose:

Give POI Participants an opportunity to use some of the concepts we have discussed regarding student engagement and online technologies to create an assignment uniquely suited for an online class they currently teach, might teach in the future, or could possibly teach in an online class.

Learning Objectives:

- Apply principles and best practices of student engagement in such a way as to create an assignment for an online class
- Utilize appropriate technologies that would help students accomplish the goals of the assignment
- Understand the purpose of a rubric and create one to help in assessing student performance on the assignment

Instructions:

In many ways, the fundamental aspects of online teaching are the same as face-to-face teaching and the concept of engaging students through meaningful activities is as applicable online as it is in any other environment. However, for the instructor who is new to teaching online it can be somewhat challenging to create assignments and activities that not only engage students but are specifically designed to take advantage of the online format. This lesson is a chance to do just that, and can either be something you design from the ground up or adapt from an existing assignment.

Think about ways to move beyond just writing a paper or composing a discussion board post, and instead look at the goals you want your students to accomplish or concepts you want them to learn and how best to accomplish that in an online class environment. How you can use a different type of activity besides just posting a few paragraphs of text, taking a quiz, or filling out a worksheet?

Whether you revise an existing assignment or create one from scratch, make sure the activity is well suited for an online environment. You should not require students to do an activity that can only be accomplished at a specific time or location. You can require students to do group projects, so long as you provide a means for them to communicate such as Canvas discussion boards, Skype sessions, etc.

Your assignment should have the following items:

- **A statement of purpose**
One or two sentences explaining the reason you are having your students do the activity. (i.e. "This project will help students understand the fundamental conflicts that led to World War I")
- **Clearly stated learning objectives**
Let your students know exactly what they are expected to learn from the assignment. For examples, see the "Articulate your Learning Objectives" link posted on Canvas
- **Clarity of instructions and expectations**
Design your activity in such a way that students should understand everything they need to know in order to complete it. Instructions should be clear, straightforward, and easy to figure out.
- **Appropriateness of the activity to meet the objectives.**
The activity itself should be appropriate for helping your students learn what you want them to learn. This seems like a common sense matter, but it's easy to fall into the trap of giving students busywork assignments that do not really meet our learning objectives. Make sure your activity will help your students accomplish your learning objectives and is not just homework for the sake of giving them something to do.

You are also required to include a Rubric at the end of your activity to let your students know how they will be assessed. There is a link to a page from Carnegie Mellon University on Canvas that explains more about what rubrics are and how they can benefit students. To actually create your rubric you can use a table in Microsoft Word or a website like Rubistar or iRubric (see links on Canvas).

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When you turn in your assignment you can include two separate files (i.e. a Word document and an Excel document) or simply insert your rubric at the end of your Assignment write-up.

Assessment Rubric:

	Proficient (10 points)	Basic (7 points)	Needs Improvement (5 points)	No Credit (0 points)
Course Activity and Assessment	Directions for the online activity are clearly explained with plenty of detail, including a Statement of Purpose and Learning Objectives. Activity is appropriate for the stated objectives, and instructions for students are clearly stated. Activity is appropriate for an online classroom environment, and includes a grading rubric stating clearly how students will be assessed. There is close alignment between what is to be assessed, and what students are expected to learn. An accompanying rubric clearly spells out expectations for students	Directions for the online activity are explained with some degree of detail, including a Statement of Purpose and Learning Objectives. Activity is mostly appropriate for the stated objectives, but might contain elements that are unrelated and unnecessary. Instructions are present, but might be ambiguous in some areas. Activity might not be that appropriate for an online environment. Grading rubric is present, but might be ambiguous in some areas. There is some alignment between what is to be assessed, and what students are expected to learn. An accompanying rubric mostly spells out student expectations, but is lacking enough information to be thorough.	Directions for the online activity are not clearly explained, lack detail, and might be missing a Statement of Purpose or Learning Objectives. Activity is generally inappropriate for the stated objectives, and contains activities that are unrelated and gratuitous. Instructions are confusing or not present. Activity may be entirely inappropriate for an online environment. Grading rubric is not complete, and does not provide a thorough description of how students will be assessed. Criteria for assessment are not related to what students are expected to learn. A rubric, if present, does not contain enough information to be useful for students.	Student fails to turn in the assignment.