

Hybrid and online courses can be challenging for students in many ways (they might struggle with study skills and the technology might be overwhelming). It is a good idea to design introductory “learn the technology” activities within the first deadline’s worth of work so students are more likely to succeed in course content activities worth more points. Instructors can also help guide online learners by following a few best practices, as outlined in the Quality Matters Rubric.

- Standard 1.1: Instructions make clear how to get started and where to find various course components.
- Standard 1.2: Students are introduced to the purpose and structure of the course.
- Standard 1.6: Minimum technical skills expected of the student are clearly stated.

Student Expectations

Help your students be successful right from the beginning of your course; [direct them to the “Student Expectations” handout](#).

Workstation Setup

All students should ensure their computer is setup to properly run Blackboard. Students should review these materials prior to engaging with any content in your class. [Include an activity for students to review and follow the steps in the “Workstation Setup” handout](#).

Familiarize yourself with CTLT’s policies; refer to the “System Troubleshooting and Policies” information on PC Online.

Getting Help

Your students need to know how to get technical and college support.

Include an activity for students to:

1. [Review the items in the Student Resources area of the course.](#)
2. [Visit the Student Support Center for assistance.](#)
3. [Send you an email or message explaining the help available \(i.e. 24x7 phone support, chat and tutorials\) and any help policies you outline in the course syllabus.](#)

If you need help with any of these components, contact CTLT at 602.285.7444!

Maricopa Student Email

All students are provided with Maricopa Student Email (powered by Google). They need to activate and either use or forward this account, as it is the method for all official college communications.

Include an activity for students to:

1. [Review and follow the steps in the “Activate Your Maricopa Email” handout.](#)
2. [If the students so desire, review and follow the steps in the “Forward Your Maricopa Email” handout and video tutorial.](#)

Did you know you too have a Maricopa Student Email account? Follow the same instructions to forward the account to your PC address!

Course Navigation

Students need to understand how to move around the hybrid and online course. If so desired, you might supplement the available resources with a personalized course tour. [Include an activity for students to review the "Overview of the Course Menu" handout and video.](#) You can include a couple of questions about this in a course introductory quiz.

For further help with the course menu, refer to the "Using the Course Menu Components" handout.

For further help with a course orientation, refer to the "Start Here – Kicking Things Off" handout.

Syllabus and Schedule

Students are expected to follow the policies outlined in the syllabus, and should know upfront the 'feel' or 'structure' of the course. [Include an activity for students to find, review and \(if desired\) print both the course syllabus and schedule.](#) Include questions about the syllabus in a course quiz.

For more information about designing a syllabus for a hybrid or online class and for hints on using a course schedule, refer to the "Syllabus Best Practices" handout.

Basic Computer Skills

Most classes don't require any special technical skills, but minimally students should be able to:

- Cut, copy and paste
- Download (save) files
- Upload (attach) files
- Print a Word document to Portable Document Format (PDF)
- Save a Word document as Rich Text Format (RTF)

[Include an activity for students to:](#)

1. [Review the "How to Cut, Copy and Paste" handout and video.](#)
2. [Review the "How to Download \(Save\) Files" handout and video.](#)
3. [Review the "How to Upload \(Attach\) Files" handout and videos \(how to attach files to a discussion board thread, a message, an assignment and email\).](#)
4. [Review the "How to Print Word to PDF Using PrimoPDF" handout and video.](#)
5. [Review the "How to Create a Rich Text Format File" handout and video.](#)

Send Email (w/attachment)

Have the students send you an email with an attachment. Student completion of this activity tells you they know how to use the send email function and submit an attachment.

[Include an activity for students to review and follow the steps in the "Sending Email" handout and video.](#)

Send the students an email from within Blackboard and require they reply to you. This will help you determine which of your students have not yet activated their Maricopa Email.

Send Message (w/attachment)

If you elect to use Messages instead of Email, ensure the students understand that. Have the students send you a message with an attachment. Student completion of this activity tells you they know how to access the messages function and send a message with an attachment. [Include an activity for students to review and follow the steps in the "Sending Messages" handout and video.](#)

If you use Email instead of Messages, disable Messages in the course tools. You don't want to check that area 4 weeks into the class and realize students have been communicating with you without your knowledge!

Discussion Board

It is important for students to interact with you and fellow classmates. For hybrid and online classes, direct your students to introduce themselves to the class; use the Introductions forum to help establish a sense of community. Be sure to provide instructions to the students regarding your expectations for their participation. Having the students introduce themselves via the discussion board (and requiring reply posts) enables them to test run Blackboard's discussion board.

For more information about effective use of the discussion board, refer to the "Discussion Best Practices" handout.

[Include an activity for students to:](#)

1. [Review the "Posting to a Discussion Board" and "Viewing and Replying to Discussion Board Posts" handouts and video tutorials.](#)
2. [Post to the Introductions discussion forum and reply to another student.](#)

Submit an Assignment

Have students submit an assignment; you may want your students to submit assignments as an attachment only or to use the submission box. Either way, including this activity allows them to practice submitting assignments. Create a new assignment and provide clear instructions on where to go in the class and how to complete this activity.

[Include an activity for students to:](#)

1. [Review the "Submitting an Assignment" handout and video OR the "Submitting an Assignment as an Attachment" handout and video.](#)
2. [Submit the assignment.](#)

Submit a SafeAssignment

You may use SafeAssignments for plagiarism detection. Have students submit a sample SafeAssignment. Including this activity will allow them to practice submitting SafeAssignments and reviewing results. Create a new SafeAssignment and provide clear instructions to the students on where to go in the class and how to complete this activity.

SafeAssign is a plagiarism detector. Consider using it as a learning tool instead of a punitive 'gotcha' tool.

[Include an activity for students to:](#)

1. [Review the "Submitting a SafeAssignment" handout and video and the "Viewing a SafeAssignment Report" handout and video.](#)
2. [Submit the SafeAssignment.](#)

Course Introduction Quiz

Give your students some practice using the assessment feature within the system before a high-stakes exam. Create a short course introduction quiz and use the specific types of questions (T/F, multiple answer, short answer, essay, mathematical equations, etc.) you think you will use in future assessments. Create a new assessment and present it with your desired options, including its presentation: all questions at once or one question at a time.

Some possible questions include:

- The best way to contact you
- How often students need to check email or discussions
- Any technology/software
- Which textbook(s) to use
- Project submission guidelines
- Response turn-around time (email, phone, etc.)
- Course grading policy, schedule, scale
- Attendance/participation/withdrawal policy

Want a few tips about assessment? Visit ctlt.weebly.com!

Include an activity for students to:

1. Review the "Recommended Best Practices for Taking Exams" handout.
2. Review the "Taking Exams All Questions at Once" handout and video OR the "Taking Exams One Question at a Time" handout and video.
3. Take the quiz.

Viewing My Grades

Students should know how to check their current grade and view assignment/assessment feedback. Include an activity for students to review the "Accessing My Grades" handout and video after they have participated in the above activities.