Brookes College

Pharmacy Assistant Diploma Program

Instructor Guide

Brookes College Pharmacy Assistant Diploma
Instructor Guide

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Pharmacy Assistant Diploma: Program Description

Brookes College's Pharmacy Assistant Diploma Program presents an exciting career path for students in the pharmaceutical industry. Students will gain essential knowledge of pharmaceutical services in Canada and the operations of community and institutional pharmacy operations. They will develop skills for crucial mathematical calculations, compounding, pharmacy administration with different computer applications, including MS Office and Kroll software. This diploma opens the doors to career opportunities in retail pharmacy stores, institutional pharmaceutical set up, or Hospital Pharmacies (both Inpatient and outpatient settings.)

Program Delivery:

The program employs a versatile hybrid/hyflex instructional model, encompassing two key components within the online instruction modality::

1. Online Synchronous Instruction:
    a. Hybrid: The first component is taught by the instructor online synchronously with students who are also online.
    b. Hyflex: The instructor teaches to a class of students in the classroom as well as students online.
    c. The instructional time is between 1.5 hrs to 2.5 hours per lesson. This depends on the length of the course.
    d. Each lesson is recorded so that students can refer back to the lesson for clarification and reinforcement of the content.
2. Online Self-Directed Learning:
    a. After the online synchronous instruction, the instructor assigns follow up assignments or assigns tests.
    b. The instructor might assign readings or assignments to prepare for the next online synchronous instruction.

Course Format

1. Each course is developed so that it can be taught within a 4-week period. The number of hours per week depends on the length of the course.
2. Students are enrolled at the beginning of each month in a course.

This structured approach combines flexibility and rigor to provide a comprehensive educational experience for our students.

Career Choices

Our Pharmacy Assistant Diploma program graduates will be prepared for employment in retail pharmacy stores, wholesale pharmaceutical distributors as Pharmacy Assistant.

Admissions Requirements

A 'Successful' interview with school administration required of all applicants.

Standard Admission

Students must meet ONE of the following criteria:

1. Alberta high school diploma, verified by transcript, or non-Alberta equivalent.
    - High School diplomas that are not from Canada must be verified by IQAS or the World Education Services Gateway Program.

OR

2. Successful completion of the General Equivalency Diploma (G.E.D)

Mature Admission

Students must meet the following criteria:

1. Be 18 years or older.
2. Must complete Wonderlic Basic Test with a minimum score of 60%

English Language Admission Requirement

Students must meet the English language requirements through ONE of the following:

1. Successful Completion of Grade 12 Alberta Education English Language Arts, or non-Alberta equivalent. (High School diplomas that are not from Canada will be verified by IQAS or the World Education Services Gateway Program.)
2. Transcripts demonstrating the successful completion of, at minimum, one year (two semesters) of full-time post-secondary education at a school where English was the primary language of instruction in a recognized nation where English is the primary language of instruction.

OR

3. Transcript evidence of ESL results: CLB7/ IELTS 6/CELPIP 7/TOEFL IBT 65 – 78.4
   60% on the Basic Skills Test. The candidate must score a minimum of 60% in the verbal skills for the Basic Skills Test.

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Program Highlights

- Program Duration: 53 weeks.
- 15 courses
- 200 hours of practicum experience
- This course prepares students for one of the fastest-growing industries in Canada.
- Evening and Weekend classes available

Graduation Requirements:

- Successful completion of 69 credits
- CGPA of 2.0 or higher

Curriculum - Course Listings

		Pharmacy Assistant Course Listings		No of Hours		
S/N	Course Code	Title	Credit	Onsite	Online	No of Weeks
1		Microsoft Office Application	3.0	20	20	2
2	BCM100	Business Communication	3.0	30	10	2
3	CHS121	Canadian Healthcare System, Ethics & Law	6.0	60	20	4
4	MDT101	Medical Terminology	6.0	60	20	4
5	ANT112	Applied Anatomy, Physiology, & Pharmacology	6.0	60	20	4
6	PHM101	Pharmaceutical Calculations	6.0	40	40	4
7	PHM142	Pharmacy Software-Kroll	6.0	40	40	4
8	PHM151	Pharmacy Computer Applications & Billing	3.0	40	20	3
9	PHM161	Non-Sterile Compounding	3.0	40	20	3
10	PHM201	Introduction to Hospital Pharmacy	3.0	40	20	3
11	PHM204	Community Pharmacy Dispensing and Lab Skills	6.0	60	20	4
12	PHM203	Institutional Pharmacy & Sterile Practice	3.0	40	20	3

13	PHM213	Pharmacy Systems Management & Inventory Control	3.0	40	20	3
14	CPR101	First Aid & CPR Training	3.0	300	10	2
15	PAR301	Career and Employment Success Strategies	3.0	40	20	3
16	PAP315	Practicum	6.0	200	0	5

Course Summaries

Courses	Credit Hours		Delivery Mode
1. Microsoft Office Application	3.0	40 Hours	Onsite and Online

Microsoft Office has traditionally been the platform of choice for businesses in Canada and globally. An increasingly large number of companies are adopting Microsoft Office as their platform of choice. Microsoft Office is used by over 50% of businesses worldwide. Students will leverage Microsoft Office Applications (Word, Excel and Access) skills to advance their career or unlock new career opportunities.

2. Business Communication	3.0	40 Hours	Onsite and Online

This course introduces students to the core concepts of communication. Students will cultivate an awareness of these concepts by analyzing how they are used in various texts and contexts, and they will apply these concepts strategically in their writing. Through various writing tasks centred on these core concepts of communication, students will develop the transferrable reading and writing skills essential for success in their post-secondary studies, workplaces, and communities.

3. Canadian Healthcare System, Ethics & Law	6.0	80 Hours	Onsite and Online

This course introduces a conceptual framework of the healthcare environment in Canada. It covers topics about the structure of Canadian healthcare systems and the role of administrative health professionals. It also includes ethical and legal aspects related to decision making in healthcare administration.

4. Medical Terminology	6.0	80 Hours	Onsite and Online

This course decodes different medical terminologies commonly used for body structure and functions. It also focuses on correct pronunciation and how it is described in the specific medical situation.

5. Applied Anatomy, Physiology, & Pharmacology	6.0	80 Hours	Onsite and Online

This course includes different basic process and terminologies of body functions, diseases, and medication. It introduces the body systems' structure and parts from a cellular level, the effect of various medicines, administration of medication and their side effects.

6. Pharmaceutical Calculations 6.0 80 Hours Onsite and Online

This course will prepare students to learn the calculations use in the pharmacy, including dosage calculations, expressions of strength and the apothecaries' systems of measurement.

7. Pharmacy Software-Kroll 6.0 80 Hours Onsite and Online

This course takes a hands-on learning approach to learning Kroll to optimize operations and enhance customer experience, improve processes with features such as Rx filling (patient, drug, doctor, and SIG), adjudication, label printing, inventory, accounts receivable, extensive reporting and audit trails.

8. Pharmacy Computer Applications & Billing 3.0 60 Hours Onsite and Online

This course will familiarize students with the Kroll pharmacy management software program. The course also covers the topics of prescription filling, drug interaction, third party medical plans and the Alberta Netcare system.

9. Non-Sterile Compounding 3.0 60 Hours Onsite and Online

This course reviews all aspects of compounding prescriptions. The student will prepare various mixtures, creams and ointments, solutions and suspensions. An emphasis on accuracy and preparation of a pharmaceutically elegant product is included.

10. Introduction to Hospital Pharmacy 3.0 60 Hours Onsite and Online

In this course, students will be introduced to hospital pharmacy and the differences compared to community practice. In addition, students will familiarize themselves with different hospital organizations and the roles and relationships of different health care professionals caring for patients. The legislation governing hospitals will be discussed. The course will also look at drug distribution, including ward stock, unit dose, etc.

11. Community Pharmacy Dispensing and Lab Skills 3.0 60 Hours Onsite and Online

This introductory course will prepare students with the basic knowledge and skills necessary to work in a retail setting. Students will be introduced to third-party billing, the workflow of a community pharmacy, ordering, receiving, dispensing procedures, and learning policies applicable to the handling and dispensing of medications in this setting. This course will provide a combination of theory and practice in a simulated pharmacy laboratory.

12. Institutional Pharmacy & Sterile Practice 3.0 60 Hours Onsite and Online

Students will gain an in-depth understanding of the operational function of an institution-based pharmacy. This course will enable students to understand the pharmacy team members' roles and scopes of practice. Students will also identify various types of automation and the use of drug distribution systems.

13. Pharmacy Systems Management & Inventory Control 3.0 60 Hours Onsite and Online

This introductory course will prepare students with the basic knowledge and skills necessary to work in a retail setting and inventory management. This course will provide a combination of theory and practice in a simulated pharmacy laboratory. Students will become familiar with the Kroll Pharmacy system and become proficient in prescription data entry.

14. First Aid & CPR Training 3.0 40 Hours Onsite and Online

This course provides first aid and level C of CPR training certification from a qualified training agency.

15. Career and Employment Success Strategies 3.0 60 Hours Onsite and Online

Mandatory on-site classes are conducted to support field-based work experience, job search, resume preparation, interview skills, workplace culture and expectations. Students will also work individually and in groups for their capstone projects as well as working with a career counsellor for career and employment success strategies after completing their core courses of study.

16. Practicum 6.0 200 Hours (5 Weeks) Field-Based

Practicum is designed to give students supervised practical application of previously studied knowledge and skills. Practicum experiences occur in a paid or unpaid arrangement and various locations appropriate to the nature and level of expertise. Students implement personal and interpersonal skills to strengthen individual performance in the workplace that creates a successful transition to the workforce or further post-secondary education. Students apply technical skills to address business applications with the knowledge gained in the program.

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Guide to Teaching an Online Career Training Program: Best Practices for Instructional Delivery

Introduction:

Teaching an online career training program requires careful planning and adherence to best practices for effective instructional delivery. This guide outlines the process and procedures that this curriculum followed to develop a successful online teaching, ensuring that both instructors and learners can achieve their goals. This guide also identifies best practices and strategies that can be followed to provide an optimum learning experience for students.

Course Design and Planning

- Define clear learning objectives: Begin by establishing specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) learning outcomes for your program.
- Create a structured curriculum: Organize course content logically, dividing it into modules or units, and provide a syllabus outlining course expectations, schedules, and assessment criteria.
- Develop engaging content: Integrate multimedia, interactive materials, and relevant resources to enhance the learning experience.
- Plan for accessibility: Ensure that all course materials are accessible to individuals with disabilities, complying with relevant accessibility standards (e.g., WCAG 2.0).

WCAG 2.0 is structured around four core principles, each of which has specific guidelines and success criteria.

Examples:

The following are some examples that align with the core principles that guide teaching online courses such as those in a Pharmacy Assistant program. You want to ensure that your course adheres to WCAG 2.0 principles to provide an inclusive and accessible learning experience for all your students.

Perceivable: When creating course content, ensure that it is available in multiple formats. For instance, provide written lecture notes alongside video lectures. Ensure that any images or diagrams used in your course materials have descriptive alt text, making them accessible to students with visual impairments. Also, consider providing audio descriptions for any visual content in your videos.

Operable:

In your online course platform, make sure that students can navigate through course modules, quizzes, assignments, and discussion forums using keyboard navigation. This allows students with mobility impairments or those who rely on screen readers to access course materials easily. Ensure that all interactive elements are clearly labeled and that students can submit assignments and quizzes without any barriers.

Understandable:

Use clear and plain language in your course materials and communications. Avoid using overly technical or medical jargon without providing explanations. Create a course syllabus and structure that is easy to follow, with consistent naming conventions for modules and assignments. Offer additional explanations or resources for complex topics to support students' understanding.

Robust:

Select a learning management system (LMS) or online course platform that complies with modern web standards and is compatible with assistive technologies. Regularly test your course materials using various assistive devices and browsers to ensure accessibility as technology evolves. Update any outdated content or technologies to maintain compatibility.

Selecting the Right Technology:

Learning Management System (LMS):

Choose a robust and user friendly LMS that supports your teaching objectives, provides user-friendly navigation, and facilitates communication and assessment. Choose an LMS system that has an attractive interface that invites users to interact with the technology. Neo operated through Cypher Learning Systems is one of the LMS platforms that is recommended.

Video Conferencing Tools: Select a reliable video conferencing platform for live sessions, focusing on ease of use, stability, and security.

Additional Tools: Integrate supplementary tools for collaboration, assessment, and engagement, such as discussion forums, assessment software, and virtual labs. Teams that is part of the suite of apps offered through Microsoft 365 is a good option.

Instructor Preparation and training:

- Ensure instructors are proficient in the chosen technology and are familiar with online teaching best practices.
- Establish an online presence: Instructors should maintain regular communication with students and be accessible for questions and support.
- Time management: Plan and allocate sufficient time for course preparation, interaction, and grading.

Communication and Interaction:

Foster a sense of community: Encourage regular interaction among students through discussion forums, group projects, and peer reviews.

Clear communication: Use clear and concise language in all communications and establish guidelines for respectful and constructive online discussions.

Office hours: Schedule regular virtual office hours to address individual student concerns and provide additional support.

Assessment and Feedback:

Diverse assessment methods: Utilize a variety of assessment tools, including quizzes, essays, projects, and presentations, to evaluate student performance.

Timely feedback: Provide prompt and constructive feedback to help students improve their skills and knowledge.

Maintain integrity: Implement plagiarism detection tools and uphold academic integrity standards.

Accessibility and Inclusivity:

Accommodate diverse learners: Be prepared to offer accommodations for students with disabilities and ensure that course materials are accessible to all.

Inclusive content: Use inclusive language and materials that are culturally sensitive and free from bias.

Continuous Improvement:

Reflect and adapt: Collect feedback from students and colleagues to make continuous improvements to your course.

Professional development: Stay updated with the latest trends and best practices in online education through workshops, conferences, and training programs.

Teaching an online career training program requires careful planning, dedication, and adherence to best practices in instructional delivery. By focusing on clear communication, engagement, accessibility, and continuous improvement, instructors can create a positive and effective online learning experience for their students.

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Blended Synchronous and Asynchronous Online Course Delivery

Introduction

This comprehensive instructor guide is designed to assist educators in crafting and delivering an online course that seamlessly combines both synchronous and asynchronous elements. This guide emphasises the importance of aligning your teaching strategies with adult learning principles to ensure an engaging and effective learning experience for your students.

Preparing for the Course

In the initial phase of course preparation, it is crucial to establish a solid foundation. The **Pharmacy Assistant** courses follow these foundational guidelines:

Defining Clear Learning Goals and Outcomes:

Begin by articulating precise learning goals and outcomes for your course, ensuring they adhere to the SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound) framework. Prioritizing relevant course, module and lesson outcomes will help maintain focus and structure throughout the course.

Developing a Detailed Course Schedule:

Create a comprehensive schedule that encompasses both synchronous and asynchronous components. This schedule should include clear timelines for synchronous sessions, topic sequencing, assignment deadlines, and assessments. Strive to strike a balance between synchronous and asynchronous elements to engage students effectively.

Select Appropriate Tools and Resources:

Carefully choose the digital platforms, instructional technologies, and learning materials that align with your course's objectives. It's crucial to provide students with clear instructions on how to access and use these resources and to anticipate and prepare for potential technical challenges.

Ensure Accessibility of Course Materials:

Prioritize accessibility by making all course materials, including slides, readings, and multimedia content, accessible to students with varying abilities. Consider offering alternative formats and closed captions for multimedia content to ensure inclusivity. (refer to WCAG 2.0 principles in the introduction to this guide).

Establish Effective Communication Channels:

Define distinct channels for different types of communication, such as questions, concerns, and technical support. Clearly communicate your availability and the expected response times for each communication channel to manage students' expectations effectively.

Synchronous Session Facilitation

The following focuses on effective strategies for conducting synchronous sessions:

Fostering Student Engagement:

To keep students engaged during synchronous sessions, employ interactive strategies such as polls, breakout rooms, collaborative tools, and discussions. Initiating sessions with icebreakers helps create a sense of community and reduces initial reservations.

Setting Clear Expectations:

At the beginning of each synchronous session, outline the session's goals, agenda, and expected outcomes. Providing a structured session plan and adhering to the schedule helps students understand what to expect and stay on track.

Managing Time Effectively:

Allocate your time wisely during synchronous sessions, ensuring that each component, whether it's lectures, discussions, or interactive activities, receives the appropriate attention. Using timers or alerts can help maintain session punctuality and manage time effectively.

Promoting Inclusivity:

Take time zone differences into consideration when scheduling synchronous sessions to accommodate students in various regions. Encourage inclusive communication by respecting students' preferred pronouns and fostering an environment of respect and equity.

Utilizing Technology Wisely:

Mastery of the selected instructional technology is crucial. Familiarize yourself with its features and functions and have contingency plans in place for potential technical issues. Encourage students to practice using the technology before the course begins to ensure a smoother experience.

Facilitating Asynchronous Learning

This section focuses on strategies for facilitating asynchronous learning experiences:

Providing Clear Instructions:

Create detailed assignment instructions that include clear learning objectives, expectations, assessment criteria, and submission guidelines. Employ multimedia resources, such as video explanations or screencasts, to clarify complex tasks and ensure students have a clear understanding of their assignments.

Encouraging Interaction:

Establish robust discussion forums or social learning spaces where students can engage in asynchronous discussions. Pose thought-provoking questions and encourage students to respond to their peers to foster ongoing discourse and collaboration.

Assessment and Feedback:
Develop transparent grading rubrics for assignments and assessments to ensure fairness and consistency. Deliver timely, constructive feedback to guide student improvement and learning, as this is a critical component of asynchronous learning.

Promoting Self-Directed Learning:
Empower students to set their own learning goals and explore additional resources independently. Provide supplemental readings, multimedia materials, or links to support individual exploration and deeper understanding of the course material.

Monitoring Progress:
Regularly review student participation in asynchronous activities and discussions. Identify students who may require additional support and proactively offer assistance to ensure no one is left behind.

Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

In this section, we explore ways to evaluate your course's effectiveness and continuously improve it:

Assessing Course Effectiveness:

Solicit feedback from your students through mid-course and end-of-course surveys to gain insights into the course design, content relevance, and the effectiveness of your instructional strategies. Evaluate learning outcomes against the pedagogical objectives you established at the outset.

Reflecting and Adapting:

Periodically review and adapt your course materials, activities, and assessments based on the feedback you receive and the evolving best practices in online education. Stay informed about emerging trends in online teaching and technology to ensure your course remains up-to-date and relevant.

Investing in Professional Development:

Engage in professional development opportunities related to online teaching, adult learning principles, and instructional design. Participate in webinars, workshops, or conferences to stay current with the latest educational technologies and pedagogical research. Foster collaborative learning and support networks by connecting with peers in online education communities.

Application of Adult Learning Principles

In this final section, we discuss how to integrate adult learning principles into your course:

Recognizing Relevance:

Explicitly demonstrate the practical significance of course content to adult learners' real-life contexts and personal goals. Encourage students to share their experiences and relate the material to their individual situations, making the learning experience more meaningful.

Fostering Self-Directed Learning:

Emphasize the value of self-directed learning and guide students in setting personal learning objectives. Encourage them to take ownership of their educational journeys and explore topics aligned with their interests.

Prioritizing Problem-Centered Learning:

Design assignments and assessments that present real-world problems for students to solve. This approach promotes critical thinking and problem-solving skills by framing complex, open-ended questions that mirror authentic challenges.

Respecting Prior Experience:

Create opportunities for students to share their diverse experiences and knowledge. Celebrate the wealth of perspectives that adult learners bring to the course, and facilitate peer learning and knowledge sharing.

Fostering Collaboration:

Establish clear guidelines for collaborative activities, emphasizing respectful communication and active participation. Encourage students to work together, leveraging their collective knowledge and expertise to enhance the learning experience.

Offering Flexibility:

Recognize the busy lives and responsibilities of adult learners by providing flexible scheduling options for synchronous sessions and assignment deadlines. Offer asynchronous alternatives for collaborative activities to accommodate varied schedules and personal commitments.

Reflecting on Progress:

Encourage students to periodically review their progress toward achieving their learning goals. Provide opportunities for reflection, either with peers or in private discussions, and guide students in setting short-term and long-term milestones to track their progress effectively.

Facilitating Application of Learning:

Design assignments that require students to apply course concepts to their personal or professional contexts. Create opportunities for students to share how they plan to apply their newfound knowledge and skills, reinforcing the practicality of their learning journey.

By following this comprehensive guide, you will be well-equipped to design and deliver a blended online course that not only meets the needs of your students but also aligns with best practices in online education and adult learning principles.

Challenges and Strategies for Teaching Post-Secondary Students Online

Introduction

Teaching post-secondary students in an online setting comes with a unique set of challenges that can impact both educators and learners. This outline highlights these challenges and offers strategies for addressing them, aiming to enhance the overall online learning experience.

Challenges:

Lack of Face-to-Face Interaction

Challenge: One of the primary challenges is the absence of face-to-face interaction, which can hinder the development of personal connections between instructors and students, leading to reduced engagement.

Strategy: To mitigate this challenge, educators should incorporate regular synchronous sessions via video conferencing, allowing for real-time interactions and discussions. Additionally, promoting open communication through discussion forums, emails, and virtual office hours can help bridge the gap and foster a sense of connection among participants.

Student Engagement

Challenge: Maintaining student engagement in an online environment can be challenging due to the potential for distractions and the lack of physical presence.

Strategy: To enhance engagement, instructors can employ various strategies, such as interactive activities, peer collaboration, and gamification techniques. Incorporating multimedia content, real-world case studies, and relevant examples can make the learning material more engaging and relatable to students' interests and goals.

Technical Issues

Challenge: Technical problems, such as internet connectivity issues or software glitches, can disrupt the learning process for both students and instructors.

Strategy: Instructors should provide clear and detailed instructions on how to access the online platform and troubleshoot common technical issues. Additionally, having a dedicated technical support system in place and offering backup plans for situations when technical difficulties arise can help minimize disruptions.

Time Management

Challenge: Many post-secondary students juggle multiple responsibilities, making time management a significant challenge when it comes to online learning.

Strategy: To assist students in managing their time effectively, instructors can set clear deadlines and expectations for coursework. Whenever possible, offer flexibility in assignment submissions and provide guidance on effective time management strategies and study habits to help students balance their responsibilities.

Assessment Integrity

Challenge: Ensuring the integrity of assessments in an online setting is a concern, as it can be more challenging to prevent cheating or plagiarism.

Strategy: Instructors can address this challenge by diversifying assessment methods. This might include open-book exams that emphasize critical thinking, essays, project-based assessments, or oral presentations. Employing plagiarism detection software and, when necessary, monitoring live assessments can further maintain assessment integrity.

Isolation and Motivation

Challenge: Online learners may experience feelings of isolation, leading to decreased motivation and engagement.

Strategy: To combat isolation and bolster motivation, educators can foster a sense of community within the online classroom. Encouraging peer interaction through group projects, discussions, and collaborative activities can create a supportive learning environment. Regular feedback and

acknowledgment of students' progress can also help maintain their motivation and sense of achievement.

Accessibility and Inclusivity

Challenge: Ensuring that course materials are accessible to all students, including those with disabilities, is vital but can be complex.

Strategy: Instructors should adhere to accessibility guidelines when designing course content, making materials compatible with screen readers and offering alternative formats for various types of content. Closed captions for multimedia content and ensuring compatibility with assistive technologies are essential steps in promoting inclusivity.

Communication Overload

Challenge: The abundance of communication channels and information flow can overwhelm both students and instructors.

Strategy: To manage communication effectively, educators should establish clear communication guidelines, designate specific channels for different purposes, and employ a centralized platform for announcements and updates. This helps streamline communication, making it more manageable for all participants.

In conclusion, teaching post-secondary students online is a dynamic endeavor that requires proactive approaches to address the associated challenges. By implementing these strategies, educators can create a more conducive online learning environment that promotes engagement, accessibility, and ultimately, student success.

Top of Form

Best Practices for Online Instructors: Incorporating Adult Learning Principles

Introduction

As online instruction continues to gain prominence, educators must adapt and develop new skills to excel in this digital environment. This comprehensive guide offers a roadmap for online instructors, focusing on best practices while highlighting the integration of adult learning principles to create engaging and effective learning experiences for adult learners.

Establishing a Positive Learning Environment

Create a Welcoming Online Presence

It is essential to cultivate a welcoming online presence as an instructor. This involves adopting a friendly and approachable tone in your communications with students, and it includes providing a professional profile picture. Such efforts make students feel comfortable reaching out for assistance or sharing their thoughts and questions without hesitation.

Foster a Sense of Community

Fostering a sense of community in the virtual classroom is paramount. Encourage active participation in online discussions and collaborative activities and take the time to acknowledge and value each student's unique experiences and perspectives. This approach ensures that every student feels included and appreciated, enhancing the overall learning experience.

Designing Engaging and Effective Content

Start with Clear Learning Goals:

Clearly articulated learning goals at the beginning of each module or lesson provide students with a roadmap for their learning journey. These objectives should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) to offer clear guidance and direction.

Utilize Multimodal Content

Incorporate a variety of multimedia elements into your teaching materials. This could include videos, images, interactive simulations, podcasts, and more. The goal is to cater to different learning preferences

and engage students with diverse learning styles. Always ensure that all content is accessible and user-friendly to accommodate all learners.

Chunk Content for Digestibility

Breaking content into manageable chunks is a key strategy to prevent information overload. Use headings, bullet points, and concise language to enhance readability and ensure that students can easily digest the material.

Encourage Self-Directed Learning

Promote self-directed learning by offering supplemental resources, reading materials, and links for students to explore topics of interest beyond the required curriculum. Encourage students to set personal learning goals and take ownership of their learning journey, fostering a sense of autonomy and motivation.

Facilitating Engaging Online Discussions

Set Clear Expectations

Effective online discussions require setting clear expectations. Establish guidelines for participation, including expectations for student involvement, standards for respectful communication, and response times. Communicate your role as a facilitator and the importance of each student's contributions to the learning process.

Pose Thought-Provoking Questions

Create thought-provoking discussion questions that require critical thinking and reflection. Encourage students to analyze, synthesize, and apply course concepts to real-world situations, thereby deepening their understanding and engagement.

Promote Peer Interaction

Active peer interaction is crucial for online learning. Encourage students to respond to their peers' contributions and engage in meaningful dialogue. Create opportunities for collaborative problem-solving and knowledge sharing, facilitating a sense of community and collective learning.

Providing Timely and Constructive Feedback

Establish a Feedback Routine

To foster continuous improvement, establish a feedback routine. Set clear expectations for when and how feedback will be provided on assignments, assessments, and discussions. Consistency in your feedback practices creates predictability for students, helping them understand how to progress in their learning journey.

Focus on Specificity

When offering feedback, focus on specificity. Provide constructive, specific feedback that addresses the quality of work, aligns with learning objectives, and offers guidance for improvement. Acknowledge and celebrate students' achievements and progress to maintain motivation and enthusiasm.

Encourage Reflective Self-Assessment

Encourage students to engage in reflective self-assessment before submitting assignments. Promote metacognition by prompting them to evaluate their work and consider how they can further improve. This reflective approach empowers students to take ownership of their learning.

Integration of Adult Learning Principles

Acknowledge Relevance

Recognize the importance of making course content relevant to the real-life contexts and goals of adult learners. Emphasize the practical applications of the material, encouraging students to relate it to their own experiences and apply it to their personal or professional lives.

Foster Self-Directed Learning

Adult learners thrive when given the autonomy to direct their own learning. Promote self-directed learning by encouraging students to set their own learning objectives and explore topics of interest independently. Provide guidance on accessing resources and conducting independent research to support their self-directed journeys.

Prioritize Problem-Centered Learning

Adult learners excel when confronted with real-world challenges. Design assignments and assessments that present authentic, real-world problems for students to solve. Challenge them with complex, open-ended questions that demand critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Respect Prior Experience

Tap into the wealth of experience and knowledge that adult learners bring to the virtual classroom. Create opportunities for students to share their diverse experiences with peers, fostering a sense of community and collaborative learning. Acknowledge and celebrate the variety of perspectives students contribute.

Encourage Collaboration

Establish a collaborative learning environment by facilitating group projects and discussions. Encourage peer learning and knowledge sharing, allowing students to leverage their collective expertise and learn from one another.

Offer Flexibility

Recognize that adult learners often have busy lives and multiple responsibilities. Provide flexible scheduling options for synchronous sessions and assignment deadlines. Additionally, offer asynchronous alternatives to accommodate varied schedules and personal commitments.

Continuous Improvement and Professional Development

Ask for Feedback from Students

Solicit feedback from your students regularly to gain insights into their learning experiences and areas for improvement. Use this feedback to refine your teaching practices and course design. Listening to your students can be one of the most valuable sources of professional growth.

Stay Informed and Adapt

Stay informed about emerging trends in online education, instructional technologies, and pedagogical research. Adapt your teaching methods and content to reflect the evolving educational landscape, ensuring that your courses remain current and relevant.

Engage in Professional Development

Invest in your professional development by attending webinars, workshops, and conferences related to online teaching and adult education. Connect with peers in online education communities to foster collaboration and support networks. Sharing experiences and best practices with colleagues can lead to valuable insights and growth opportunities.

By incorporating these detailed best practices and aligning your teaching strategies with adult learning principles, you can create an enriching and effective online learning experience that caters to the unique needs and aspirations of your adult learners.

Strategies For Teaching Adult Students Returning To School As Mature Students

Introduction

Most students who attend post secondary career training college are returning to school after a significant length of time since their last educational experience. Consequently, relearning or upgrading their academic and study skills as well as understanding how to be a student in a post secondary environment may pose challenges. Adult students who have been away from a learning environment may require more support from teachers than those who have had recent post secondary experience.

Here are some of the challenges and suggested strategies for supporting adult learners who may be lacing the necessary academic skills that are needed to be successful in post secondary career training programs:

Diverse Backgrounds and Experiences:

Strategy*:*

Use diagnostic assessments or surveys at the beginning of the course to gauge the skills, knowledge, and experiences of your students. Then, design differentiated instruction to meet the varying needs of the learners in your class. Offer additional resources or reading materials for those who need more support.

Limited Academic Skills**:**

*Strategy***:**

Offer remedial or developmental courses to help students build essential academic skills. Provide resources for extra practice and consider offering workshops or tutoring services for additional support. Encourage peer tutoring or study groups to facilitate skill development.

Time Management and Life Balance**:**

*Strategy***:**

Provide time management workshops or resources to help students balance their various commitments. Offer flexible scheduling options, such as evening classes or online courses, to accommodate their busy lives. Encourage the use of digital tools and apps for time management.

Motivation and Confidence**:**

*Strategy***:**

Create a positive and supportive learning environment. Recognize and celebrate students' achievements, no matter how small, to boost their confidence. Set clear, achievable goals and provide regular feedback

and encouragement. Connect them with mentors or role models who have successfully navigated similar challenges.

Technology Proficiency:

Strategy:

Offer technology training or support sessions to help students become proficient with the required tools. Make sure that your course materials and online resources are user-friendly and provide clear instructions for using them. Offer tech support through IT services or peer mentoring.

Different Learning Styles:

Strategy:

Incorporate a variety of teaching methods, such as lectures, group discussions, hands-on activities, and multimedia presentations, to accommodate different learning styles. Allow students some autonomy in how they approach their learning when possible. Provide resources for self-assessment to help students identify their preferred learning styles.

Real-World Relevance:

Strategy:

Highlight the practical relevance of the course content and provide real-world examples and case studies. Encourage students to apply what they're learning to their current jobs or life situations. Invite guest speakers or industry professionals to share their experiences.

Building a Learning Community:

Strategy:

Foster a sense of community through group activities, peer mentoring, and collaborative projects. Create online discussion forums or social media groups for students to connect and share ideas. Organize networking events or study groups.

Assessment and Evaluation:

Strategy:

Use a variety of assessment methods, such as project-based assessments, presentations, and portfolios, to allow students to demonstrate their understanding in different ways. Offer formative assessments and provide timely feedback to help students improve. Allow for revisions or retakes to support learning growth.

Career Counseling:

Strategy:

Offer career counseling services or connect students with career resources on campus. Help them align their educational goals with their career aspirations. Organize career fairs or workshops to facilitate networking and job placement.

By implementing these strategies, educators can better address the unique challenges faced by adult learners returning to post-secondary education, ultimately improving their chances of success and achievement.

Strategies for supporting Students Whose First Language is not English

Introduction

With the growing number of newcomers and International students that Canada has been attracting to Canada, the percentage of students who are seeking to gain Canadian credentials in order to find a first or second career, is growing. According to a Stats Canada (Canada's population estimates: Record-high population growth in 2022) report, Canada welcomed 437,180 immigrants and saw a net increase of the number of non-permanent residents estimated at 607,782. [1]

It is therefore a reality that the immigrants and International students are increasing in Private Post Secondary Career Colleges. They are typically highly educated and have learned English at a level that would meet Career College entrance requirements. However, English language comprehension may still be a challenge when being exposed to an English academic learning environment.

Strategies to Support Students whose first language is not English

Effective online instructors in post-secondary career training programs can employ various strategies to ensure all students receive a quality education. Here are some strategies to consider:

Clear Communication:

Use clear and concise language when giving instructions or explanations. Avoid jargon and idiomatic expressions that might be confusing to ESL students.

Syllabus and Course Materials:

Provide a detailed syllabus and course materials in advance. This helps ESL students prepare for class and understand the expectations.

[1] Canada's population estimates: Record-high population growth in 2022. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/230322/dq230322f-eng.htm

Multimodal Instruction:

Integrate a variety of teaching methods, such as written materials, videos, audio recordings, and interactive exercises. This accommodates different learning styles and helps ESL students comprehend the content better.

Visual Aids:

Incorporate visuals like charts, graphs, and diagrams to supplement verbal explanations. Visual aids can make complex concepts easier to understand.

Bilingual Glossary:

Create a bilingual glossary of key terms and concepts, especially if you have a diverse group of ESL students with different native languages.

Slow Pacing:

Avoid rushing through content. Allow extra time for ESL students to process information and ask questions. Encourage them to seek clarification when needed.

Regular Feedback:

Provide timely and constructive feedback on assignments and assessments. Offer suggestions for improvement and consider one-on-one discussions if necessary.

Group Work:

Incorporate group activities that encourage peer learning. Pairing ESL students with those who have strong English skills can be beneficial for language development.

Online Discussion Forums:

Use online discussion forums to facilitate asynchronous communication. This allows ESL students to compose their thoughts and responses more thoughtfully.

Language Support Resources:

Recommend online language resources and tools to help ESL students improve their language skills outside of class.

Cultural Sensitivity:

Be aware of cultural differences and avoid unintentional biases. Create an inclusive and respectful learning environment.

Flexible Assessments:

Consider alternative assessment methods, such as project-based assessments, that allow ESL students to demonstrate their understanding in ways other than written exams.

Recorded Lectures:

Record lectures for students to review at their own pace. This is especially helpful for ESL students who may need to listen multiple times to grasp the content fully.

Encourage Participation:

Encourage ESL students to participate in class discussions and activities. Create a supportive atmosphere where they feel comfortable expressing themselves.

Office Hours:

Offer virtual office hours to provide additional support and address individual concerns. ESL students may need extra help with specific language-related issues.

Peer Tutoring:

Consider implementing a peer tutoring program where more proficient English speakers can assist ESL students outside of class.

Continuous Assessment:

Instead of relying heavily on high-stakes exams, use continuous assessment methods like quizzes, discussions, and homework to gauge student progress.

Professional Development:

Keep up to date with best practices in ESL education and online teaching through professional development opportunities.

Remember that effective teaching is not just about accommodating ESL students but also fostering an inclusive and engaging learning environment for all students. Flexibility, patience, and empathy are key attributes of a successful online instructor in this context.

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