

**George Mason University  
College of Education and Human Development  
Graduate School of Education  
Instructional Design and Technology**

EDIT 710 (001): Online Teaching Essentials  
1 credit, Summer 2020  
Online

**Faculty**

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**Prerequisites/Corequisites**

None.

**University Catalog Course Description**

Introduces the essential concepts and skills to effectively teach online courses. Explores the topics of designing and managing online courses, assessing online students' knowledge and skills, facilitating online student collaboration and communication, and establishing a supportive online learning community.

**Course Overview**

Teaching and facilitating online courses requires skills and knowledge that are unique to the online learning environment. In this course, students will work individually and collaboratively to explore the essentials skills that are required to teach online. Skills include designing and managing online courses; assessing online students' knowledge and skills; facilitating online student collaboration and communication; and establishing a supportive online learning community.

**Course Delivery Method**

This fully-online course will be delivered via the Blackboard Learn learning management system (LMS) housed in the MyMason portal (<https://mymason.gmu.edu/>). The course will use primarily an asynchronous format with minimal synchronous instruction. Students will log in to the Blackboard Learn course site using their Mason email name (everything before "@masonlive.gmu.edu") and email password. The course site will be available on Tuesday, May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2020, under the "Courses" tab (found in the upper right corner of the screen).

**Under no circumstances may candidates/students participate in online class sessions (either by phone or Internet) while operating motor vehicles. Further, as expected in a face-to-face**

**class meeting, such online participation requires undivided attention to course content and communication.**

### *Technical Requirements*

To participate in this course, students will need to satisfy the following technical requirements:

- High-speed Internet access with standard up-to-date browsers. To get a list of Blackboard Learn's supported browsers see: [https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Getting\\_Started/Browser\\_Support#supported-browsers](https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Getting_Started/Browser_Support#supported-browsers).
- To get a list of supported operating systems on different devices see: [https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Getting\\_Started/Browser\\_Support#tested-devices-and-operating-systems](https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Getting_Started/Browser_Support#tested-devices-and-operating-systems).
- Students must maintain consistent and reliable access to their GMU email and Blackboard Learn, as these are the official methods of communication for this course.
- Students will need a computer-compatible headset microphone for use with the Blackboard Collaborate Ultra web conferencing tool.
- Students may be asked to create logins and passwords on supplemental websites and/or to download trial software to their computer or tablet as part of course requirements.
- The following software plug-in for PCs and Macs is available for free download:
  - o Adobe Acrobat Reader: <https://get.adobe.com/reader/>

### *Expectations*

- Course Week:  
Because asynchronous courses do not have a fixed meeting day, each weekly module will become available on **Monday** morning, and projects will be due the following **Sunday** at midnight EDT.
- Log-in Frequency:  
Students must actively check the Blackboard Learn course site and their GMU email for communications from the instructor. This must be completed no fewer than 2 times per week to foster active and meaningful course-related discussion.
- Participation:  
Students are expected to actively engage in all course activities. This includes viewing all course materials, completing course activities and assignments, and participating meaningfully in course discussions and group interactions.
- Technical Competence:  
Students are expected to demonstrate competence in the use of all course technology. Students who are struggling with technical components of the course are expected to seek assistance from the instructor and/or College or University technical services.

- Technical Issues:

Enrolling in an online course can be intimidating for students with lower technical competence. As a result, the course contains several embedded video tutorials to assist students when they encounter technological issues. However, even with this level of support, students may encounter unforeseen technical issues. When students encounter a technological issue, they should try the following:

1. Try to accomplish the task in a different way.
2. Close and reopen the Internet browser and try the task again.
3. Try performing the task in a different Internet browser.
4. Seek instructor-based assistance if steps 1-3 did not resolve the issue.

Students should expect some technical difficulties at some point in the semester and should, therefore, budget their time accordingly. Late work will **not** be accepted based on individual technical issues. Contact ITU (<http://itservices.gmu.edu/help.cfm>) at (703) 993-8870 or [support@gmu.edu](mailto:support@gmu.edu).

- Workload:

Please be aware that this course is **not** self-paced. Students are expected to meet *specific deadlines* and *due dates* listed in the **Class Schedule** section of this syllabus. It is the student's responsibility to keep track of the weekly course schedule of topics, readings, activities and assignments due. Expect to log in to this course **at least 2 times a week** to read announcements, to participate in the discussions, and to work on course materials.

- Instructor Support:

Students may schedule a virtual one-on-one meeting to discuss course requirements, content, or other course-related issues. Students should email the instructor to schedule a one-on-one session and include a preferred meeting method (e.g., phone, Blackboard Collaborate Ultra, Skype) as well as suggested dates/times. Meetings on the Fairfax campus can also be arranged in special circumstances.

- Netiquette:

The course environment is a collaborative space. Experience shows that even an innocent remark typed in an online environment can be misconstrued. Students must always re-read their responses carefully before posting them, so as others do not consider them as personal offenses. *Be positive in your approach with others and diplomatic in selecting your words.* Remember that you are not competing with classmates, but you are sharing information and learning from others. All faculty are similarly expected to be respectful in all communications.

- Accommodations:

Online learners who require effective accommodations to ensure accessibility must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services.

## **Learner Outcomes**

This course is designed to enable students to:

1. Understand the importance of making courses accessible to all learners and following copyright guidelines;
2. Examine learning objectives and understand how they impact the online course design;
3. Consider the types of content that best align with course objectives;
4. Create content pages in Blackboard Learn that contain embedded media;
5. Design effective traditional and alternative assessments that align with course objectives;
6. Provide online learners with effective feedback;
7. Facilitate effective learner collaboration and discussions in online courses;
8. Create an online discussion board prompt that is aligned with course learning objectives;
9. Establishing presence and a sense of community among learners; and
10. Recognize and respond to learner needs.

## **Professional Standards (The California State University):**

This course adopted The California State University's Quality Online Learning and Teaching framework.

### **Section 1: Course Overview and Introduction:**

- 1.1 Instructor uses course environment to provide clear and detailed instructions for students to begin accessing all course components, such as syllabus, course calendar, assignments, and support files.
- 1.2 Detailed instructor information is available to students and includes multiple formats for being contacted by students, availability information, brief biographical information, and a picture of the instructor.
- 1.4 Online etiquette expectations for various forms of course communication and dialog (e.g., chat, "hangout," email, online discussion) are presented and clear to the student.

### **Section 2: Assessment of Student Learning**

- 2.1 All student learning outcomes are specific, well-defined, and measurable.
- 2.2 Grading policy is provided in a manner that clearly defines expectations for the course and respective assignments.
- 2.3 The learning activities (including graded assignments as well as ungraded activities) promote the achievement of the student learning outcomes.
- 2.4 The assessment instruments (e.g., rubrics) are detailed and appropriate to the student work and respective outcomes being assessed.
- 2.5 Throughout the semester, instructor provides multiple opportunities to give feedback on student learning.
- 2.6 Periodically, instructor solicits feedback from students regarding their learning and potential improvements that may be made to the course.

### **Section 3: Instructional Materials and Resources**

- 3.3 Instructor articulates the purpose of each instructional material and how it is related to the course, activities, learning objectives, and success of the student.
- 3.5 There are a variety of instructional material types and perspectives, while not overly relying on one content type such as text.
- 3.6 Modeling academic integrity, instructor appropriately cites all resources and materials used throughout the course.

#### Section 4: Student Interaction and Community

4.1 At the beginning of the course, instructor provides an opportunity for students to introduce themselves to develop the sense of community.

4.4 Learning activities facilitate and support active learning that encourages frequent and ongoing peer-to-peer engagement.

4.5 The modes and outcomes for student interaction are clearly communicated.

#### Section 5: Facilitation and Instruction

5.1 Instructor helps identify areas of agreement and disagreement on course topics.

5.3 Instructor actively strives to keep course participants engaged and participating in productive dialogs.

5.5 Instructor helps focus discussions on relevant issues.

5.6 Instructor provides feedback in a timely manner.

### Required Texts

Students are **not** required to purchase texts for this course. All learning materials will be provided in the Blackboard Learn course. Materials include the following:

Cranney, M., Alexander, J. L., Wallace, L., & Alfano, L. (2011). Instructor's discussion forum effort: Is it worth it? *MERLOT Journal of Online Learning and Teaching*, 7, 337–348.

Hailey, D. E. (2001). Online education horror stories worthy of Halloween: A short list of problems and solutions in online instruction. *Computers and Composition*, 18, 387–397. doi:10.1016/S8755-4615(01)00070-6

Moore, M. G. (1989). Editorial: Three types of interaction. *The American Journal of Distance Education*, 3(2), 1–6.

University of Oregon Teaching Effectiveness Program. (2013). *Generating and facilitating engaging and effective online discussions*. University of Oregon. Retrieved from <http://tep.uoregon.edu/technology/blackboard/docs/discussionboard.pdf>

West, R. E. (2010). A student's guide to strengthening an online community. *TechTrends*, 54(5), 69–75. doi:10.1007/s11528-010-0439-7

### Course Performance Evaluation

Students are expected to submit all assignments on time in the manner outlined by the instructor.

### Assignment Descriptions:

**Discussion Activities** — Discussions are an important aspect of this course. Discussion activities, prompts, and required level of participation will vary. This will allow students to experience firsthand the advantages and disadvantages of online discussion strategies.

***LMS Organization and Pages*** — Although this course is not designed to prepare students to create online courses from scratch, online instructors who facilitate pre-created courses still need to modify some of the course pages. As a result, in this activity students will learn the basics of content creation in Blackboard Learn.

***Quiz Creation*** — In this assignment students will learn the advantages and disadvantages of using objectively scored quizzes for assessing learner understanding. Following students will create a short quiz within Blackboard Learn.

***Alternative Assessment and Rubric Creation*** — Objectively scored assessments are helpful in assessing what learners know but are not as effective at assessing if learners are able to apply their knowledge in authentic ways. In this project, students will explore the advantages and disadvantages of online performance assessments. Students will also create and share a performance based assessment and rubric that is aligned with a learning objective.

***Discussion Board Prompt Creation***—In this project students will learn how to facilitate online discussions as well as explore some of the advantages and pitfalls of online discussions. Students will then create a discussion board prompt that is aligned with a learning objective.

***Collaboration Norming Document***—New online tools have made collaboration at a distance easier and better. Although not all assessments require learner collaboration, it's important for online instructors to know how to facilitate learner collaboration and understand when collaboration would be valuable to learners. Instructors can also use collaborative tools to work with learners individually to improve their projects. Therefore in this module students will discuss strategies for facilitating student collaboration and explore several different collaborative tools. Students will also work collaboratively on a small project to experience firsthand what it's like to collaborate online.

***Instructor Page and Video***—In this project students will identify ways to foster a sense of community in our courses and help learners to recognize that they have an instructor who is directing and supporting their learning. Students will also create a “Meet Your Instructor” page and video.

**Optional consideration:** Students might think of a cohesive topic connecting all course assignments. Quizzes, alternative assessments, and discussion board prompts could be built around a specific idea (e.g., simulating a course students have enrolled in, have taught, or plan to teach in the future). This would allow for more realistic assignments that have a common thread.

## Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Percentage Range
A	94-100
A-	90-93
B+	87-89
B	84-86
B-	80-83
C	70-79
F	0-69

## Proposed Course Assessments and Point Values

Assignment	Raw Point Value
Online discussion participation	20 points (5 points for each discussion activity)
LMS Organization and Pages	10
Quiz Creation	10
Performance Assessment and Rubric Creation	10
Discussion Board Prompt Creation	10
Collaboration Norming Document	10
Instructor Page and Video	20
Ice-Breaker Fair Share	5
Synchronous Communication Session	5

## Mastery Learning Approach

In this course the instructor will take a mastery learning approach to the assignments. This is how it will work:

- The criteria for completing the assignments will be clearly explained.
- The instructor will evaluate students' work and provide qualitative feedback on their assignments.
- Students who have adequately completed all of the criteria will receive full credit on the assignment.
- If students have not adequately completed all of the criteria, the assignment will be returned and will be subject to late points until all of the criteria are complete.
- Students must complete ALL assignments to get a passing grade.

## Late Work

Students are expected to complete and electronically submit all assignments prior to 11:59 p.m. on the last day of the module as indicated on the course calendar. All assignments—EXCEPT for discussion board activities—can be submitted late but a minimum 10% late penalty will be assessed for work submitted after the assignment deadline. Work that is submitted over a week late

will receive an additional 30% penalty for each additional week late. No late work is accepted after the final assignment's due date.

### Professional Dispositions

Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times. See <https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/policies-procedures/>

### Proposed Class Schedule

Module	Topic and Learning Objectives	Activities and Projects Due
Module 1 (June 1-7)	<p>Topic: Introductions</p> <p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand online learning trends.</li> <li>• Understand how the course is organized and the level of commitment that will be required.</li> <li>• Consider the advantages of digital badges.</li> <li>• Create a video introduction using your webcam.</li> </ul>	<p>Complete the pre-course survey.</p> <p>Complete the lessons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to Online Learning</li> <li>• Course Design and Organization</li> </ul> <p>Complete the workshop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Google Account and Screencasting Setup</li> </ul> <p>Participate in the Ice Breaker activity by posting a video comment to the appropriate discussion board.</p>
Module 2 (June 8-14)	<p>Topic: Assessment and Feedback</p> <p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See the advantages and disadvantages of traditional and alternative assessments.</li> <li>• Understand what constitutes effective feedback.</li> <li>• Develop a quality rubric for a subjectively scored alternative assessment.</li> <li>• Evaluate other's alternative assessments.</li> <li>• Create a quiz/exam that can be objectively scored using an online grading tool.</li> </ul>	<p>Finish the ice breaker activity by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replying to your group members' video posts</li> <li>• Reply to your video post and reveal your truth</li> </ul> <p>Complete the lessons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Backwards Design and Objectives</li> <li>• Assessment Types</li> <li>• Providing Feedback</li> </ul> <p>Complete the workshops:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating and evaluating an alternative assessment</li> </ul>



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating a test in Blackboard Learn</li> </ul>
Module 3 (June 15-21)	<p>Topic: Facilitating Discussions</p> <p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the types and dimensions of online interactions.</li> <li>• Understand instructor’s roles and responsibilities when facilitating online discussions.</li> <li>• Create an online discussion board prompt that is aligned with course learning objectives.</li> </ul>	<p>Complete the lesson:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designing Effective Asynchronous Discussions</li> </ul> <p>Complete the workshop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designing a Discussion Board Activity</li> </ul> <p>Participate in the discussion board activity.</p>
Module 4 (June 22-28)	<p>Topic: Facilitating Student Collaboration</p> <p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate the effectiveness of student collaboration in online courses.</li> <li>• Summarize the skills students require to collaborate effectively online.</li> </ul>	<p>Complete the lessons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purposes and Strategies</li> <li>• Technology that Affords Collaboration</li> </ul> <p>Complete the collaborative workshop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing Norms</li> </ul>
Module 5 (June 19-July 5)	<p>Topic: Establishing Presence and Support</p> <p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the importance of establishing their personal presence and nurturing a sense of community among learners.</li> <li>• Know effective strategies for recognizing and responding to student’s needs.</li> </ul>	<p>Complete the lessons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fostering a Sense of Presence and Community</li> <li>• Recognizing and Responding to Student Needs</li> </ul> <p>Complete the workshops:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ice-breaker Share Fair</li> <li>• Introduction Page and Video</li> </ul> <p>Participate in a <b>synchronous</b> communication session.</p>
Module 6 (July 6-12)	<p>Topic: Course Design and Management</p> <p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the importance of making your courses accessible to all learners and following copyright guidelines.</li> <li>• Examine your course's learning objectives and understand how</li> </ul>	<p>Complete the lessons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Types of Content</li> <li>• Accessibility and Copyright</li> <li>• Learning Management Systems</li> </ul> <p>Complete the workshop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building Content Pages</li> </ul>

	<p>they impact the design of your course.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider the types of content that best fits your course objectives.</li> <li>• Create content pages in Blackboard Learn that contain embedded media.</li> </ul>	<p>Participate in the Discussion board activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online learning memes</li> </ul>
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Note: Instructor reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary, with notification to students.

### **Core Values Commitment**

The College of Education and Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles: <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>.

### **GMU Policies and Resources for Students**

#### *Policies*

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code (see <https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/>). Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (see <https://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>).
- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their Mason email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students **solely** through their Mason email account.
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services. Approved accommodations will begin at the time the written letter from Disability Services is received by the instructor (see <https://ds.gmu.edu/>).
- Students must follow the University policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be silenced during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

#### *Campus Resources*

- Support for submission of assignments to Tk20 should be directed to [tk20help@gmu.edu](mailto:tk20help@gmu.edu) or <https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/tk20>. Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard Learn should be directed to <http://coursesupport.gmu.edu/>.
- For information on student support resources on campus, see <https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus>.

## Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking:

As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Responsible Employee,” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1202. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason’s confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703-380-1434 or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730, or emailing [titleix@gmu.edu](mailto:titleix@gmu.edu).

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, please visit our website <https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/>.

## Assessment Rubrics

As explained earlier, the course will use a mastery-based approach to grading. As a result, students will need to complete all of the assignment criteria in order to earn points on the assignment and all assignments must be completed prior to earning credit in the course. The following rubrics were created to reflect the mastery-based approach.

### LMS Organization and Pages

Criteria	Mastery	In progress
You created a content area that is linked in the main navigation sidebar.		
Within the content area you created an introductory item and a learning module with at least two items.		
One of your content pages contains a working hyperlink.		
You embedded a working video into one of your content pages.		
You added an image to one of your content pages.		

### Quiz Creation

Criteria	Mastery	In progress
The Blackboard Learn quiz was created using at least three different question types.		
The Blackboard Learn quiz provides students with automated feedback when possible.		

### Performance Assessment and Rubric Creation

Criteria	Mastery	In progress
You clearly described the learning objective that the assessment was designed to measure.		
You clearly describe the assessment and what is required of students.		
The rubric described assignment criteria and how students demonstrate mastery.		

### **Discussion Board Prompt Creation**

Criteria	Mastery	In progress
The designed discussion prompt follows best practices.		
The discussion board prompt has been copied into at least two Blackboard Learn discussion board groups.		

### **Collaboration Norming Document**

Criteria	Mastery	In progress
The document clearly identifies the specific norms that students should adopt while collaborating on group projects including: the rules for attendance and technology use, building collaborative relationships, netiquette, and experiencing non-productive conflict avoidance and resolution.		
The document is free from grammatical errors.		
The document makes specific references to the provided learning materials.		
You completed the individual responsibilities that were assigned to you by the instructor.		

### **Instructor Page and Video**

Criteria	Mastery	In progress
The instructor page clearly highlights your relevant personal and professional background to students.		
The instructor page is free from grammatical errors.		
The instructor page contains at least one image.		
The instructor page contains an introductory video created using Kaltura.		