Whether you are engaged in strategic online learning development, or have been impacted by the COVID-19 emergency situation, there are best practices that can be followed to create high-quality learning experiences. The Faculty Playbook provides detail and extensive resources, but this overview will get you started.

When initially conceptualizing course design, the use of an evidence-based model, such as **Backward Design**, provides a roadmap for an effective and efficient process.

**Key course design principles include:**

- Become familiar with [basic quality standards](#) for online courses as you begin to design your course - regardless of whether you have months to prepare, or are going online quickly.
- Use [measurable learning objectives/outcomes](#).
- [Align content, activities, and assessments](#) to learning objectives/outcomes.
- Consider how your face-to-face strategies translate to the online environment, and [media-rich and/or courseware options for enhancing the learning experience](#).
- As you assess content and materials, and determine needs for adaptation of existing materials and/or the addition of new content for effective online delivery, be sure to attend to [web accessibility standards](#) (check out these ten steps for a great foundation) and use [Universal Design for Learning](#) wherever possible.
- Design with equity in mind. This [equity rubric](#) can help guide course design to provide opportunity for all learners to succeed.

**Beyond effective design and presentation of content and materials, there are several things you can do to set yourself and your students up for success:**

- Become familiar with the LMS that your institution uses and [select supplementary tools](#) based on your course outcomes and goals.
- [Introducing yourself and your course](#) is important for establishing your class environment, setting expectations, and for allowing students and instructors to get to know one another. In an emergent situation, providing a course welcome in the online course can help ease disruption and set the stage for instructional continuity.
- Design your course to provide [intentional opportunities for students to interact with the instructor, each other, and the course content](#).
- [Set clear and explicit expectations](#) for your course for both performance and interaction. This is especially important in the online environment, where there are fewer verbal or behavioral cues than in face-to-face courses.
- Provide [options and opportunities for students to communicate with the instructor](#). This is especially important in online courses, where real-time interaction is limited or unavailable.
- Provide academic support resources (including institutional resources such as library and tutoring services as well as [supplemental resources](#)) and ensure that students are aware of them.

After an online course is completed and has been offered, it is important to regularly evaluate and continuously improve the course to ensure that it is up-to-date, relevant, and following current best practices for high-quality online education.
Delivering High-Quality Instruction Online in Response to COVID–19
Faculty Playbook
For many in the higher education community, the notion that nearly every educator would all at once be delivering their courses online seemed improbable, if not impossible. But here we are. In just the span of a few weeks, as a result of the rapidly spreading coronavirus, almost every postsecondary institution has either closed or rapidly moved face-to-face classes to “remote instruction.” For those moving online, the initial mantra was “make it run” in the interest of learning continuity, and for the benefit of students needing to complete courses and earn credits.

Today, as we’re transitioning into a new phase of planning for an uncertain summer and fall, we can be more thoughtful about how to deliver high quality online learning. On the positive side, online delivery as an instructional modality is not new. In fact, many colleges and universities have been developing and delivering successful online programs for years. Faculty have learned and shared valuable lessons through this process, and instructional design principles employed in online education can benefit learners in all course modalities.

In recent studies, one-third of all undergraduates are enrolled in online classes, and thirteen percent are learning exclusively online. What’s more, online course enrollments in 2019 increased for the fourteenth straight year, even as overall enrollments have declined. This growth has been concentrated in public institutions since 2012, with online enrollment growth in public institutions surpassing both private non-profit and private for-profit sectors for the first time in 2015–16. In 2016, 69% of online enrollments were in public institutions, with 18% in private non-profit institutions and 13% in private for-profit institutions.

Despite the growth in online learning, research on student, faculty, and institutional readiness for online learning makes it clear that educators and institutions need more help understanding how to effectively design, develop, and deliver high-quality instruction online. This need is greatest for educators at institutions serving low-income students, first-generation students, and students of color who will likely be disproportionately affected by the current crisis because they lack access to needed resources and technology.

This playbook is a collaboration between the Online Learning Consortium (OLC), the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU), and the Every Learner Everywhere Network with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. It is designed to serve as a concise guide in addressing faculty needs for online course design, teaching, and continuous improvement. This guide will provide you with the information you need to get started (and keep going!) at any level, along with resources for more in-depth information or assistance.

Find more Every Learner Everywhere resources online at everylearnersolve.com.