

MFAcc Best Practices for Instructors

As you know there are seven different learning styles. Most of us fall across a range of each therefore recognizing and supporting online classes that incorporate on all levels will provide sessions that are well attended, engaging and provide an exceptional learning experience for all students - catering to each type of learning style. Therefore one important element to success is selecting an online platform that allows for a combination of teaching tools. We have selected Adobe Connect as the MFAcc Platform for its reliability and use of tools such as the Audio and Video portal within the meeting room, the ability to use power points in real time and other pods within the session that allow for the use of a white board, polling pods and access for students to communicate in written as well as audio formats.

1. Auditory Learner

Auditory learners like to hear solutions and have examples explained to them, and are inclined to favour group learning to understand material.

The key here is your voice (and the voice of your students). Show information on the power point or write down data on the whiteboard option, then read it out loud. Work on your delivery so you can express learning material in interesting and engaging tones. Having groups prepare an answer to a predetermined question prior to class, having them post the answer during the class and then summarizing the information to the class verbally has been very successful. Hearing the sound of their own voice and others is engaging to auditory learners and therefore a great learning tool.

Other strategies we have available and implemented include:

- Recording lessons for later listening and reference
- Asking for comments from students in the class that may have experience in the topic of discussion
- Adding in Videos when applicable
- Having guest speakers during the 8 week sessions

2. Visual and spatial learner

Visual learners like diagrams, drawing out concepts, watching instructors draw out concepts, charts and processes – especially applicable to those in accounting. One instructor works through his formulas in real time on the white board pod in Adobe. Visual learners tend to be creative and the use of colour and shapes becomes valuable in their online learning experience. Visual learners often prefer visual instructions and are great at planning.

To encourage participation of a visual learner online, you'll want to use graphs, charts and some imagery (memes, photos, diagrams, etc.).

Providing for visual learners does not mean you are ignore the needs of other types - everyone loves a bit of change in a 2 x 1.5 hour session and the movement to a new visual will be welcome. These elements work well when included in assignments as well – creating graphs and flowcharts will provide the same answers but in a way that is more meaningful to the visual learner. Providing Instructor notes or summaries pre- and post-class have been a great success in a number of the MFAcc courses.

3. Verbal learner

Verbal learning includes both writing and speaking. Verbal learners might have a preference for reading and writing. They love their readings posted in their entirety prior to the start of Class 1. Verbal learners

effectively use a broad range of words, and love to add new terms to their collection. Verbal learners are intelligent, like to read, love to share their knowledge and experiences.

Verbal learners will want to write down notes, talk about concepts and potentially present them as well, so we encourage instructors to share the stage with these individuals. Sometimes when evaluating participation in class, we tend to look only at these individuals as those with higher participation – but this can be unfair so always keep that in mind. Give them access to the online mic when appropriate – acknowledge their written contribution to the chat pod. The trick here is to recognize what other types of learning apply to them – are they an extraverts or introspective verbal learners – we don't want an introverted verbal learner to be made to feel uncomfortable by pressing them to explain verbally what they want to say. Some like talking, while others prefer writing in the chat pod.

4. Logical learner

Unsurprisingly, most who chose a career in accounting fall under this category. Some qualities associated with these individuals is:

- Pattern recognition
- Good with numbers
- Predisposition towards grouping and classification

We have found that MFAcc students are comfortable if the instructor logically explains the subject at hand. For Loss Quantification and Business Valuation, that's straightforward. For other subjects like Intro to IFA, Practice Issues or Law, it requires some effort and planning. Try to include statistics and classification organization in lesson plans. With logical students, always look to incorporate a system. From an administrative prospective, the students are most comfortable when all class structures on Quercus and Adobe are consistent and symmetrical. All materials are lined up as follows under the Course:

1. The Course Outline
2. The Instructor Bio
3. The Classes by Week 1 through to Week 8 with each class having:
 - a. The Readings
 - b. The Instructor Notes
 - c. The links to the On-line class
 - d. A copy of the PowerPoints

5. Physical learner

The hands-on learners are action-oriented and want to “engage” with the course materials. Usually outgoing, these are the ones who deprioritize reading and writing! They will benefit by the use of different pods on Adobe that they can participate in. They also benefit from the group work, being able to speak during class, and will love the Research Report course and final Capstone.

Channeling the energy and excitability of physical learners by role playing, for instance, is key to offering a good, engaging session. Jack, the law instructor has noticed their enthusiasm in his role playing activities in the law course. Taking breaks is also a requirement to reenergize them!

6. Social and interpersonal learner

Social learners show preference towards groups and collaboration. Not all social learners are extraverted or highly communicative, but they can be visual, auditory, verbal, logical or physical learners. The interpersonal

aspect perhaps better describes the settings in which they are most comfortable, rather than how they absorb information, and as we have found lately interpersonal learners like to 'do' and to 'share'. This can sometimes lead to conflict with other students who are more intrapersonal in their learning habits. To avoid this, we have to at least get them to understand how others learn and where their strengths are and how they can benefit the group. To do this, MFAcc has created a section on Group Dynamics in their orientation, which includes the creation of a group charter that includes social and performance expectations, and conflict resolution protocols. We may want to even introduce in the 2020 orientation a "game" to determine which category students belong to. There are a number of short tests available on line for this sort of assessment.

7. Solitary and intrapersonal learner

Solitary learners can be visual, auditory, physical, verbal or logical learners. Fulfilling all the needs of the solitary student will ensure they are fully engaged. These learners are Independent, Introspective and Private!

In an online class environment, it can be hard to involve a solitary learner. They sometimes prefer to remain quiet and therefore look uninvolved, only to be one of the top performers in the class. Providing visual materials, books and learning aids is important. Giving the solitary learner time to prepare is essential.

Through years of implementing changes expressed in course evaluations, the MFAcc program has developed a case-based learning approach which incorporates a broad array of learning options for students, and which students see as an outstanding learning experience.

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July 2020