

About Online Teaching Associates (OTA)

Background:

With the increasing availability of technology and networks, online learning is becoming more prevalent in schools systems and colleges. However, the effectiveness of such online classes depends largely upon the capabilities of the instructor teaching the class. Relatively few existing teachers have any first-hand experience with online learning and hence do not have the necessary background to teach an online class effectively. The classes offered by OTA provide teachers with the proficiencies and knowledge needed to be an effective online teacher.

The standards and proficiencies guiding all of OTA's online courses are based on and correlated to both the National Standards for Quality Online Teachers (NSQOT), as published by the North American Council for Online Learning (NACOL); and the National Educational Technology Standards (NETS), as published by the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE).

Our Mission:

The mission of OTA is to: (1) improve the effectiveness of online teaching through our course offerings, (2) create an online community to support online teaching, (3) further our understanding of online teaching through research and evaluation studies tied to the courses and community.

Our Courses:

OTA offers a suite of courses, each of which is 4-6 weeks in length (depending upon the specific requirements of each customer):

1. The Online Teaching Course (OTC) – an introduction to online teaching for teachers that covers: nature of online learning, online teaching methods, online assessment, managing online classes, and the social/ethical aspects of online teaching. Participants develop an online lesson plan as part of the course.
2. The Management of Online Instruction course (MOI)– an introduction to the management of online learning courses intended primarily for school/college administrators. It covers: benefits/limitations of online learning, selecting and training online teachers, budgeting for online courses, evaluation methods for online learning, and the ethical/legal implications of online learning. Participants develop a plan of online learning as part of the course.

3. The Learning 2.0 Course – The OTA Learning 2.0 course (L20) is intended for individuals who want to understand first-hand how to harness the new applications of Web 2.0 for learning in formal or informal educational contexts. These applications include: blogs, wikis, podcasting, RSS feeds, social networking, media sharing, multiplayer games, and immersive environments. Our L20 course will be of particular interest to librarians, school technology coordinators, and those designing/teaching online courses.
4. Custom courses – configured to meet the needs of a specific institution and their teachers. For example, while online teaching for special needs is a topic covered in other courses, we could provide a full course about this topic if requested (e.g., for 504 coordinators). Alternatively, we could offer an entire course about online teaching for a given curriculum area (e.g., science, math, languages, etc).

Delivery System:

Courses is delivered using the Open Source, Moodle Course Management System(for asynchronous elements) and the Wimba Online Classroom (synchronous interactions). Participants should have their own personal computers and access to high-speed, broad band internet connections in order to participate in our course most efficiently. Courses are accessed via a public Moodle page that provides online learning community features. These include: a newsletter, a blog, a graduate directory, and access to scheduled web conferences.

Online Teaching Associates hosts various Web 2.0 applications on the “[onlineteachingassociates.org](http://www.onlineteachingassociates.org)” site, for educational use by K-12 teachers, under the “Educational Community License Version 2.0.”For details on the “Open Source” Educational Community License, see: <http://www.opensource.org/licenses/ecl2.php>.

The OTA team:

Greg Kearsley, Ph.D. and Bob Blomeyer, Ph.D. have combined careers including more than 50 years of experience designing, developing and building online learning environments, as well as conducting research about educational technology

In addition to Drs. Kearsley and Blomeyer, OTA maintains a professional network of carefully screened and highly experienced “master: online instructors and experienced online teachers as “subject matter experts” for supporting custom development of new, high demand online courses.