

# Less, but More Germane

Consistency and Predictability as Principles for Course Design

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Students are frequently overburdened and time constrained. Help them concentrate on high-priority learning goals by:



Reducing time and energy needed to navigate courses



Staying focused on relevant learning



Creating space for innovative thinking and learning

## Strategies for Consistency and Predictability

Actions you can take to create a more predictable, consistent learning experience. These can be divided up among instructors, instructional staff, and program or department staff. Starred items are low effort and high impact, making them good places to start.

	Help Students Plan Ahead	Help Students Stay Oriented	Help Students Understand Their Work
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Announce dates for synchronous meetings early</li> <li>Communicate schedule changes explicitly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ Include weekly <b>overviews</b> that preview topics, interactions, and assignments</li> <li>★ Send weekly <b>announcements</b> that preview topics, interactions, and assignments</li> <li>Send timely reminders about upcoming due dates</li> <li>Broadcast contact information for instructors, teaching assistants, and technical support</li> </ul>	
Course Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ Configure assignments to allow students to use the course calendar effectively</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ Include an easy-to-find, centralized list of due dates</li> <li>★ Organize modules into clear course weeks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ Connect assignments to specific course materials</li> <li>Implement a consistent structure for assignment directions</li> <li>Provide assignment help as part of directions</li> </ul>
Setting Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep due dates consistent across courses</li> <li>Set clear expectations for the types of assignments students will encounter in the program</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ Specify expected time spent and submission length</li> <li>Establish consistent assignment types that appear across courses</li> </ul>

