Online Courses Best Practice

There are many misconceptions about online courses. Many students and educators believe that online courses are not as rigorous as face-to-face instruction. Another false belief is that online courses are in a sense an “independent study” and that there is little or no collaboration among students and the instructor. Unfortunately, there are many educators who conduct their online courses in this manner and it is no wonder that the perception and value of online courses continue to be diminished.

The online course format that I propose for 21st century learners consist of both online and synchronous teaching and learning approaches. The required items for the course include access to high speed Internet, a computer headset with microphone, a web camera, and software such as Adobe Connect in order to participate in the live synchronous online sessions. Students are assigned weekly readings from both text and online resources, which are posted on the college’s learning management system. Students read and then post an online critical reflection of the readings, which may include questions that arose from the readings. It is also suggested that students post feedback, thoughts, and counter questions or arguments to other students’ postings. Two students act as moderators each week to monitor and facilitate the online forum. In addition, each week there is a live workshop session in which students are encouraged but not required to participate. Students who opt not to participate in the live session have access to the recorded sessions, which are posted on the learning management system. Lastly, there is an Ask the Professor forum where students are encouraged to post questions, which may be answered, by either the professor or peers. So far, our online
program has had positive feedback with this format. It is this format that I believe is best practice in regard to teaching online courses.