

# Getting Started Teaching Online

Learn how I went from being a law enforcement officer, working double shifts to make ends meet, to one of the country's top online professors making a six-figure income, and the president of my own company.

I have online teaching to thank.



**Brian Robison, M.S.**

## **Getting Started Teaching Online**

By Brian Robison, M.S.

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*Dedication*

*Here's to you Mrs. Robison.*

## **Important Information**

While this book is an expansive guide to online teaching, my website <http://www.nextleveleducator.com> is where you will find all of the information mentioned in this book and much more. For more information, visit the website and follow my blog at [www.nextleveleducator.com/blog](http://www.nextleveleducator.com/blog).

Please be sure to also check out my other social networking sites:

[Twitter](#)

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I strongly believe in giving back and sharing any success. Starting in 2011, I will be donating 10% of all profits from this book and my website to charity. A few of my favorite charities to which I will be distributing the donations are listed below.

Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation

Just in Time for Foster Youth

San Diego State University

Ferris State University, School of Criminal Justice

## **Book Summary**

Learn from one of the country's leading distance education experts what it takes to be successful in distance learning as he reveals his teaching strategies and systematic approach to online teaching and eLearning. Finding teaching jobs online can be difficult and very competitive. Jobs in online education are extremely rewarding and allow many individuals to work from home and make money virtually anywhere. Online education is one of the fastest growing fields in the world! It is also one of the most competitive. It is vital that you stand out from the others and become one of the best! Brian serves as a personal coach to many top educators and successful people throughout the country. His experiences provide an expansive insight not seen anywhere else before. His unmatched experience is here for you to draw upon for your success! Allow yourself to have the life and the career that you have always wanted and that you deserve!

## **How This Book Is Arranged**

As there is a great deal of information in this book and I want you to be able to easily find what you are looking for, this book is divided into easy-to-use sections. Ideally, you would read this book from cover to cover, but I wanted you to be able to use it as a quick reference as you progress through your online teaching career. Therefore, I have divided the book into three sections:

**Section 1 – Getting Started** – Everything you need to know about finding and applying for an online teaching job

**Section 2– Online Lifestyle** – Helpful tips and tricks to make your online life better and more efficient

**Section 3 – Online Teaching** – Important information to help you understand how an online class is set up

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## Letter to Reader

Dear Reader,

Thank you for purchasing “Getting Started Teaching Online.” I hope you find everything you expect to learn, and more!

It’s official. The internet has taken over the world! I believe it! Al Gore believes it! And I am sure you believe it! We turn to our web browsers every day for information. We can get online from nearly anywhere today. That’s good news for people who dream big but can’t seem to get ahead; the internet has given you a chance to make your dreams come to reality. Sound too good to be true? I can assure you, it is not too good to be true and there are more and more opportunities available every day. The internet is still relatively young. It is going to continue to grow at a tremendous rate with more people getting online and using it for everything under the sun.

Hundreds of thousands of colleges, universities, trade schools, high schools, bartending schools, cosmetology schools, you name it, are now offering classes online for students to take via the internet. There are many reasons that schools favor online education. They can severely cut their overhead costs by not paying for buildings, lights, and other utilities. They can reach students that they otherwise would not have been able to. A student can live in Florida and attend a college in California, without ever stepping foot in the state. Amazing!

You may be asking how this can help you. With the growing demand for online schools, there is a growing demand for teachers to facilitate those classes. That is where you and I come in and get our piece of that internet pie! You may be thinking, “I do not know how to teach,” or “I have never taught before. I can’t do this,” but it is not true! I have been teaching online since 2004 and have made a life for myself that I could have never dreamed of. I went from being a law enforcement officer who needed to work double shifts to get by to making well over \$100,000 a year on a consistent basis. It would have taken me 20 years in law enforcement to get to the level I am at today. I can assure you, I would not be living in San Diego and I would not be one the happiest men alive had I not started teaching online. I want to show you what I did and how I did it. I will give you a game plan for success to help you live your life the way you know you want to live it. I will show you how to unleash the power of online teaching and give yourself the financial and personal freedom that you deserve.

This is not a get-rich-quick scheme. Everything I have achieved today has come with hard work and persistence. I know it can be done. I see it every day.

By picking up this book, you have just discovered one of the easiest and most practical ways to achieve your dream. I hope you enjoy this book as much as I enjoyed writing it!

To your online success!

Thanks for your time my friend,

Brian Robison, M.S.

President

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## My Story

My name is Brian Robison and I grew up in the great state of Michigan, where I spent the first 25 years of my life. I did not live a privileged life, to say the least, but we will save that story for another day. I am proud to say that I was raised by a single mother and three wonderful and caring sisters. After losing my mother at the age of 11, I was given two options – sink or swim. I chose to swim. I wanted to prove to the world, and more importantly, myself, that you do not need to be born with a silver spoon in your mouth to make a difference and be successful. And that is just what I did, and will do every day for the rest of my life. I will swim.

As I am sure like most mothers, my mother always wanted me to go to college. She never lived to see that day, but I did it. I attended a small college near my home, Ferris State University, in Big Rapids Michigan. I picked a major that had always interested me and one that I knew would be stable – law enforcement. Ferris has one of the top criminal justice programs in the country and I am honored to be a part of that great tradition. Getting through college was not the easiest for me. It was not the academics; I got that. It was the survival and being able to sacrifice so much of my life to make sure I could keep attending classes. In 2000, I received my master's degree in criminal justice administration. By this time, I already had a few years of law enforcement experience under my belt. I had worked as a juvenile probation officer for a few years and as a correctional officer in both a nearby prison and the local sheriff department. After college, I took one of the biggest chances in my life. I quit my job, packed my car up, and headed to California with nothing more than \$1,100 and a dream. I always knew that I would do something great some day; I just never knew how I would do it or what it was.

Once in California, I wish I could tell you that it was all sunshine and surfing. Instead, it was more like job hunting and living on peanut butter sandwiches and baked potatoes. With less than \$20 to my name and on the verge of doing something that I had never done in my life...sink, I got a job. It was a job as a clerk (or glorified receptionist) at a law firm downtown. It paid \$12 an hour and it was the life jacket that I needed to keep me a float. I spent the next three years working hard and moving up in the firm. I had moved my way up to managing two departments and having a paid assistant. I was making about \$60-\$70 thousand dollars a year. Not bad for a \$12 receptionist job, huh? But this was nothing new to me. It was just good old-fashioned Midwestern work ethic, and determination not to sink. Ironically enough, I met my wife at this same law firm. That is a story for another time. Unfortunately, not long after we met, we both ended up in the unemployment line. Once again, I was unemployed and living in California. I wish I could tell you that I had been smart with my money and that I had a nice nest egg, but I did not. My girlfriend (soon-to-be wife) Heather had just graduated from San Diego State University and only had one option, and that was to

move back to northern California with her parents. We were in love and she asked me to come with her. She told me that I could live with her grandmother, who was one of the sweetest women I have ever met. She smoked like a chimney, but would bend over backwards for anyone, which she did for me and let me into her home. And for that I am eternally grateful.

The first six months were tough on Heather and me. We were both college graduates and could not find jobs for the life of us. The little savings that we did have was fading fast, and as much as I liked her grandmother, I needed to get on my feet and be a man. I needed to get established.

I remember one night sitting in Heather's grandmother's house. I was in my bedroom on the computer sending out job applications, which was becoming a job in itself. I saw an ad for an "Online Criminal Justice Instructor" at Kaplan University. I thought, why not, I need a job and this seems like it would be fun. I sent the application and the thought of the job left my head as soon as I hit the apply button. A few months had passed and by this time, I had found a pretty good job. I was the director of security for a high-rise building in Oakland. I got to wear a suit every day and had a staff of 20 officers working for me. I was making \$20 an hour, which is more than I had made in some time.

Then it came, the email that changed my life. It was simple in nature and I had no idea how it would affect me. Little did I know how that one email would change the course of my life. It was an email from Kaplan about the online teaching job. It was not a job offer. They simply wanted me to fill out an application packet. I filled it out that night and sent it back the next morning. Before I got home from faxing the application over, I received a call from the school. It was a man named Robert and he was just chatting with me, asking about my experience and how I had ended up in California. I thought that he was just calling to tell me that he received my application packet. Before he ended the call, he said, "Oh yeah, I've got this online Intro to Corrections class that I need someone to teach. You want to take a swing at it?" I was really taken aback, but I accepted and was excited about the opportunity. He said he would send me an email about the training I would need to complete and that the class would be starting in two weeks. The job paid \$1,900 for 10 weeks. That seemed pretty good for a job that I could do at home.

I remember coming back to Grandma's house and telling her about it. She told me I was being scammed. She said that she had seen something on 60 Minutes about it and that I needed to be careful. I heeded her advice and proceeded with caution. I only wish she could have lived to see the day when that "scam" became a revolution and changed both my and her granddaughter's life.

I received all the information that I needed about my new online teaching endeavor the next day. I completed the self-paced training in a few hours and was now officially an online teacher. I picked up the online teaching concepts fairly easily and fit in quickly. While all this was going on, I was in the hiring process for the Department of Justice to work at the Federal Bureau of Prisons. I had always wanted to work

for the government. I thought it would be a great accomplishment for me to and would mean that I would basically have a job for life. The problem was that the job was in Victorville, CA, which was about six hours away (between San Diego and Las Vegas). Getting a government job is a very long and painful process and is something that you basically do and put in the back of your mind while they do their process. When I was finally offered the job with the Department of Justice, I had a decision to make. I was being offered a job for which I had gone to school, and it was for the government. The problem was that the job was six hours away and in a place that I really did not want to go. I also had a girl that I loved and knew I was going to marry, but with nothing much to offer her. To make a long story short, after a long discussion with my future in-laws, we agreed that I should take the job and that Heather and I would move to Victorville.

We moved to Victorville, bought our first home, and tried to make the best of it. We were having a hard time adjusting and it was not really what we expected. I was working a lot of overtime at the prison and we just were not as happy as we knew we could be. In the meantime, I was still teaching online for Kaplan. One night, I decided that I needed to make a change. I had gotten myself and now my future wife into a situation that we did not like. I ordered a book from Amazon that listed every school in the country that had an online program. This was one of the biggest books I had ever seen! It was at least 2,000 pages and full of information. It was nothing more than lists and websites of schools and the programs they offered. The day I got the book was another turning point in my life. What was I going to do with this monstrosity of a book? I was going to find every school that taught criminal justice and see if they were hiring for online teachers. If they were hiring, I would apply for the job. If they were not hiring, I would still send an email to any address that I could find for their human resources department on their website. I spent about four to six hours a day going through this book. Each day that I had off, I would look up schools and send out applications. I was also creating a database of all of the schools, which has turned into the database that I will share with you in this book (It's funny to think how that list started and how much time you will save!).

After about a month, I got a few leads on jobs. I was hired by another school. I recall one of my first conference calls with this school. The hiring manager (who ended up being one of my greatest influences in online education) was discussing pay and the number of classes that she wanted us to teach. She said that she would like us to teach four classes a term. She informed us that the classes paid about \$1,200 each and that there were four terms a year. The dollar signs lit up in my head and I shouted out, "That's \$20,000 a year!" She and everyone else laughed as if they knew a secret that I just found out. I do regret my little outburst, but it makes for a good story. When I got off the phone, I started doing some more math. I figured I was making about \$20,000 a year from Kaplan and I that could earn \$20,000 a year at this new job. I could manage both of these jobs very well and only needed to work about 10 hours a week, conservatively. I then

picked up a pay stub that I had sitting on my desk from the prison. Something did not add up. I was making about \$55,000 a year at this prison job. I was working 16-hour shifts in one of the most dangerous prisons in the country. I was not able to spend much time with my future wife and I was stuck in the middle of the desert in 120-degree weather. I needed to keep looking for more of these online teaching jobs and see what happened. Well, what happened was, in the next six months, I got three more teaching jobs and was in position for several more. I was working at the prison and teaching online. I was running myself ragged. It was not until I had my taxes done that I realized what had happened. I had made \$100,000 in one year just from teaching! I could not believe it. I was shocked. It would have taken me 20 years and several moves to other cities like Victorville to get even close to that number with the government.

By this time, Heather and I were married and had enjoyed a wonderful celebration with friends and family. It was an emotional experience for us as we had spent over a year planning for this day. We were lucky enough to spend our honeymoon in the beautiful country of Costa Rica. I took my laptop with me and was going to work on the trip. Sitting on a lounge chair, drinking a beer with my laptop at my side, I was watching the beautiful Costa Rican sunset. I looked over at my new bride, who was looking through the pages of a fashion magazine, and I said, "When we get home, I am going to quit my job at the prison and I am going to teach online full-time." With hardly the slightest bit of reaction, she replied with a reassuring "Okay." OK! I thought to myself! What? Are you crazy? You are supposed to be my voice of Reason. You are the one that is supposed to tell me that my harebrained ideas will never work. OK? Well, ok then! For the rest of the trip, we did not mention it again. When we got home, I did quit my job at the prison. We decided that we wanted to go where we were the happiest – San Diego. Within a few months of being back from our honeymoon, Heather found a job in San Diego, our house was up for sale, and we were going back to where it had all started.

Since that day on the beach in Costa Rica, I have landed many more online teaching jobs and opportunities. I have made well over \$100,000 a year and I am proud to say that the days of living on peanut butter sandwiches and baked potatoes are over. I have always been a modest man, but I am also one who knows when he has a good thing, and I want to share it with you. My successes have allowed my wife to quit her job and for us to travel whenever we want and be able to get our slice of the American dream, here in San Diego.

My life has come full circle and I assure you I do not take anything for granted. I appreciate the relationships that I have in my life and everything that hard work and the good Lord has given me. I found a way to turn a bad situation into a great one. I took a simple idea and transformed it into a great career opportunity, which went beyond anything I could have ever dreamed of. I have started my own company with my wife to share these experiences with people just like you. I look forward to helping you, whether it

is through teaching online or just a motivating story of a country boy from the middle of Michigan, who wanted to make a difference, who wanted to be someone. I want to thank you for taking the time to read my story and I hope I can share more with you some day. The question I want to leave you with my friend is, what are you going to do with your life? Are you going to sink or swim?

## How Does It Work?

To be able to tell you how online teaching works, I do not need to give you an elaborate description of the ins and outs of online education. It would be much easier to just tell you what I do on a daily basis. Hopefully, you are thinking, “Finally, someone who is going to give it to me straight and tell me what I need know!” Well, that is my goal.

This is what I get paid to do and a ballpark percentage of how much of my time is spent on each task. While this is not an inclusive list, it will help you understand what an online teacher does on a daily basis.

*35% Grading* - Grading consists of grading papers, discussions and other assignments.

*30% Discussions* - Participating in discussion boards, depending on the schools requirements.

*15% Answering emails and questions in classroom* - I have included emails that I respond to schools here as well.

*5% Class set up and other*- Preparing a class for the term. This can include the syllabus, announcements and lectures. Your responsibilities will vary from school to school. Other includes anything that I forgot or that requires a very small amount of my time.

*5% Research* - This could be research for lectures or discussion questions.

*3% Conference calls and meetings* - Most every school requires that you have at least one conference call a term. Some require more, some require less. Others require live participation, while some allow you to listen to a recording.

*3% Professional development* - This could be attending professional conferences in your field to ensure that you are current on any new developments in your field. Most schools require that if you do not actively work in your field, that you attend a certain number of professional development hours each year.

*2% Seminars* - The only schools that require me to hold a live seminar on a weekly basis are Kaplan and National. These are live lectures that allow teachers to interact with students. These are normally one hour a week.



2% *Training* - This could be any type of training that the school requires to ensure that they meet their own accreditation. An example of this would be training on a new system or program.

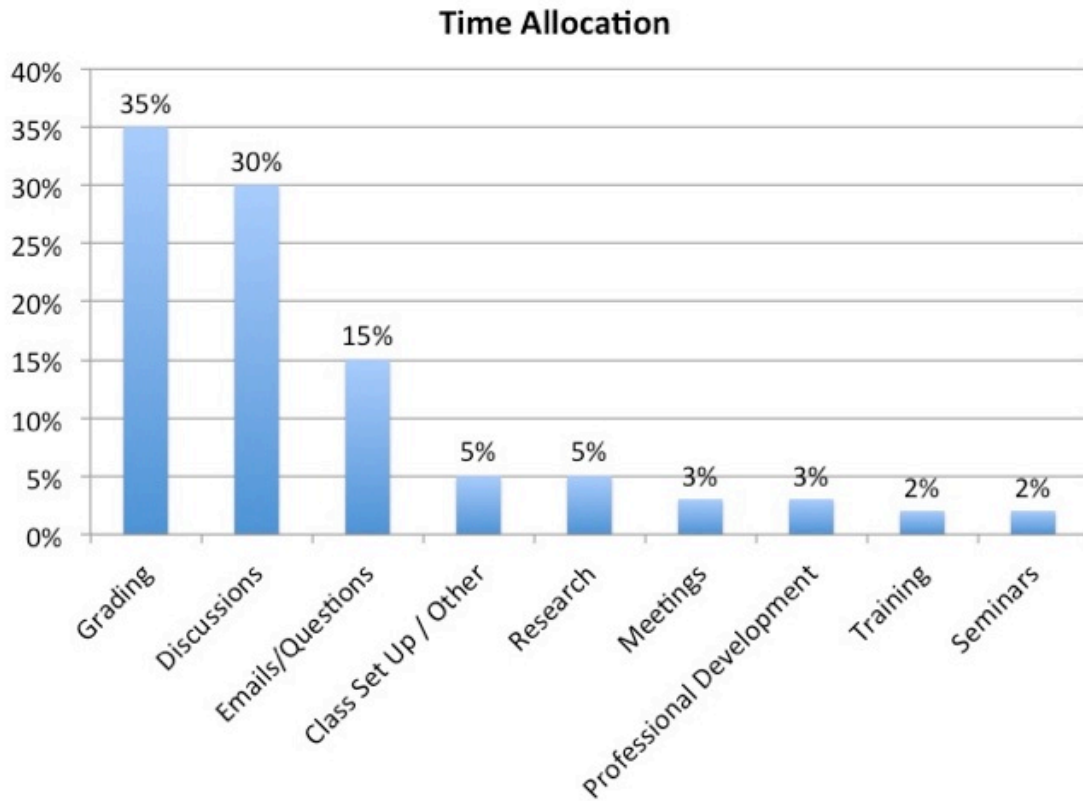


Figure 1.1 Percentage of Time Spent on Various Teaching Tasks

I hope that this gives you a better understanding how you will spend your time. Of course, you may need to devote more time to other areas based on your learning curve and your work habits.

I hope you have enjoyed your free preview of my book. To get the full version, please visit:

<http://www.onlineteachingbook.com>

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