Checklist of Competencies for Effective Online Teaching

1. Instructional Principles

Audience Analysis
Who are your learners? What is their reason for taking your class? What is their preparation for success in your class?

❏ Course prerequisites and co-requisites are listed.

❏ Entry-level knowledge/skills are described.

❏ Technology skills are clearly articulated.

Course Goals and Objectives
What are the expected student learning outcomes?

❏ Course objectives are clearly stated in the syllabus and in each learning module

❏ Objectives are observable, measurable.

❏ Students' entry-level skills are assessed at the start of the course and/or at the start of each learning module.

❏ Course expectations and grading standards are described.

Instructional Activities
The instructional activities, assignments, and assessments are directly linked to the course objectives. Content should be sequenced and structured in a manner that enables learners to achieve the stated goals with multiple measures of student learning outcomes. All instructional material must be copyright compliant and meet accessibility requirements.

❏ Active learning strategies are employed to achieve objectives and to create a learner-centered environment.

❏ Activities are clearly linked to course objectives.

❏ Information is chunked or segmented for clarity and to facilitate learning.

❏ All materials are in compliance with the copyright compliance guidelines.

❏ All materials are accessible to students with disabilities.

Student Evaluation and Assessment
Feedback and evaluation of student progress is frequent, ongoing and timely. Scores and grades are available throughout the course via the student gradebook.

❏ Multiple measures of student learning outcomes are used.

❏ Authentic assessments of student learning outcomes are used.

❏ The course provides frequent opportunities for students to demonstrate their understanding of the material.

❏ If objective tests are administered, the questions are randomized so that each student has a different question set.

❏ Exams are updated each semester.

❏ A time limit for exam completion is set.

Teaching Strategies
Faculty incorporate regular, effective communication with their online students into their teaching strategies. They design the course so that the learning path is clear and consistent. The course content builds on the instructor's strengths as the content expert and a facilitator of student learning. All activities are designed to engage the learner with the course material, with classmates, and with the instructor.

❏ The syllabus is comprehensive, with clear descriptions of the course requirements, quality expectations, communication protocols, grading criteria, schedule for completing coursework, and standards of academic integrity for online learners.

❏ The course incorporates a variety of learning activities, content format, and rich media content.

❏ Students are engaged in active, interactive learning strategies.

2. Interaction and Feedback Principles

Learner Readiness
Provide time and opportunity for learners to practice and master the skills that are necessary in an online class.

❏ Online technology orientation and/or self-readiness assessments are made available to students.

Links or content are provided for resources such as:

❏ Technology/software tutorials;

❏ Online learning readiness assessment;

❏ Student services resources.

Interaction Among Learners
Carefully select technologies such as email, chat and discussion boards to enable and increase interaction and collaboration among learners. Explain the standards for communication frequency and quality.

Facilitates communication electronically through:
❏ Required discussion, chat, or email;

❏ Assignments, projects, presentations.

Synchronous and Asynchronous Communication
Provide precise information about the type of communication to be used and the requirements for participation.
❏ Communication tools are clearly described.

❏ Clarify expectations about the frequency of student participation.

Learner / Instructor Interaction
Develop strategies and techniques to promote interaction between learners and the instructor that demonstrate frequent, effective communication.
❏ Faculty email, office hours, and phone number are clearly identified on syllabus and on the course site.
❏ Virtual office hours conducted using web-conferencing.

❏ Instructor initiates communication via announcements, calendar updates, email, discussion board, chats, Web2.0 tools.
❏ Post discussion questions that require higher-level critical thinking.

❏ Post follow-up questions.

Electronic Collaboration
Develop and encourage collaborative activities among learners using strategies such as group projects, blogs, wikis and chat.
❏ Tools for collaboration are made available.

❏ Relate goals for online collaborate to course objectives.

❏ Provide guidelines for acceptable standards of netiquette.

❏ Provide guidelines for working in virtual groups.

❏ Explain how group work will be evaluated.

Feedback

Provide regular and timely feedback to students on their course progress and their scores on assignments and assessments.

❏ Modes of feedback are described.

❏ Turnaround time for grading and returning student work is described.

❏ Timeline for responding to student emails is clearly stated.

Paced Learning to Prevent Procrastination

❏ Reinforce due dates, schedules and timelines

❏ Provide a regular schedule of assignments.

❏ Describe due dates and late work policy.

❏ Use Calendar and Announcements tools to provide reminders.

3. Multimedia Principles

Information Presentation

The course content should be clearly organized and the course pages logically linked to facilitate information retrieval. When preparing content for the course, the course content must be provided in a format accessible to persons with disabilities.

❏ Information is logically grouped or chunked.

❏ Important information that orients users is prominently displayed.

❏ Course navigation is clear and consistent.

❏ Course employs accessibility principles.

Interface Design

Navigation items should be carefully designed on the course content page and within the course menu to orient the user and provide a sense of direction. Use the same conventions for links throughout the course. Graphics and media elements must directly support the text and have a clear instructional purpose. All graphics require an "ALT" tag so that users who have either turned off their graphics or are using speech-recognition software will still be able to use them.

❏ Navigation cues are readily identifiable and consistently available.

❏ Consistent layout design orients users throughout the course.

❏ Hyperlinks are clearly identifiable.

❏ Graphic elements & color serve an instructional purpose.

❏ Graphic elements load quickly and read clearly.

❏ Font type, size, and color are readable and consistent throughout the course.

Multimedia Elements

Consider the instructional purpose of the media elements and the accessibility to end-users. Audio and video files over 2 MB should be stored on the media server (http://online2.sdccd.edu) not Blackboard and should be embedded as links in the course.

❏ Plug-in links are provided as needed.

❏ Multimedia are captioned for accessibility.

❏ Large files (over 2 MB) are stored on the media server, not Blackboard..

❏ Audio and Video clips are short (under 15 minutes).

4. Course Management

Time Requirements

The instructor should allocate adequate time to develop an online course, usually at least six months in advance. Learning module development is usually a minimum three hours for every hour of student contact. Instructional design support from SDCCD Online Learning Pathways is highly recommended.

❏ Course development completed and reviewed before the course start date.

Module Progression

The instructor should be consistent in organizing and presenting modular/session/weekly instructional activities and facilitating student learning.

❏ Modules are organized in logical and consistent sequence.

Tracking Progress

The instructor should track student learning progress in the online course.

❏ Student progress is readily available via the Grade Center and frequent instructor feedback.

Evaluating Student Progress

Evaluation should include multiple assignments and assessments rather than just one or two high-stakes exams or projects. Participation in online activities such as chat rooms or discussion boards is required for a grade.

❏ Detailed information about evaluation of assignments is provided.

❏ Evaluation of online participation is described.

❏ Online tests account for a small percent of the overall grade.

Assignment Feedback
Respond to students' emails and discussion postings in a timely fashion and provide students with adequate feedback. Establish clear guidelines for answering student emails, acknowledging the receipt of assignments, and returning their graded assignments.

❏ Clearly stated course policy of frequency and method of feedback.

Managing Asynchronous and Synchronous Communications
Use asynchronous and/or synchronous tools to promote interaction in an online course. If a synchronous format is selected, make sure students are given the time and date for online meetings. Set clear expectations for student online activities. Show students how to lead an online discussion and how to moderate it by example. Encourage students to take charge of and lead online discussions. Be prepared to moderate or intercede when necessary.

❏ Communication instructions are provided.

❏ Communication expectations are clearly described.

Promoting Online Learning Community
The instructor should design opportunities for interaction among students. Welcome students to the class, and include contact information (and emergency numbers or email) and virtual office hours. Encourage a learning community within the course to foster engagement and retention.

❏ Students are provided a variety of ways to communicate with the instructor and each other.

❏ Students are encouraged to communicate with the instructor and with each other.

❏ CyberCafe or other ungraded discussion area is provided to facilitate social interaction.

5. Support Services Principles

Technical Support Services
A comprehensive system of technical support services is in place to ensure the effective use of technologies in online courses for learners and instructors. Students need to access this support in multiple ways and receive a response promptly or be able to find their own answers immediately through the knowledge base. Tutorials on using Blackboard need to be easily viewed and students should be encouraged to view these before beginning actual work within their online course. This includes the readiness activities like the Browser Tune-up

and turning off of all popup blockers. Links to electronic resources of the libraries and the Learning Resource Centers on the various campuses should be tested for functionality and ease of use.

❏ A link to the technical support services webpage is readily available.

❏ A link to tutorials that help students navigate and perform in their course is provided

❏ Links to library services for the campuses or online are available.

This Checklist of Competencies for Effective Online Teaching was developed to help faculty improve the design and delivery of online courses. The content of the checklist is based upon the Principles of Online Design developed by the Florida Gulf Coast University and adapted for use by SDCCD Online Learning Pathways

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