

Best Practices Checklist for Effective Online Instruction

1 Course Overview and Introduction

- 1.1 Instructions clearly define how to get started and where to find various course components (e.g. welcome email and/or schedule note).
- 1.2 A statement orients the student to the purpose of the course, its components, and organization. In the case of a hybrid course, the statement clarifies the relationship between the face-to-face and online components.
- 1.3 Etiquette expectations (sometimes called “netiquette”) for online discussions, email, and other forms of communication are stated clearly.
- 1.4 The instructor’s introduction is appropriate and available online, and contact information is clearly stated.
- 1.5 Students are asked to introduce themselves to the class, or participate in an alternative ice-breaking activity.
- 1.6 Minimum student preparation, and, if applicable, prerequisite knowledge in the discipline are clearly stated.
- 1.7 Minimum technical skills and tools expected of the student are clearly stated.
- 1.8 Students are directed to District online information regarding student success in online courses.
- 1.9 Course syllabus and course schedule (including due dates) are featured prominently and schedule is updated as needed. Syllabus includes a policy for dropping inactive students throughout the semester.

2 Student Learning Outcomes

- 2.1 All learning outcomes are clearly stated and written from the students’ perspective.
- 2.2 The module/unit learning objectives describe outcomes that are measurable and consistent with course-level student learning outcomes.
- 2.3 Instructions to students on how to meet the learning outcomes are adequate and clearly stated.
- 2.4 Learning activities (e.g. projects, essays, discussions, labs) promote the achievement of the stated learning outcomes.

3 Assessment and Measurement

- 3.1 The types of assessments selected measure the stated learning outcomes and are consistent with course activities and resources.
- 3.2 The course grading policy is clearly stated.
- 3.3 Specific and descriptive criteria are provided for the evaluation of students’ work and participation (e.g. scoring rubric).
- 3.4 Instructors use more than one method to assess student learning, and the methods are appropriate to the content being assessed.
- 3.5 Students have access to current grades prior to critical semester dates (i.e., Credit/No-Credit and final drop dates).

4 Resources and Materials

- 4.1 Instructional materials contribute to the achievement of the stated course and module/unit learning outcomes.
- 4.2 The purpose of instructional materials and how the materials are to be used for learning activities is clear.
- 4.3 Instructional materials have sufficient breadth, depth, and currency for the student to learn the subject.
- 4.4 All resources and materials used in the course are appropriately cited (e.g. A.P.A., M.L.A., link to original document).

5 Regular and Effective Contact & Authentication

- 5.1 Learning activities provide opportunities for interaction that support active learning (e.g. e-mail, discussion, phone, online conferences).
- 5.2 Instructor responsiveness and availability standards (turn-around time for email, grade posting, etc.) are clearly stated and are commensurate to that of face-to-face class.
- 5.3 Requirements for student interaction are clearly articulated.
- 5.4 The instructor reads online discussions, and responds as appropriate.
- 5.5 The instructor posts weekly announcements that help students navigate the course.
- 5.6 The instructor provides constructive and timely feedback on assignments (1-2 weeks).
- 5.7 Student identity is authenticated by password protected login, variety in assignments, and getting to know students so it is apparent when the work or writing changes.

6 Course Technology

- 6.1 Tools and media support the learning objectives, student engagement, and active learning.
- 6.2 Navigation throughout the online components of the course is logical, consistent, and efficient.
- 6.3 Required technologies and campus resources are specified in the course syllabus.
- 6.4 Instructions on how to access resources are sufficient and easy to understand.

7 Learner Support

- 7.1 The course instructions articulate or link to available support services (technical, academic, student services).
- 7.2 Course instructions answer basic questions related to research, writing, technology, etc., or link to tutorials or other resources that provide the information.

8 Accessibility

- 8.1 The course meets current Federal and State ADA standards regarding accessibility in online and hybrid courses (i.e., alternative text for images, captioning for video, transcripts for audio, etc.).
- 8.2 For details regarding ADA standards, please refer to http://www.cuyamaca.edu/dsps/web_accessibility.asp