

Standards, Benchmarks, and Guidelines for Online Courses

In the July 2nd issue of this newsletter we provided a list of recommended standards, guidelines, and benchmarks for your reference in developing online or web-enhanced courses. That list focused on promoting interaction and communication, development of learning objectives and suggestion of activities for developing critical thinking skills. In this issue, we provide you with recommended standards, guidelines, and benchmarks related to assessment, facilitation of communication and student feedback.

Assessment & Evaluation of Student Learning

Assess student readiness for learning

- Pre-requisites are defined and enforced
- Acceptable methods for completing assignments are identified (group work, open book, etc.)
- Consequences of cheating for plagiarism

Assessment activities are aligned with learning objectives

- Criteria used to evaluate participation in online discussion groups
- Study questions
- Quantity and scope of graded assignments is reasonable
- Authentic assessments

Multiple assessment strategies

- Students' bibliography or reference list includes a variety of materials such as URLs, books and journals, and videos
- When possible, options among assignments are provided to allow for different interests, backgrounds, and personal learning styles
- Students are not assessed solely on tests/quizzes but are provided ample opportunity to demonstrate proficiency in different ways.

Regular feedback

- Rich and rapid feedback—self grading assignments released immediately
- Frequent and substantial feedback from the instructor
- Samples of assignments illustrate instructor's expectations
- Detailed instructions and tips for completing assignments



eFaculty LIVE!

Online Course Showcase & Round Table Discussions

TAMU-C Faculty Lounge
July 25th, 2008, 10:00-12:00
(FREE lunch follows)

Metroplex Campus
August 1, 2008, 10:00-12:00
(FREE lunch follows)

Online Course Showcase & Round Table Discussion sessions. Discussions will include topics such as assessing student learning online, creating active student learning experiences, and synchronous vs asynchronous interactions.

Register by July 19th indicating which session you plan to attend (Commerce or Mesquite) so we may make adequate preparations for the round table discussions and lunch. Email online@tamuccommerce.edu to register.

Multimedia elements

- Flash animation
- Tutorials with screen capture and voice over
- Audio clips
- Graphics
- Video clips
- PowerPoint presentations
- CD-Rom or DVD supplemental materials
- Other learning objects, simulations or interactive

Engage students throughout the course

- Students off-campus with modems are provided with low-bandwidth alternatives for downloading media
- Technology is used to engage students in learning, not just for viewing but for interacting with other students or with course content

Faculty Use of Student Feedback

Course content

- Evaluation survey at end of course

- Detailed instructions and tips for completing assignments
- Due dates for all assignments
- Rubrics for all assignments identify assessment guidelines
- Grading scale
- Instructor models assignment

Self-assessment and peer feedback

- Self-tests similar to the final evaluation instrument
- Students pose discussion questions, respond to others' comments on their discussion topic
- Peer review opportunities
- Students apply rubric to their own work and describe/defend their score
- Clear guidelines for peer review, if applicable

Innovative Tools to Facilitate Communication

Appropriate tools to facilitate communication

- Discussion boards
- Synchronous "chats"
- Email
- Listserv
- Teleconferencing
- Group discussion areas, when appropriate for group activities
- Instant messaging

New teaching methods

- Instructor is open to trying new methods of delivery of instruction
- Instructor is open to accepting new methods of student preferred learning styles

Announcements

Ready to Develop or Modify Your Fall 2008 Course(s)?

Request that your Fall 2008 course shell be created by completing the online course copy request form found at www.tamu-commerce.edu/itde/copyrequest.asp.

Fall 2008 Populated

Fall 2008 courses are scheduled to be populated with students on August 13th.

**** A PDF version of this newsletter is available at www.tamu-commerce.edu/itde/newslettersArchive.asp.

COURSE CONTENT

- Evaluation survey at end of course
- Student input sought at regular intervals
- Open ended questions
- Students failing behind are prompted to determine what might be delaying their progress
- Students prompted to find web-based resources supporting the topic to share with classmates; the highest quality resources incorporated into the course

Online Technology

- Instructor has an open door to students to point out flaws of delivery of instruction using technology
- Instructor solicits feedback on how delivery can be more effective for student learning (e.g. a discussion topic or feedback)

Instruction and Assessment

- Instructor is willing to modify courses (live) as needed to improve or fix inadequacies
- Instructor is able to modify elements (e.g. fix bad quiz questions, extend deadlines, review methods of achieving course objectives)

Seok, S. (2007). Standards, accreditation, benchmarks, and guidelines in distance education. In M. Simonson, & C. Schlosser (Eds.) *Quarterly Review of Distance Education: Research that guides practice*, 8(4), pp.387-398.

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