

# Promising Practices in Online Teaching and Learning

**Collection Editor:**

Keith Restine



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**Collection Editor:**

Keith Restine

**Authors:**

Robin Bartoletti

Keith Restine

**Online:**

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**C O N N E X I O N S**

**Rice University, Houston, Texas**

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# Table of Contents

<b>1 About the Course</b>	
1.1 About the Course - Promising Practices .....	1
<b>2 Welcome to Promising Practices</b>	
2.1 Overview - Promising Practices .....	3
2.2 Why QualityMatters? - Promising Practices .....	4
<b>3 Getting Organized</b>	
3.1 Organizing - Promising Practices - Getting Organized .....	7
3.2 Using Blackboard - Promising Practices - Getting Organized .....	8
3.3 Selected Faculty Competencies - Promising Practices - Getting Organized .....	8
<b>4 Designing your Course</b>	
4.1 Designing your Course - Promising Practices .....	9
4.2 Preparing your Students for Success - Promising Practices .....	9
<b>5 Principle 1: Good Practice Encourages Student-Faculty Contact</b>	
5.1 Create an Encouraging and Inviting Environment - Principle 1 - Promising Practices .....	11
5.2 Structures to Clarify Expectations and Requirements - Principle 1 - Promising Practices .....	12
5.3 Personalizing the Environment - Principle 1 - Promising Practices .....	13
5.4 Increasing Contact and Communication - Principle 1 - Promising Practices .....	14
<b>6 Principle 2: Good Practice Develops Reciprocity and Cooperation Among Students</b>	
6.1 Cooperation and Collaboration - Principle 2 - Promising Practices .....	17
6.2 Establishing Reciprocity and Cooperation - Principle 2 - Promising Practices .....	18
6.3 Student-Centered Discussion - Principle 2 - Promising Practices .....	18
6.4 Setting the Stage - Principle 2 - Promising Practices .....	20
6.5 Problems for Groups - Principle 2 - Promising Practices .....	21
<b>7 Principle 3: Good Practice Encourages Active Learning</b>	
7.1 Redefining Course Activities - Principle 3 - Promising Practices .....	23
7.2 Activities to Encourage Active Learning - Principle 3 - Promising Practices .....	24
7.3 Discussion Boards to Increase Active Learning - Principle 3 - Promising Practices .....	25
7.4 Grouping and Discussion Boards - Principle 3 - Promising Practices .....	26
<b>8 Principle 4: Good Practice Gives Prompt Feedback</b>	
8.1 General Information on Feedback - Principle 4 - Promising Practices .....	29
8.2 Assessment Strategies to Provide Feedback - Principle 4 - Promising Practices .....	30
8.3 Blackboard Tools for Feedback - Principle 4 - Promising Practices .....	30
8.4 Additional Feedback Options - Principle 4 - Promising Practices .....	31
<b>9 Principle 5: Good Practice Emphasizes Time on Task</b>	
9.1 Elements to Assist Organization and Time Tracking - Principle 5 - Promising Practices .....	33
9.2 Course Organization to Emphasize Time on Task - Principle 5 - Promising Practices .....	34
9.3 Course Planning - Principle 5 - Promising Practices .....	34
9.4 Blackboard Course Menu - Principle 5 - Promising Practices .....	35
<b>10 Principle 6: Good Practice Communicates High Expectations</b>	

10.1	Communicating High Expectations Within Your Course by Models - Principle 6 - Promising Practices .....	37
10.2	Procedures to Clarify Expectations - Principle 6 - Promising Practices .....	38
10.3	Remind, Remind, and Remind Again - Principle 6 - Promising Practices .....	38
10.4	Questioning to Extend Thinking - Principle 6 - Promising Practices .....	39
10.5	Assessment Options to Communicate High Expectations - Principle 6 - Promising Practices .....	39
10.6	Instructor Contact and Written Explanations to Communicate High Expectations - Principle 6 - Promising Practices .....	40
<b>11</b>	<b>Principle 7: Good Practice Respects Diverse Talents and Ways of Learning</b>	
11.1	Individualize for Course Composition - Principle 7 - Promising Practices .....	41
11.2	Cultural Implications - Principle 7 - Promising Practices .....	42
<b>12</b>	<b>Resources</b>	
12.1	Enrichment .....	43
12.2	Successful Distance Education Students .....	53
12.3	Resources for Web 2.0 .....	54
12.4	General Face-to-Face Teaching Tips .....	55
<b>Index</b>	.....	<b>56</b>
<b>Attributions</b>	.....	<b>58</b>

# Chapter 1

## About the Course

### 1.1 About the Course - Promising Practices<sup>1</sup>

#### **Disclaimer**

This course was originally created in Blackboard to help faculty members new to distance education. Some assignments and formats have been changed or omitted for this Creative Commons version. TWU wants you to use this course or elements of the course in your own faculty development work. Information on assignments, practice activities, and support provided to the TWU participants in the program may be obtained by contacting the course author.

#### **Welcome to Promising Practices in Online Teaching and Learning**

This course was created as a part of the TWU Online Course Development Program. Participants in the program will be working with instructional designers to design and develop their first distance course for TWU. Don't worry, you aren't expected to complete this course immediately. We have intentionally spread the work in the course over the academic year so you can work on this new course as you get time.

We will provide you information and the opportunity to practice certain skills using Blackboard before we go much further. Once you feel comfortable with Blackboard, you will move to designing certain parts of your course that you can do immediately (even if you don't know exactly what you will be teaching). We will work on your course menu, general information to provide requirements and expectations to students, and a skeleton of your course structure. Our goal is to complete these over the summer to allow you to concentrate on course development during the fall and spring semesters.

It sounds like a lot of work and it is! We will work hand-in-hand with you to make you successful and confident about your ability to design and deliver a distance course. You won't be alone and you won't be without support. Your instructional designer is just a phone call or email away.

On your own, you can browse through information on online instructional strategies and techniques (also found in this course). Once you are ready to place content into your course, you will work with an instructional designer. We encourage you to use the designer as a sounding board for what you want to do and what you want students to learn as a result of the learning activity. We like to talk about teaching and learning and will help you use Blackboard or other tools to create these activities. Later in the academic year, we will introduce certain management strategies to you to help you become prepared for the day your first course opens.

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<sup>1</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m16412/1.1/>>.





# Chapter 2

## Welcome to Promising Practices

### 2.1 Overview - Promising Practices<sup>1</sup>

#### **Promising Practices at TWU**

Promising Practices in Online Teaching and Learning was designed to provide information on planning, designing, producing, and managing online instruction. We can help you with planning, course design, and production needs. To help you become familiar with some practices that you might want to consider in your distance courses, we want you to gain experience as a student and as a course producer. We have combined both of these roles in this course Promising Practices in Teaching and Learning Online. We want you to learn practical techniques for teaching and learning while gaining experience using Blackboard. TWU's Office of Lifelong Learning will award the TWU Distance Education Faculty Certificate, Level 1 after successful completion of the course.

#### **Welcome**

The Office of Lifelong Learning is excited to work with you to help make your time as an online educator personally and professionally satisfying. Quite frankly, we also are excited to learn from you. You know your content and know your students far better than anyone in this course and are the expert on how certain online learning techniques will need to be modified for your students. We are here to facilitate interaction, to allow you to learn from your peers and to learn from you. Our job, as facilitators, is to provide reassurance and support to you as you begin to explore how to make online courses work for you.

We do understand the time limitations on you as a faculty member. It is important that you participate and engage with the others in the class and with the course facilitators. We also believe it is important for you to see the strengths and limitations of distance education as a student. We structured the course so that a portion of the work is self-paced with collaboration and sharing, done through the use of the discussion board to allow you to log-on and participate when your schedule allows. We hope that you will find the interactions with other participants valuable as you work through the materials. We believe you will find that your colleagues will serve as valuable resources during the course and after course completion.

#### **Expected Course Outcomes**

1. Participants will develop understanding of key distance education principles by reading and discussing the readings.
2. Participants will demonstrate understanding of important design principles for distance education through designing their first TWU distance education course.
3. Participants will obtain a course shell for development purposes.
4. Participants will practice core Bb competencies using the P3 Practice Shell.
5. Participants will create a menu structure and a tentative class structure within their practice shell.
6. Participants will develop QM Elements for their course.

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<sup>1</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m16415/1.1/>>.

7. Participants will better understand the role of the distance student through participation in this course.

### Overview of the Course Structure

- Overview
- Why QualityMatters?
- Getting Organized
- Designing your Course
- This ends the first part of the course. You should browse through the section found below to understand some of the instructional techniques available to you for your course. Feel free to ask questions and engage your instructional designer in discussion about how to build strong learning activities.
- Principle 1: Good Practice Encourages Student-Faculty Contact
- Principle 2: Good Practice Develops Reciprocity and Cooperation Among Students
- Principle 3: Good Practice Encourages Active Learning
- Principle 4: Good Practice Gives Prompt Feedback
- Principle 5: Good Practice Emphasizes Time on Task
- Principle 6: Good Practice Communicates High Expectations
- Principle 7: Good Practice Respects Diverse Talents and Ways of Learning
- Conclusion

## 2.2 Why QualityMatters? - Promising Practices<sup>2</sup>

### Why QM Elements?

QM is a program focusing on course design and a collegial review process with opportunity for modification of courses to meet the 40 QM standards, organized into 8 broad categories. This process, based on an extensive review of the literature, presents much of what is known about certain design elements important for online success.

We will focus on these structural elements for this discussion. These are often text-based instructions or clarifications found to be important in successful distance education courses. For purposes of this course, we will focus on certain elements that are easy to develop and include in almost any online course. Many of these elements focus on issues of quality and clearly inform students of the course expectations and procedures.

Many of you already have some or all of these elements in your distance courses or in your syllabi. We favor making a menu item that includes many of these as Online Course Policies and Procedures. As a menu item, these elements are available to students from any location in the course and serve as a quick reference for students. This makes it harder for students to argue "they didn't know." Feel free to modify or borrow content and ideas from any samples or examples in this section.

### 2.2.1 QM Elements

### 2.2.2 Course Overview and Introduction

#### Navigation Instructions

Navigation instructions make the organization of the course easy to understand. Instructions telling students how to navigate the course and identifying the location(s) of all important course materials helps students understand where they need to go and why they need to go to that location for certain materials and/or information.

#### Clarify what is found in the main menu sections.

Provide explanation to students about what will be found in each menu section found on the permanent menu. This menu is available from any location in the course and is one of the essential navigation tools that

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<sup>2</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m16416/1.1/>>.

students must master. Defining what is found under each menu item helps students know where to look for certain materials for the course. Don't make student guess where materials are found - clearly tell them.

#### **Where to Start?**

Provide a link, a "Start Here" button, or some equivalent measure to directly tell students what they should do when they enter the course for the first time. You can do this with your opening announcement or direct students to the appropriate menu item to begin the course.

#### **A statement introduces the students to the course and to the structure of the student learning.**

You also want to give students some clarification about how the learning activities, assignments, projects, and assessments are organized. It is very helpful to students if your organizational elements for each course remain consistent from session to session. You want students to spend time exploring the content, not looking for where something is housed. Sections such as: Readings, Discussion, Activities, Assignments, and Assessments are general terms covering much of what is done in a session.

#### **Expectations for students while online.**

Never assume that students know your expectations for online conduct. Spell out how and what you expect for email, discussion boards, chats, etc. Included in this module is a link titled Student Guide to Online Communications that you may use as a model for defining expectations for student conduct while online.

#### **Self-introduction by the Instructor.**

Your goals are to address several things: 1. you are accessible, 2. you care about their learning, 3. you are approachable, 4. you are a person and not only an instructor, and 5. you are professional and knowledgeable. This is your chance to establish tone for the course. If you love your topic, let it come across in your introduction. This helps to establish a support structure for students. This is also one more place that contact information can be inserted.

#### **Student Introductions**

Design some activity requiring students to connect with other students and disclose something about their life or situation that allows others to begin to know them as more than a name in a course. This is the first step to create a learning community where students feel connected to their classmates.

#### **Minimum Technology Requirements**

The technology requirements recommended by the university should be displayed in the course. You want students to know, early in the course, exactly what types of technologies are needed for success in the course.

#### **Minimum Student Technology Skills**

The technology skills necessary for student success should be visible to students in the course. It is better to place this information in a location that will be seen by students early in the course. Some suggested minimum technology skills include: ability to use a word processor, ability to attach documents, ability to create presentations, ability to post to the discussion board, and ability to format documents according to an established style. Think about what students will be required to do in your course and develop your skill list accordingly. This is also a location where you can link to tutorials and other resources that will help students improve their technology skills.

### **2.2.3 Learning Objectives (Competencies)**

#### **Learning objectives are written in clear language, easily understandable by students.**

The learning objectives (student learning outcomes) are written to be clearly understood by students. The jargon that is found in all disciplines is minimized.

#### **Instructions are provided to students on what they must do to meet the learning objectives.**

After introducing the learning objectives to students, clear explanation is provided on what students need to do to successfully meet the learning objectives. These can be instructions found on assignments, assignment sheets, or lists of requirements.

### **2.2.4 Assessment and Measurement**

#### **Course grading policy is available and stated in understandable terms.**

Your explanation should include information on how grades are calculated (points, percentages, and weights

are clearly stated). This is a requirement for the TWU syllabus.

### 2.2.5 Learner Engagement

#### **Instructor Response Time.**

Set clear standards for responses from you. Some instructors set various response times based on the type of message while others apply a general policy to all communications.

#### **Instructor Availability.**

Clearly define when and where you are available.

#### **Expectations for Student Interaction.**

Requirements and expectations for student interaction are stated.

### 2.2.6 Learner Support

#### **Technical Support**

Always include contact information for technical support issues in every course. You want students to have easy access to the information within the course (Consider also including the information in your syllabus). This statement provides students with contact information in case they experience difficulty. For your courses, consider posting a similar statement in your Welcome or place a menu button for Help.

### 2.2.7 Accessibility

#### **TWU Disability Statement Required**

You are required to include the TWU Disability Statement in your syllabus and should include it somewhere in your course. TWU uses a specific statement for publication to students (You can also link directly to the direct URL containing this information. Doing so ensures that your course contains the most current disability statement.

## Chapter 3

# Getting Organized

### 3.1 Organizing - Promising Practices - Getting Organized<sup>1</sup>

Success in the distance education classroom is greatly enhanced if you are familiar with the structure and management of the course environment. All of you know what a F2F classroom looks like because you have sat in many of these classrooms as a student or taught in these environments. You know you will find some type of board (remember the old days when Blackboards were really black?), a lectern or some equivalent, maybe a projector, maybe a computer, etc. You probably won't need to unduly familiarize yourself with a new classroom because you already carry understanding because of past experiences in a classroom. In a distance classroom, you may not be as familiar with the environment. Spending time prior to the course in the online classroom to familiarize yourself with its features and management aspects will create a smoother transition for you and your students.

Even if you have taught online before, you may have used another Learning Management System. Although you will find many similarities between the various systems, each has its own unique features. To complicate this even more, all of these systems are updated on a regular basis so features and functionality changes. Traditional classrooms are more alike than different. In the online world, you are always learning new ways of teaching and managing students due to changes in the system. At this time, TWU uses Blackboard for a Learning Management System. It is used by 100% online courses and by 100% face-to-face courses. Each course you teach will have a Blackboard shell for your use.

You will also want to think about what you want students to take from the course. What do you want students to know and what do you want students to do as a result of the course? One approach that we find very promising is to deconstruct the course to the essential skills and knowledge you believe most important for your course. Using this approach, key skills and concepts are emphasized, practiced, and assessed throughout the course. The course looks pretty much the same but the careful identification of the essential elements focuses instruction and assessment on those areas you believe must be mastered to some degree.

You'll also want to review the navigation needed to move from location to location to create the materials for the course. You'll need to learn how to upload materials you create to the course. You'll need to become familiar with the discussion board area. You will need to think about the sequence of instruction and assessment. Contact your instructional designer and work to gain understanding of the distance environment so you can create the best learning environment for your students.

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<sup>1</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m16418/1.1/>>.

## 3.2 Using Blackboard - Promising Practices - Getting Organized<sup>2</sup>

### Using Blackboard

Blackboard is the current Learning Management System (LMS) used by TWU. A LMS provides a variety of tools to support teaching and learning in the online environment. Content, assessments, discussions, handouts, grades, and more can be delivered and managed through a LMS. You will need to become familiar with Blackboard but this doesn't mean you need to become an expert to successfully deliver your first course.

For your first distance course at TWU, you must become familiar with the following six tools and features:

### Blackboard Features

1. Announcements - the tool for general communication to the class.
2. Communication tools - tools (Messages, email, and Discussion Board) for individual and group communication in the course.
3. Assignment tool - the assignment tool combines the functionality of a dropbox and grading tool into a single location.
4. Test Manager - this tool can administer quizzes, practice tests, and examinations.
5. Gradebook - single location for all grades with some sorting capability.
6. Content tools - ways (add item, add folder, and add test) to add content to the course.

## 3.3 Selected Faculty Competencies - Promising Practices - Getting Organized<sup>3</sup>

### Selected Faculty Competencies

Competencies you should possess include (but are not limited to):

### Competencies

- Posting an announcement
- Sending email within the system to one student or all students
- Establishing discussion forums
- Posting responses or moderating discussion forums
- Setting up groups
- Uploading content
- Managing students' assignments
- Designing exams
- Developing question pools
- Grading assignments and quiz submissions
- Resetting student exams
- Setting points for assignments and quizzes
- Sorting and filtering the course gradebook
- Enabling various settings in your course
- Tracking student progress
- Making your course available or unavailable
- Copying select content from course to course
- Archiving your course

### Acknowledgement

Special thanks to Larry Ragan from Penn State for the idea to include faculty competencies in a course for online faculty development.

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<sup>2</sup>This content is available online at <http://cnx.org/content/m16419/1.1/>.

<sup>3</sup>This content is available online at <http://cnx.org/content/m16420/1.1/>.

# Chapter 4

## Designing your Course

### 4.1 Designing your Course - Promising Practices<sup>1</sup>

#### **What to Do**

There is no reason to be apprehensive about putting your course together. Even if you have no experience using Blackboard, you can do this. You already know how to create folders and documents using a desktop computer. You will be able to transition these skills to course development. Don't worry, you don't have to build the entire course right now. You will begin to work on the skeleton of the course and you can add the content later.

#### **How to Do It**

There are some key concepts you should think about as you begin to design. The course menu is available in all sections of the course and can be used to navigate between major sections of the course. As the designer of the course, you have a great deal of control over the content and appearance of the menu. You should spend some time thinking about the categories of the menu and how you want the menu to appear and function. The second concept to think about is how you want each class or session to appear. It is well documented that consistency in this part of the design process helps students navigate the course more effectively. In other words, you want to develop courses or sessions that are identical in appearance and function. Remember, you are only working on the skeleton. This means that categories in each class appear in the same location. All folders and categories are labeled in the same way and appear in the same sequence from class to class. Your end result will be that students spend less time looking for information and more time interacting with content.

You will decide on the categories you want for each class. A traditional approach to this would feature the class or session objectives, readings, assignments, assessments, etc. Once you determine the categories (remember you can change these if you find you need to expand or condense categories), you will create one class or session in the exact order and sequence you want. You will then copy this class to the other classes in your course. You will then have the skeleton for each course as you begin to insert content.

### 4.2 Preparing your Students for Success - Promising Practices<sup>2</sup>

#### **What to Do**

Effective distance educators provide sufficient orientation to the tools and navigation of the CMS and to significant elements of the course. Access to technical support and other university support mechanisms are prominent in the course. Students are also provided with strategies for being successful in the distance course.

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<sup>1</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m16471/1.1/>>.

<sup>2</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m16473/1.1/>>.

**How to Do It**

- Post a welcome message (Announcement or email) and guide students to where to get started in the course.
- Include a brief orientation for students to gain familiarity with the terminology and the tools used in your CMS.
- Remind students that the TWU email account is the preferred account and that all messages will be sent to the account established in Blackboard.
- Provide resources and strategies for success in distance learning. Explain how learning online is different from learning in a traditional classroom.
- Provide a section on course support resources (technical support, TWU library, and TWU Write Site)
- Develop and provide a section for Course Procedures

**Course Procedures**

- Instructor's name and contact information
- A description of the structure of the course
- Navigation guidelines
- Course schedule, including lessons, reading assignments, assignments and deadlines, projects, quizzes, exams or papers, and/or other learning activities
- Expected instructor response time
- Preferred communication methods



## Chapter 5

# Principle 1: Good Practice Encourages Student-Faculty Contact

### 5.1 Create an Encouraging and Inviting Environment - Principle 1 - Promising Practices<sup>1</sup>

#### Developing Communication Expectations

For both face-to-face and online education, student contact with faculty, both in and out of class, appears to be a crucial factor in student motivation and persistence. This section begins the discussion on how online educators can create an environment to promote interaction and establish the expectation of regular and ongoing interaction with the instructor.

As the instructor, you establish the tone for the course and communicate your expectations primarily through text. A supportive and inviting tone that conveys accessibility and concern for student success is important. Welcome the students to the course, and invite them to participate. This is the first impression that many students will have of you as an instructor and you as a person.

#### 5.1.1 Tips

1. Welcome the students to the course prior to the official opening of the semester by sending a course email or posting a course announcement.
2. Post the official syllabus at the same time. You can make the other sections of the course unavailable at this time or let students browse the course - your choice.
3. Write in an informal tone.
4. Develop some means to provide extra encouragement and support at the beginning of the semester.

Many authors identify interaction as important for successful distance courses. Three types of interaction affecting learning have been identified: interaction with content, interaction with the instructor, and interaction with other students (Moore, 1989). Jiang and Ting (2000) suggest instructor interactions with students is connected to student learning. These authors also suggest that student learning is connected to the value instructors place on the quantity and quality of student postings on the discussion board. Richardson and Swan (2003) point out that a sense of social learning is linked to student learning.

You have thought about how you want students to communicate with you. Communicating your expectations for communication also includes thinking about how to frame your expectations for students to interact with content and to communicate/ interact with other students.

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<sup>1</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m16477/1.1/>>.

## 5.2 Structures to Clarify Expectations and Requirements - Principle 1 - Promising Practices<sup>2</sup>

### Welcome Message

Certain course elements can assist the distance educator to clarify expectations and requirements. Many instructors use some type of welcome message at the start of the semester. We have seen these as text only, text plus audio, and video only. Regardless of the type of welcome you decide is best for your course, your welcome should establish a tone conveying your passion for the topic and your concern for the students. It may also provide information on how to get started in the course and how the learning activities are structured. The more time you spend defining the structure of the course, the less time you will spend answering questions about where to find activities and materials from students during the course.

### Announcements

Blackboard's Announcements feature is one structure that we encourage you to use in your course. Announcements are important to keep students informed about issues with the course. In TWU's system, students will see announcements from your course when they first log-in to Blackboard if they have Announcements Module enabled on their page (we encourage you to require this), and they will also see the announcement within your course. You have total control over when announcements appear and how long they remain visible. One practice we encourage is to use the announcement area to refresh your course on a weekly basis. Important messages, announcements about required assignments, notices that an assessment will open, and many other messages will norm students to expect to see something new in the announcements area on a regular basis.

### 5.2.1 Tips

Do not make your Announcements permanent. If you regularly post Announcements, the newest Announcement will appear at the top of the page. If you use permanent Announcements, these Announcements will always be at the top of the page and any announcement that is not permanent will appear beneath the permanent announcements.

### Course Calendar

The course calendar is another structure used to clarify expectations and requirements. We encourage you to place important dates (Discussion board due dates, Examination dates, Assignment due dates, etc.) in the calendar. We take the time to set up the calendar because the Blackboard calendar can also be displayed in each student's opening Blackboard page in the My Calendar module. Setting due dates in the calendar and setting the availability of these Calendar reminders causes reminders to appear when the student logs into Blackboard. This is just another way to ensure that students have been informed of the expectations and requirements.

### Communication Preferences and Requirements

Carefully define how you want students to communicate with you. State your preferred communication method with supporting rationale. Emphasize this in your course and your syllabus so it is not missed by students. While you are on this topic, define the expected response time for a return message from you. Some instructors define types of student communications and establish different response times by method or subject of the communication.

### Expected Time Demands on Students

You should post clear expectations of time demands for students. This helps them organize their study schedules and clearly indicates what is expected for success in the course. You want to make sure students know early in the course what demands the course will make on them. Many instructors use the Calendar feature in Blackboard to outline assignment due dates and important benchmarks in the course to assist students to plan for the course.

### Expectations for Student Interaction

Somewhere in your course, you should include your expectations for student interaction. This helps students

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<sup>2</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m16478/1.1/>>.

to more clearly understand what is required to be successful in the course. Interaction with the content, with other students, and with you should be covered in some way.

### 5.3 Personalizing the Environment - Principle 1 - Promising Practices<sup>3</sup>

#### Introductions

##### Instructor Introductions

One way to personalize the online environment is to develop your online introduction carefully so you reveal something about yourself as a scholar and as a person. You should also seek to convey a tone of approachability. One of the more interesting introductions that we have seen is the use of an instructor's pet (a cat) to introduce the instructor to the class. All of the important information was covered in a light hearted way. Activities such as these begin to personalize the course for participants and the instructor.

##### Student Introductions

Good practice suggests that it is important for students to introduce themselves to the class. We encourage a move from "provide your name and what you do" to introductions that reveal enough about the person to prompt questions and discussion. The more rapidly you can generate discussion in a course, the more likely you will have ongoing discussion throughout the course.

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#### Examples

Fictionalize the student introduction process. Have students introduce themselves to the class...	... through the eyes of a child ... through the top ten books that I have ever read... "I bet you didn't know that I can..."
Provide a small amount of credit for a "test" over their classmates' introductions.	Who lives in _____? Who works at _____? Who wants to be a _____?

Figure 5.1

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Once participants begin to reveal parts of themselves to others, some degree of trust is built and some degree of community is established. Introductions are the beginning of the community-building process.

#### Email

A friendly greeting or salutation on an email message can mean a great deal to a student. A simple way to do this is to start your messages with the name of the student or to ask a question about something the student has mentioned at some point in the course. Taking the time to add the students' names to the top of the email and customizing a few sentences is a small detail that is possible without a great deal of work and reduces the isolation common in online education.

One thing to do early in the course is to have students confirm their email addresses so you know the messages are going to the correct address. While we are on the subject, it is also a good idea to let students know that junk mail or spam filters need to be checked if they are not receiving regular emails from you. Some instructions require students to confirm their email for an assignment while others use the test feature of Blackboard to gather information on the students for contact purposes.

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<sup>3</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m16479/1.1/>>.

### 5.3.1 Tips

1. Require students to confirm their email address by creating an assignment early in the course requiring them to acknowledge receipt of a message from you. Assign a minimal amount of points for the assignment.
2. Print out your student introduction activity on the discussion board (use the Collect function). Use some of the information provided by the students to personalize email messages throughout the semester.
3. Use the testing features of Blackboard to gather contact information about students.
4. Create generic emails that you can personalize by changing the name and send these to students individually.
5. Create standard email responses (I received your assignment, reminders about exams or assignments, instructions, etc.) in your word processor and keep the file handy on your desktop.

#### Discussion Boards

For discussion boards, it is very easy to personalize your response, if you have set up the board to display student names. We encourage you to disable anonymous posting for all graded assignments. The board is also a good place to reinforce the types of collaboration and cooperation you expect from students. As you scan the board, take a moment to acknowledge a student-initiated request or a particularly thoughtful posting.

## 5.4 Increasing Contact and Communication - Principle 1 - Promising Practices<sup>4</sup>

#### Plan Frequent and Diverse Communication Opportunities

One way to encourage and increase communication between the instructor and students is to plan frequent discussion opportunities. Plan for specific communications between you and individual students, you and small groups of students, and you and all students.

It is important for students to know that you are active and care about the activities and communications within the course. This means responding in a timely manner to individual communication and to group communication activities. It also means making your presence (often known as teaching presence) known by providing individual and group feedback in a variety of ways.

#### Use a Regular Cycle of Reminders

Regular and recurring reminders norm students to expect information from the instructor at specific times in the course. These reminders also create structure for students not physically attending class. Regular reminders about due dates, important assignments, etc. help students organize their time and study schedule.

#### Individual Communications with Students

One way to build a sense of connection is to build at least one individual conference for each student during the semester. One easy way to accomplish this is to use email to send a personalized message to each student inviting them to share their course experiences with you. Planning a certain amount of individual responses to students via the discussion board is another way to touch each student individually. Feedback on individual assignments is one of the ways we favor to make individual connections with students.

We have also found feedback to be a powerful mechanism to shape learning and to create positive relationships between the instructor and students. Frequent feedback can serve to encourage students, especially if you communicate that you care about the learning and clearly identify applications of the learning to real world examples.

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<sup>4</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m16497/1.1/>>.

### **5.4.1 Tip**

Create a chart to manage your communication plan and to track your interactions with students. List your students and then make columns for individual, small group, and large group communications. To track, all you need to do is put a checkmark in the appropriate spot. Our suggestion is to use Announcements and the Discussion Board for most large group communication. Individual communication can be feedback on assignments, email, and responses to posts on the discussion board. Small group communication is best accomplished using the Groups feature in Blackboard.



## Chapter 6

# Principle 2: Good Practice Develops Reciprocity and Cooperation Among Students

## 6.1 Cooperation and Collaboration - Principle 2 - Promising Practices<sup>1</sup>

### Cooperation and Collaboration

In the online environment, cooperation and collaboration are seen as critical components of the educational experience. Reciprocity and cooperation among students implies that students work together on tasks and communicate with one another to complete the tasks. Also implied is a degree of independence from the instructor. The instructor serves to structure the task or activity and then leaves the students to sort out details, assign specific tasks, and collaborate to create a group product.

Current tools feature a wide range of collaborative tools and new tools are being developed to enhance collaborative efforts. Collaboration can serve to build the social context absent in online learning and create opportunities for students to learn from one another. Online learning can be an isolating experience, if we do not intentionally design collaborative opportunities into the course.

Collaboration also supports a more active approach to learning while promoting creativity and critical thinking processes. Social interaction, rather than individual exploration, expands the student's view of the topic and what he or she thought they knew, allowing them to question previously held beliefs and explore new ones. It is important to remember, however, that collaboration does not just happen. The instructor plays a critical role in preparing students for collaborative work.

### Groups

One of the ways that instructors can encourage collaboration in a distance course is to make sure students understand that the instructor values collaboration. Language emphasizing the value and importance of collaboration is important to establish the culture of the distance classroom. The types of assignments designed by the instructor also show that collaboration is valued. One of the tools in Blackboard that is useful for collaborative activities is the ability to establish groups. The group tool allows students within a group to exchange files and communicate by email, chat, and discussion board.

### 6.1.1 Tips

1. Craft language emphasizing the importance of actively participating in the learning process.

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<sup>1</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m16500/1.1/>>.

2. Emphasize the importance of multiple players to assist learning and understanding.

## 6.2 Establishing Reciprocity and Cooperation - Principle 2 - Promising Practices<sup>2</sup>

Bill Pelz, the 2003 Sloan-C award winner for Excellence on Online Teaching, is a firm believer in shaping the online environment and expectations for the course so that students are engaged in doing most of the work in the course. He admits that it has taken him a long time to move from being the center of the teaching to a facilitator of student learning. He favors student-led discussions and peer support (students helping students) as major ways to move the class to active online learning and to a more cooperative and collaborative environment.

## 6.3 Student-Centered Discussion - Principle 2 - Promising Practices<sup>3</sup>

The discussion board is one location in your course that can be used to encourage collaboration and cooperation. Well written discussion items do not happen without planning and thought. Consider how you will motivate students to participate, how you will encourage substantive and relevant responses, and how you will guide and assess student participation. As the designer and facilitator of the board, your role is one of balance. You must create discussions that are engaging in ways to pull students into the discussion while maintaining a focus on intended learning outcomes.

### 6.3.1 Tip

It has been shown that many threads will extinguish if students do not respond quickly to new postings. One technique that is often successful is to require students to post early in the week and to post again later in the week.

The value you place on discussion board postings and responses is perceived by students. Reinforce your beliefs in the power of dialogue and communication as a way to learn. The language you craft in the course emphasizing the discussion board as essential for cooperation and collaboration is important. You can reinforce this by making discussion postings a significant portion of the grades for the course.

Here are five activities for your consideration to spark sharing among students on the discussion board. Remember, the focus of this unit is to discuss practice to develop reciprocity and cooperation among students. Use of controversial readings, diverse points of view, debates, case studies, etc. are just a few of the ways to engage students and to make the board more collaborative.

#### 1. Controversial Topics

Many disciplines have controversial topics that are perfect to stimulate discussion and engage students. Students have personal opinions on many of these topics. If you have carefully defined the rules for using the board (including acceptable ways to disagree), you can expect some spirited and thoughtful postings. This type of posting works equally well for individuals or small groups.

#### 2. Web Trips

You can provide several links in the board to define a learning path for students. You paste in specific URLs that you want students to visit. If you make this a small group activity and require the students to share the workload on the research on the sites, students are forced to share what they located and to use what other students found as well. You can require a single response from the group or (we favor these types of activities) you require each student to synthesize what others have found to create an individual response that covers the topic and requires students to share information.

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<sup>2</sup>This content is available online at <http://cnx.org/content/m16501/1.1/>.

<sup>3</sup>This content is available online at <http://cnx.org/content/m16502/1.1/>.



**Example 6.1: Sample Web Trip for e-Portfolios**

Instructions: You are to visit the Web sites listed below. You have been assigned to groups and I encourage you to divide the work between group members. The entire group is responsible for developing responses to the questions about this topic. Only one of the group members will need to submit the responses but be sure to identify the group name and the group members on the response.

- <http://electronicportfolios.com/reflect/whitepaper.pdf>
- <http://electronicportfolios.org/systems/paradigms.html>
- <http://www.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/ELI3001.pdf>

**Questions:**

- Provide three comprehensive definitions for electronic portfolios.
- Discuss the issue of portfolios for formative and summative assessment.
- ...

**3. Collaborative Writing**

Small groups work to develop a paper that all contribute to and jointly edit and modify for the final product. The final product is posted to the discussion board for critique and review by the class.

**Example 6.2: Sample Collaborative Writing Assignment**

You and your writing team are to create a review of the research study provided to you. You will use the Research Study Review Rubric to jointly craft your responses to the following items:

1. Critique the purpose of the study to determine if the problem is worthy of investigation. Support your reasons with facts obtained from other sources.
2. Analyze the literature review for breadth and depth. List other sources that you believe should be included in the literature review.
3. ...

You are required to turn in a draft document for each section listed above. I suggest you share the work and then use editing tools (TrackChanges and Comments) to demonstrate collaboration. I require you to turn in the draft with evidence that different authors contributed to the final draft. I will make comments and return the draft to you for revision. I expect you to share the draft among the group and to address all edits and comments before returning the final to me.

**4. Discussion Board Debate**

Small groups are assigned a particular perspective on a topic and required to develop a written response to the topic. Controversial issues seem to work well for this strategy and you might consider having the groups prepare on both sides of an issue and then assign the groups to one stance or the other stance later in the week. The various perspectives are posted for review and then the groups are required to respond to an opposing perspective. You can determine how many rounds are required for the strategy and then move to some consensus-building discussion to allow all viewpoints to contribute until a position is defined and agreed upon by the entire class.

**5. Course Readings**

You create forums or threads around assigned readings throughout the course. Students are required to locate additional resources on topics covered in the readings and the group uses some sort of group process to rank the resources for usefulness in understanding the course concepts.

These are not the only ways to encourage cooperation on the discussion board. These are presented as examples to prompt thought. You are limited only by your own creativity when thinking of ways to encourage cooperation.

Graham et al. (2000) suggest

- Focus the discussion on a task.

- Tasks should result in a product.
- Engage the student with the content.
- Provide feedback on the discussions.
- Quality of the postings should be more important than number or length.
- Post expectations for the discussions prior to the discussions.

Palloff and Pratt (2003, p. 25) provide the following suggestions to maximize interaction.

- Model participation by contributing to the discussion.
- Monitor participation for both frequency and to intercede if discussion is moving away from the topic.
- Be willing to intercede if one or more students dominate the discussion since this may inhibit the participation of other students.
- If you notice certain students are not participating, personally contact them to invite more participation and to show concern for their learning.

## 6.4 Setting the Stage - Principle 2 - Promising Practices<sup>4</sup>

Students need to know that you value cooperation and collaboration. Design activities that require cooperation. Students also need to know that you value groups as one way for them to discuss ideas and learn from each other. When setting the stage for cooperation, it is useful to encourage students to try ways of learning that are often shunned in more individually-oriented courses:

- Encourage students to study and prepare for exams together.
- Encourage students to explain difficult and hard-to-understand concepts to each other.
- Encourage students to evaluate each other's work.
- Encourage students to praise each other.
- Encourage students to seek out classmates with backgrounds and viewpoints that are different from their own.
- Encourage students to use peer editing.

To ensure students understand that groups have a definite academic focus (as opposed to merely a social focus), carefully develop instructions and statements so group members understand that communications that express an opinion, advance an idea, propose a hypothesis, or defend a position are encouraged forms of learning. All students have something useful to say and "making meaning" can happen in a variety of ways.

To set the stage for cooperation and collaboration, spend some time crafting language to discuss the following points:

- For cooperation to become a strong learning tool, groups should develop norms that support the idea that the success of the individual is tied to the success of others.
- Create the expectation that individuals will assist others to reach group goals.
- Shared goals, specific roles, and division of labor are norms that support cooperation
- The expectation should be that individuals should do their share of the work and the work should be distributed.
- Interpersonal skills are crucial (Establish trust, communicate clearly, provide support, and resolve conflict).
- Reflective Processes (Talk about how well the group is functioning and what needs to be improved to meet group goals. )

Adapted from information on collaborative learning at: <http://www.ssn.flinders.edu.au/flexed/innovations/elements.php>

<sup>4</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m16503/1.1/>>.

For groups to actively co-construct knowledge, care must be taken to set appropriate tasks that are challenging enough to require the expertise of a group. The tendency is often to list too many tasks that are too easy. The results of such efforts are that individual tasks are assigned within the group with no shared interaction. Students also need some guidance with developing the necessary skills to work cooperatively with others. This doesn't happen automatically, these skills are developed through practice and repetition.

## 6.5 Problems for Groups - Principle 2 - Promising Practices<sup>5</sup>

We are sure that all of you have heard of problems with group work. The most common complaint we hear is that one student does all of the work or that a student did not contribute to the project. These are both valid points and should be addressed. Setting the stage for cooperation and collaboration includes addressing group issues early in the process.

It is useful for you to carefully define group expectations and steps that groups should take to engage other students in the work. Be prepared to let students manage their own groups and require groups to document steps taken to engage other students.

Carefully review the links provided with this module.

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<sup>5</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m16504/1.1/>>.



## Chapter 7

# Principle 3: Good Practice Encourages Active Learning

### 7.1 Redefining Course Activities - Principle 3 - Promising Practices<sup>1</sup>

#### Plan Activities Requiring Communication

One way to think about active learning is to think about activities that focus more on process. Process-oriented activities require students to do something to complete an assignment or activity. One process skill that we ask you to consider is communication. If we can get students talking to one another about content, this is one level of activity. Another level of activity may use groups to co-develop a product. Communication is crucial for this process to be collaborative. If communication is absent, you will often see students parcelling out the work and working independently on pieces of an assignment.

Skillful instructors intentionally set the tone for active work in a F2F course through language and non-verbal cues showing that the instructor values an active approach to learning. These instructors reinforce the types of discussion and behaviors desired for the activity. What distinguishes online courses from F2F courses is the availability of tools to make communication and action possible when students are not physically present with other students and when the instructor is not physically present with students. Tools such as the discussion board, email, groups, chat, and the virtual classroom can all be used to design activities requiring communication as one element of active learning.

#### 7.1.1 Tips

- Encourage students to be proactive learners
- Encourage or require students to regularly log into the course
- Encourage or require students to submit assignments on time
- Encourage or require students to complete exams on time
- Require students to read and reply to discussion items by the due date
- Encourage and require students to cooperate with others in the course

We encourage you to design activities that require student-to-student and student-to-instructor communication. The discussion board, with requirements to respond to the postings of other students is one way to build action into the online course. Requiring students to work in groups with carefully defined procedures is another way to use communication as a way to increase action in a course. Remember, many students still come to the online environment from a F2F background and are comfortable doing individual assignments. Forcing the action through the use of communication tools is one way to increase the amount of required student action.

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<sup>1</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m17152/1.1/>>.

### 7.1.2 Tips

- Encourage and require students to participate in the discussion area
- Design thought-provoking discussion prompts to encourage discussion
- Provide structure to multi-step activities
- Use summaries to reinforce similarities and differences in individual posts
- Encourage students to respond at deeper levels
- Emphasize opposing perspectives and opinions as a way to grow

#### **Plan Activities that Require Process and a Product**

Activities that require communication between students or between a student and the instructor and require a final product are another example to increase interaction. Basing these activities on peer collaboration and cooperation may increase motivation and yield richer student products. By requiring production and communication in a single activity, students must interact with their peers and the content to complete the activity.

Reading information with no required action on the part of the student is a low level form of active learning. To require more action, create a series of questions that students should answer while reading or require students to post a summary of the reading. Requiring students to discuss the reading with others is still another form of action.

Active learning is an attempt to use certain processes to allow students to explore content in ways other than having the content presented to them. Collaborative learning, problem-based learning, project-based learning, case-based learning, and others are all approaches to involve the student in actively using the content in different ways. Active learning moves students from passive recipients to more active participants with varied ways to interpret, analyze, and internalize information. Active learning strategies are not discipline-specific and encourage students to begin to understand their personal role in learning.

Online tools and activities vary in terms of potential for active learning. Assignments requiring interaction with the instructor or other students provide more potential for active learning than assignments where students read information or view a web page. Likewise, different online tools have different potentials for active learning. Viewing PowerPoint slides does not have the same active learning potential that reading and responding to the same slides does. Requiring students to discuss the questions and come to consensus in an additional level of action and activity. Creating active learning online requires attention to the planning and execution of the activity as well as the tools used to complete the activity.

## 7.2 Activities to Encourage Active Learning - Principle 3 - Promising Practices<sup>2</sup>

### **Active Learning**

Active learning in distance courses is encouraged to move from the traditional "teaching by telling" approach that encourages passivity in learners. The goal, as we see it, is to create an environment that provides opportunities for students to learn at different levels of Bloom's taxonomy. The "teaching by telling" approach tends to function at very low levels of the taxonomy and often, without more active strategies, does not move students into higher levels on the taxonomy (Analysis, Synthesis, and Evaluation).

To insert active learning opportunities into distance education, instructors should provide opportunities for students to: locate important content, apply the content to a specific situation, analyze the content, synthesis the content, and evaluate the content. We also believe there is great potential for learning when the environment also requires the student to reflect on the process, discuss the process with others, and to summarize the content in various ways.

### **The Challenge for Instructors**

Materials prepared for a traditional F2F course cannot be inserted into a course without modification. A presentation, supplemented by the instructor's comments and content knowledge, is a quick way to convey

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<sup>2</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m17151/1.2/>>.

an enormous amount of information to students. However, it is still "teaching by telling" when inserted into an online course without modification and large amounts of content are lost (the content the instructor talks about that is not on the slides). Information can still be conveyed but there is no immediate check for understanding (possible in a F2F course through questions, non-verbal cues, etc.). Without modification, there is a resulting loss of quality because the instructor is not immediately available to intervene and clarify.

This means that instructors must re-conceptualize traditional materials for the online environment. In the example above, some way should be used to allow students access to the instructor's comments that do not appear on the slides. If you place presentations without this additional context into courses, you are using resources to deliver what is essentially text with some graphics. You could do this just as easily (and use far less resources) by inserting the text into the course. You must constantly think about how to provide context in a medium that does not use the normal cues of face-to-face teaching.

On a simple level, this means anticipating questions and misunderstanding and addressing them in the materials. It also means creating clear and unambiguous instructions for students and clear expectations for the assignment or activity. It may mean inserting specific activities into the course to encourage a more active approach to learning.

## 7.3 Discussion Boards to Increase Active Learning - Principle 3 - Promising Practices<sup>3</sup>

### **Distribute the Workload**

Another key to developing discussion activities promoting active learning is to distribute the work load. If you want to promote more activity, consider assigning roles and responsibilities within the discussion area. Students, with guidance from you, can learn to moderate discussion and respond to questions from their peers. Discussions that are dominated by the instructor establish more of a one-way communication between the instructor and students. Your goal is to promote interaction and shared responsibility for learning. Not only will this reduce your work load, it sets the stage for the creation of knowledge by the community. One technique we have seen is to have a group leader for the activity (we suggest you rotate leaders across different activities so everyone has a chance to be a leader) and to provide a few extra credit points for assuming this role. We don't know what it is about extra credit but it seems to work.

Pelz (2004) suggests that students should do most of the work in the course through student-led discussions. Some of the assignments that he suggests to encourage more active learning include: locating and discussing web resources (400+ word essay on the site with a facilitated discussion about the site), case study analysis (features discussion and collaboration with each student submitting individual assignments), collaborative research papers (papers are submitted for class discussion), research proposal team project (collaboration to collect resources and to develop the proposal. The proposal is reviewed by another team for comment).

### **Questions**

Open-ended questions are useful to begin discussion within a discussion board. The discussion topic should be interesting to students and require them to offer more than their opinion. One way is to require students to support their viewpoint with outside sources or a thoughtful rationale. Successful online instructors allow time for students to respond and then ask probing questions, provide examples, provide contradictions, and challenge students to apply learning to other situations. Asking students to analyze their response or to look at the response from another perspective is also useful. Some instructors quote brief student comments to summarize and paraphrase important points. Another way to reinforce positive postings is to email the student to tell them you appreciate their response or thoughtfulness.

### **Balance**

Try to encourage student-to-student learning first by asking other students to answer questions or to collaborate on a particular topic. Although difficult to do, it is important to maintain a balance in the amount and

<sup>3</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m17153/1.1/>>.

frequency of posting. Mazzolini and Maddison (2003) found that too many posts from instructors seemed to lead to shorter discussions and inhibit student postings.

We favor a structured approach to the discussion board. That is, provide samples or examples in the forum to help students stay on focus. If your prompt is too general, students digress. If it is too specific, you tend to get short responses. Step-by-step instructions (use numbering) help students understand what is to be posted and in what order. The general steps used in most activities can be applied to the board with little problem. For instance, a brainstorming activity might require students to post a list of ideas. These ideas are then examined and discussed to produce a shorter list. From this shorter list, consensus is reached on the best ideas and these are prioritized. To take this one step further, require a deliverable of some sort to close out the topic. In the case of the brainstorming example, a short paper comparing pros and cons of the top three ideas requires students to synthesize information contained in the board to develop their own response.

The Ohio Learning Network suggests that instructors work toward incremental and increased patterns of student-student and student-content interaction patterns. One of these techniques is to require reflection and synthesis of discussion threads from course participants. Another technique, after you feel comfortable on the discussion board, is to provide an overall framework to guide students and then let them create their own topics for discussion.

## 7.4 Grouping and Discussion Boards - Principle 3 - Promising Practices<sup>4</sup>

### Size of the Discussion Board

- Use a variety of group sizes throughout the semester
- Large group (entire class) - For general topics
- Small groups - 5-7 participants, useful for group projects, useful to reorganize the class to promote more interactivity
- Pairs - Often encourages more interaction, useful if students do not work well in small groups
- Individual-to-individual - Students can reply to a single individual on the discussion board, post should include the name of the person for which it is intended, remind students that all will read the post and suggest email or chat for private communications (if necessary).

### Encouraging Interaction

- Encourage students to discuss.
- Change the composition of the groups over the course of the semester to allow students to work in small groups with a variety of other students.
- Use guest lecturers to moderate a discussion board activity.
- Minimize your posts to the bare minimum to encourage participation or to clarify (be visible, but not too visible).
- Post student work in the Board (be sure to notify students prior to posting and obtain a signed permission form), and invite comment and feedback.

### Assessment

You should carefully define the discussion assignments, defining requirements and expectations. Discussion board rubrics and model postings are helpful to structure the activity for students.

A word here about group projects and grading. There is a lot of controversy about the best way to assign grades for group activities. This comes back to the issue of students feeling that some students did not contribute as much as others. We have found that a group grade on the product and a group self-evaluation on group participation is useful. Students individually submit a group contribution form at the end of the

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<sup>4</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m17154/1.1/>>.



assignment that details their perception of participation in the group. Students are also told that the group's responsibility is to inform the instructor when someone on the group is not contributing according to the expectations of the group. The instructor can contact the student via email (after ensuring that the group has documented evidence of their attempts to engage the student) and pose a simple choice - contribute to the group work or do the entire assignment individually. Most students conform quickly. Another variation to this technique is to have students name the group members who contributed the most to the assignment. You might consider providing some extra points for members who are great contributors.



## Chapter 8

# Principle 4: Good Practice Gives Prompt Feedback

### 8.1 General Information on Feedback - Principle 4 - Promising Practices<sup>1</sup>

#### **Information and Acknowledgement Feedback**

Instructors will find it useful to use two types of feedback for student success and satisfaction with the course. Information feedback provides information or evaluative feedback. This may be an answer to a student's question, a grade on an assignment, or specific feedback on an assignment. Acknowledgement feedback can be used to ensure that students receive confirmation that something has happened. How many students send you an email asking if you received the assignment? One way to reduce this is to acknowledge that you have received their assignment. Simple e-mail messages confirming receipt of assignments or questions provides students with confidence in online systems. We suggest you have a set of responses that are easy to paste into a reply to a student.

#### **Two Blackboard Tools for General Feedback**

We also suggest you use discussion boards to provide feedback and encouragement to the entire class. Discussion areas allow you to post one message that will be read by many students. General answers to questions that all need to see should always be posted in the discussion area. Spend some time clarifying this point and norming students to this technique. Announcements can be used in the same manner. The idea is to "write once so many can read."

#### **Consistency**

One of the things you should try to do is to remain consistent throughout the semester on providing feedback and acknowledgements to students. You should also attempt to honor your posted response time and provide explanation to students when you will not be able to respond in a timely manner. Let students know if you will be unavailable due to travel or other scheduled events. Inform students when unanticipated events come up so they will know when to expect a response. Graham et al. (2000), in a study of online instructors, report instructor response time and frequency of responses decreased over the course of a semester for many instructors.

Massey (2002) suggests that many distance educators are challenged by the potential to provide quick responses and feedback to students. Ladon (2002) believes that one attribute of successful online instructors is their ability to provide individualized feedback, using a variety of communication tools.

#### **Feedback Plan**

Have a feedback plan in place before the course begins and be committed to providing feedback throughout the semester. Your feedback plan should include several statements that can be used to provide acknowledg-

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<sup>1</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m17157/1.1/>>.

ment feedback. You should also include some table or chart so you can quickly track feedback to individual students and to the group. We use a table with the names of the students and cells for individual, small group, and large group feedback. A quick glance at the chart lets us know that we need to intentionally provide feedback to a student. We can quickly generate a statement and send it to the students. Acknowledging the small things, like receiving an assignment or an email and following through with a response, conveys a sense of caring and concern. Taking the time to send feedback on a major or minor assignment means a great deal to students.

## 8.2 Assessment Strategies to Provide Feedback - Principle 4 - Promising Practices<sup>2</sup>

### Assessment Strategies to Provide Feedback

Students learn more effectively if they receive frequent and meaningful feedback in a timely manner. Feedback can come directly from the instructor, from assessments with feedback built into the instrument, and from other students. Feedback is a powerful way to shape student learning. Feedback delivered during instruction allows students to make changes during their learning, leading to better products. We encourage you to seek feedback on your course throughout the semester as well. If we only seek feedback at the end of instruction, we can only improve courses for the next delivery. If we think about feedback as a way for continual improvement, we can adjust during instruction.

### Classroom Assessment Techniques

Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs) were created to encourage instructors to systematically and directly observe and assess learning within the classroom. Use of these techniques provides timely and specific feedback on the status of student's learning and understanding (Angelo and Cross, 1993).

CATs allow instructors to make some determination of the effectiveness of the instructional approaches and to refocus teaching efforts to make learning more effective and efficient. Perhaps most importantly, feedback happens rapidly enough for continuous refinement of approaches through consistent monitoring of student understanding and teaching effectiveness.

Use of regular feedback mechanisms can allow input that can help instructors proactively react to teaching and learning issues. Data from these techniques serve as one replacement for the cues absent in the online environment.

Adapted from the following source: Angelo, T. and Cross, K. (1993). Classroom assessment techniques: A handbook for college teachers (2nd Ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

### Early Course Assessment

The traditional course assessment form completed at the end of a course and used to determine student satisfaction with a course provides data for summative assessment of the course. However, these data come too late in the course to be useful for ongoing and continuous improvement of the course while active instruction and learning are occurring. Methods to gather data about the teaching and the learning during the course are useful to allow continuous and ongoing improvement of the course when this improvement can affect the teaching and learning activities.

## 8.3 Blackboard Tools for Feedback - Principle 4 - Promising Practices<sup>3</sup>

### Test Manager as a Feedback Tool

Test Manager allows you to create assessments using a step-by-step method. One of the important features of Test Manager is the feature allowing student feedback for individual answers. With this tool, you can display a response for a correct answer (providing reinforcement) and a response for an incorrect answer (clarifying

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<sup>2</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m17160/1.1/>>.

<sup>3</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m17161/1.1/>>.

why another selection is more appropriate). This tool is useful if your intent is to provide feedback to students. Test Manager allows you to select the question level feedback that students will receive for both correct and incorrect answers to questions. Another valuable feature of Test Manager allows the instructor, during the test deployment stage, to record number of attempts on the assessment or to restrict attempts to a single attempt.

Another view of feedback using Test Manager is to create self-assessments for students to use throughout the course to gauge their mastery of material. One way to do this is to create a pool of questions presented to students in the form of practice tests throughout the course. Students benefit by exposure to course concepts, feedback on strengths and weaknesses, and familiarity with your questioning style. Many instructors suggest giving minimal credit to these assignments to ensure that students take the practice tests seriously.

If your intent is to provide feedback or to point students to the textbook or other readings so they better understand course content, remember that you have a great deal of control on what you include as the comment for an incorrect answer. As an example, you may point the student to the exact phrase or section of the text where they should look for further information.

Consider adding several items to a regular exam or quiz asking students to respond to items such as how the class is going, how well they are understanding course concepts, how well the exam measured their learning, etc. Dependent upon how you structure the exam, you have several options for how these items are handled for grading.

#### **Survey Manager as a Feedback Tool**

Surveys are often used to gather information on teaching effectiveness and the organization of the course content. The Survey Manager allows instructors to quickly develop surveys to gauge students' perceptions of the course or the instructor's style. Student volunteers can provide valuable data on the progress of the course and suggestions for improving the course. Anonymity is protected via the survey tool. Depending upon the responses and suggestions made, you may want to modify areas of your course, change or add instructions, create or change policies, etc.

#### **Discussion Boards for Feedback**

For unique assignments like papers or projects, you can have the student post the assignment to the discussion board. One advantage is that learners get to see other examples and reflect on their own work. Some instructors believe that the quality of work improves when students know their peers will see the assignment. You have the option of setting up specific groups for the discussion board. Ask for volunteers to discuss the progress of the course and learning issues using one of these groups.

#### **The Virtual Classroom or Chat for Feedback**

The virtual classroom and chat functions can be used to administer virtual, oral examinations for students to provide feedback on student understanding. If you have a need to gather evidence on how students are able to quickly respond to content questions, this method allows you to do this from a distance. You and the student agree on a time for the meeting. You generate a list of questions that you will type during the meeting and pose these questions throughout the time span. It is important to remember that typing is an intimidating skill for some students; so take care to clarify that quality is the key consideration. Instructors also have the option to provide feedback, prompts, and encouragement throughout the session.

These tools allow you to schedule sessions with one student or several students to ask questions about content and your teaching style. These sessions provide a valuable opportunity to clarify misconceptions or misinterpretations of course content and provide insight into how the students perceive the course.

## **8.4 Additional Feedback Options - Principle 4 - Promising Practices<sup>4</sup>**

### **Comments on Assignments**

Feedback on course assignments is important for quality learning. An instructor's failure to provide feedback may be interpreted by students in a variety of ways, most negative. Some may believe the instructor is impersonal and uncaring. Students state that feedback helps them improve and reduces the tendency to make

<sup>4</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m17159/1.1/>>.

similar mistakes again. Students seem to want a clear standard against which to judge the feedback. Students appreciate comments that are detailed and focused on specific areas of their work. Positive, improvement-oriented comments are also important in the students' view.

Feedback can be delivered by downloading student assignments to your desktop and using TrackChanges and Comments features in MS Word. General feedback on assignments can use the e-mail feature of Blackboard to send personal feedback to students.

#### **Item Analysis of Examinations**

The Assessment Attempt Details function in Blackboard allows the instructor to call for details on examinations. This provides information on percentage of correct responses and percentage of incorrect responses by answer. Using this function allows the instructor to look for patterns of errors and use this information to correct misconceptions. If you notice patterns where numerous students had the same difficulty with an item, Blackboard can be used to send a message to the entire class, clarifying the item or misconception.

## Chapter 9

# Principle 5: Good Practice Emphasizes Time on Task

### 9.1 Elements to Assist Organization and Time Tracking - Principle 5 - Promising Practices<sup>1</sup>

#### **Expectations for Student Time Commitment**

It is important that students understand that the time demands for distance learning courses equal or surpass those of traditional classrooms. Although distance courses are convenient and students have some control over when they access and participate, the actual time commitment is important for success in the course. Instructors should clearly indicate their expectations for time commitment on the part of the students. You should also lead your students through many of the procedural details found within the course to allow them to concentrate on the content and the interactions necessary for success in the course.

#### **Course Calendar to Emphasize Time on Task**

One of the ways to emphasize time on task is to establish deadlines for key events and assignments within the course. Deadlines also help students to manage time and helps to establish expectations for completing assignments. The Calendar function within Blackboard is an easy way to post deadlines that are easily seen by students.

We favor the Course Calendar because you can force the calendar items to appear on the Blackboard login page for each student. When students login the TWU Blackboard page appears. One of the modules we suggest you require is the My Calendar module. This module will show every calendar entry you posted in the Course Calendar. As with other Blackboard tools, you have a great amount of flexibility with optional settings for the Calendar feature.

Here is something to think about. If all TWU instructors used the calendar and required students to enable the My Calendar module - each time a student logged into Blackboard they would have immediate access to all valid calendar postings for each of their courses.

#### **Use of Summary to Reinforce Assignments and Activities**

Another way to emphasize time on task is to develop and post a checklist to allow students to track the assignments and activities of a class or module. After each section (usually a module or class) in the distance course, post a checklist that students can complete to determine if they have completed all assignments and activities for the section.

#### **Example 9.1: Am I Done Yet?**

To be sure you have completed all the requirements for Unit 1 and are ready to move on to Unit 2, complete the check list below.

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<sup>1</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m17165/1.1/>>.

1. Read chapters 1 and 2 in Taber and the essay "Best Practices for Scholars"
2. Posted at least one original post and two responses in Forum 1 on the Discussion Board
3. Completed and submitted the Unit 1 Quiz
4. Turned in you self reflection essay

Have them all? Good work! Proceed to Unit 2.

## 9.2 Course Organization to Emphasize Time on Task - Principle 5 - Promising Practices<sup>2</sup>

### Course Organization

Consistent course design and consistent organization of the course are essential. If you develop the greatest course in the world but put it together haphazardly - there will be some loss of student learning. Your goal is to make the organization so easy that students know where to go to find certain materials, know the regularly occurring rhythm of the course (when assignments and activities are due), and know what to do to accomplish tasks.

You explain the organizational structure and you explain the cycle in some sort of overview. You design the course so that the same organizational scheme appears time after time. You keep it simple.

Distance learners need a clear and coherent structure to follow. A clear organizational structure will help students spend less time finding course materials, increase their confidence in navigating the course, and assist students to stay on task. An additional benefit is that clear structure reduces the amount of questions about navigation. Remember that students do not have the chance to turn to their neighbor and ask for clarification. You, as the designer of the course will provide clarification through design and structure or you clarify through email, announcements, and discussion boards.

Having an organizational structure that remains consistent from class to class is the easiest way to provide structure for learners. Dividing the course into logical categories and pieces of information that are consistent from class to class allows learners to look for information in the same place in each class.

Courses can be organized in several ways:

- Weeks
- Topics
- Assignments

Providing students a clear overview of the overall course structure with consistent application of your organization to each class is the most effective way to use design and organization to affect the amount of time and the kind of time students spent in a course.

## 9.3 Course Planning - Principle 5 - Promising Practices<sup>3</sup>

### Create a Course Outline

Instructional design plays a key role in organizing a course. In F2F courses, assignments are presented to students to coordinate with assigned readings and lectures. The instructor typically addresses questions about the assignments in the classroom. In an online course, one organizational method found to be useful is to create an outline containing class sessions, assigned readings, assignments, assessments, and other pertinent points for instruction.

#### Example 9.2: Example (By Week)

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<sup>2</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m17163/1.1/>>.

<sup>3</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m17164/1.2/>>.



Sessions	Readings	Assignments	Assessments
Week 1			
Week 2			

**Table 9.1**

Your course doesn't have to be organized by weeks. You may consider using topics, chapters in the text, or other organizational schemes. Regardless, this schedule of planned activities will help you organize your materials, assignments, and assessments. You may note that this organizational outline looks remarkably like the Course Content and Class Schedule often found in syllabi. We often organize F2F instruction by dates (classroom meetings) but online coursework can expand this organizational scheme.

#### **Locate Existing Materials**

Spend some time locating and gathering existing materials for the course. If you have taught the course face-to-face, you probably have lecture notes, presentation slides, handouts, course activities, assignments, and assessments. Most materials used in F2F courses can be modified for use in a distance course. Faculty should verify that materials are readily available electronically. Distance Learning Library Services can assist faculty with reading lists.

#### **Identify Formats of Materials on Hand**

Identify the formats of existing materials. Some of your materials may already exist in some electronic form while others are print copies or other formats. Regardless, some modification is necessary to prepare these materials for upload into a distance course. In fact, we encourage you to always modify materials if you are concerned about quality for the distance course version. A presentation in a F2F course is enhanced by the instructor but the instructor is not available in the same way for the distance version. We encourage you to create similar materials that are organized in smaller units with use of Bold or Italicized text to point out key ideas.

#### **Match Existing Materials and Activities with Outline**

Spend some time determining the materials, activities, and assessments you have "ready-to-go" and which materials, activities, and assessments need to be created. Identify gaps between "what you have" and "what you need." Create a list of what you need to develop.

#### **Create the course "file map"**

Create a file map structure of your course. You have identified materials, activities, assignments, and assessments in your course outline. Create a folder for each organization section (Sessions, in the example shown). These are the main folders for the organization of each main section of your course. Within these folders, we suggest you develop additional folders to house materials. These are the sub-topics for each of your main folders. You can also create sub-folders for sub-topics as necessary throughout your organizational file map. Try to go no deeper than 3-4 folders to make it easier for students to locate materials.

## **9.4 Blackboard Course Menu - Principle 5 - Promising Practices<sup>4</sup>**

When you first view your course shell, the first thing you need to think about is the Course Menu found on the left hand side of the course site. You have a great amount of control over this menu. Some common elements you may want to consider in the menu include:

- **Announcements:** We consider this an essential element in your course since Announcements are the way to let students know of important information about the course.
- **Course Calendar:** The calendar is useful to remind students about due dates for important assignments and projects.

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<sup>4</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m17162/1.1/>>.

- **Course Information:** This is a useful area to provide a general overview of the course. You have other options but this area is useful to set the general overview apart from other course documents.
- **Staff Information:** This is the area where you should post information about yourself. You can change the name of this menu area.
- **Course Documents:** This area is where most of your materials will go. Although you can change the name of this menu, you must have an area where you can place materials.
- **Assignments:** This area is where you can place assignments. You have other options, including placing assignments within the Course Documents section.
- **Discussion Board:** Discussion boards are a major element in distance courses.
- **Syllabus:** This area is where you place your syllabus.
- **Resources:** This is where you can add supplemental resources for your course.

Remember - you can change the names of all of these items to reflect your own organizational scheme!

Spending some time getting a course plan down on paper before beginning to develop the course will save you time in the end. You want to brainstorm and scribble until you have an organizational plan to be consistently applied across multiple classes. Having a plan in place makes it easy to write the introduction to the course and to explain exactly where certain materials are located throughout the course.

## Chapter 10

# Principle 6: Good Practice Communicates High Expectations

### 10.1 Communicating High Expectations Within Your Course by Models - Principle 6 - Promising Practices<sup>1</sup>

#### **Communicating High Expectations Within Your Course by Models**

Distance education faculty must plan ahead, be organized, and learn to communicate with students in different ways. We favor building many of these "expectation statements" into the course. We also favor frequently reminding students of course expectations and dates.

#### **What Constitutes A Good Post in the Discussion Board?**

There is no single recipe for a good post. Since discussions develop and evolve, dependent upon varied input and responses, it is impossible to create a single example that serves all courses equally well. You, as the course instructor, know what you are expecting for a good post and it will serve you well to spend some time defining such a post for students.

#### **Example 10.1: Example - Defining Expectations for the Discussion Board**

In general, posting a single time is insufficient to engage in a discussion. What I expect to see is an evolving dialogue, featuring some exchange back and forth between students. I should be able to read the discussion and it should read much like an actual conversation between several people. Our online discussions will be class discussions, meaning that I expect you to show the same respect we would show each other in an actual classroom. Being respectful doesn't mean that you should agree with all points or that you can't disagree. It simply means you should respect the other point of view in a polite way. I suggest you stay away from excessively short responses like "I agree" and stay away from excessively long responses. As you post, be aware that you are engaging in a discussion. Work to craft your responses succinctly and focused. A good guide is to try to keep the response to a few paragraphs at most. It takes a great deal of work on the part of the student and the instructor to help students realize their potential. How and what you communicate is important to stress the expectations for the course. Don't minimize the impact that motivational statements and statements demonstrating your commitment to helping students understand and become successful will have on the students.

#### **Framing Expectations and Parameters for Student Posts**

It is also helpful to post a model of a good post with explanation as to why you believe the post is good. If you use student examples for this, remember to obtain permission of the student with a signed waiver and

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<sup>1</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m17168/1.1/>>.

to acknowledge the student's ownership of their writing and ideas. This can also serve to reinforce the idea of copyright for students.

#### **How long...how much...etc.?**

Frequently communicate the connection between goals, objectives, and performance expectations to provide students with a connection to "what are we supposed to learn." Create models for important assignments or activities so students better understand the expectations for the assignment. Not only will this help students "hit the mark" but it may reduce the amount of questions you receive about the assignment. Create poor examples to show students how a poorly organized assignment would look and provide explanation about why it fails to meet standards. If you recycle student work, take care to follow copyright law. Providing model assignments will provide a visual example for students and can reduce the questions about the assignments

## 10.2 Procedures to Clarify Expectations - Principle 6 - Promising Practices<sup>2</sup>

### **Procedures**

Create a policy for early posting. Some students want to work ahead of the group and to get many of the activities out of the way. This is your decision but clearly define what you will accept and what is not allowed in the course. Another way to approach this is to release material on a scheduled basis so students can only see the material as you allow. Students not actively participating with other students are not supporting other students and miss some of the interaction and learning found through the online environment.

Create a policy for late assignments and missed examinations. Some instructors implement policies that do not accept late work while others allow reduced credit.

#### **Example 10.2: Assignment Policy**

All assignments will be submitted via Blackboard. This means you will upload a file to Blackboard. I will then grade that assignment using Track Changes in Word, and return the graded file to you. Since Blackboard has time and date stamp capabilities, it will be the final record of when an assignment was received. All weekly postings are due by 8:00 a.m. on Wednesday. Postings will be submitted via the discussion board. The discussion board will be checked weekly on Wednesday mornings to determine whether posting requirements were fulfilled on time.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS AND/OR POSTINGS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED

Use assignments that require approved topics, draft versions, peer editing, etc. to emphasize issues of quality. You might see these called incremental progress assignments in some of the literature. The idea is to allow students to see where they should be in the project at a particular date. Use some type of checkpoints for long-range assignments to help students stay on track. Announcements work well to remind students that preliminary materials (topics for papers, rough drafts, etc) are required at specific times throughout the semester. You might also post these using the Calendar function. Incremental progress assignments are also good as a feedback mechanism, allowing you to identify and clarify misunderstandings early in the project.

## 10.3 Remind, Remind, and Remind Again - Principle 6 - Promising Practices<sup>3</sup>

### **Clarifying Expectations**

Some instructors use a regular cycle of reminders to keep students up-to-date on the course material and expectations for the course. In Blackboard, the Announcements section works well for this function. We also encourage the use of the Course Calendar to remind students of important dates.

<sup>2</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m17170/1.1/>>.

<sup>3</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m17171/1.1/>>.

**Example 10.3: Reminder Announcement**

Have you completed your reading for the first assignment? If you haven't started, remember that you have a required posting that is due this Wednesday. I will post the Discussion Board prompt for the required posting at 5:00 PM on Tuesday. I am excited to understand your reactions to the reading and to see how other students respond to your posting. I look forward to your post.

## 10.4 Questioning to Extend Thinking - Principle 6 - Promising Practices<sup>4</sup>

Your goal is to develop questions that encourage divergent thinking and stretch students to think about their thinking. Paul (1993) recommends Socratic questioning techniques to increase engagement and to move students towards deeper thinking. Many of these techniques also work well to emphasize respect for diversity and sensitivity to different ways of learning.

- Clarification of conceptual understanding - attempt to get students to think about the concepts underlying their argument. Examples include: Why do you say that? How does this relate to our discussion topic? Can you provide an example?
- Clarification of assumptions - attempt to get students to think about the assumptions behind their beliefs. Examples include: How can you verify that assumption? How did you chose that assumption?
- Probing for evidence - attempt to get students to support their argument. Examples include: How do you know? What causes \_\_\_\_\_? Where is your evidence?
- Questioning about viewpoints - attempt to get students to think about and consider divergent viewpoints. Examples include: What are different ways to look at the same topic? How might someone else with different beliefs and cultural values look at this issue? How are \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ similar?
- Probing implications - attempt to get students to think about the consequences of their arguments. Examples include: What would happen next? What are the intended and unintended consequences of that belief or assumption? If everyone believed this way, what would happen?
- Questioning the question - attempt to get students to think divergently by asking for reflection about the purpose of the question. Examples include: Why do you think I asked that particular question? What do you think I intended for you to learn from that question?

## 10.5 Assessment Options to Communicate High Expectations - Principle 6 - Promising Practices<sup>5</sup>

Many students are quite experienced with cramming for an examination and then forgetting the material so they can repeat the process for the next examination. This process, taken to extreme, requires little accountability on the part of students. Skills such as memory are valued while skills such as divergent thinking are minimized.

The types of assessments used in an online course can communicate high expectations. Requiring students to demonstrate competency through the use of assessments that require application of course concepts to real world problems and require presentation of the solution to peers is one way to use assessment to communicate increased expectations. Posting assignments for review by peers has been shown to improve products in some classrooms.

<sup>4</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m17172/1.1/>>.

<sup>5</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m17166/1.1/>>.

## 10.6 Instructor Contact and Written Explanations to Communicate High Expectations - Principle 6 - Promising Practices<sup>6</sup>

Use your syllabus and specific course elements to clearly communicate your expectations for students. Many of the elements found in the QualityMatters program are used to establish clear expectations for daily tasks, communication standards, assignment quality, etc.

Use the tools available in Blackboard to encourage students to expand and extend their thinking. Use your ability to communicate to motivate and encourage students to move past the easy answers to ponder more complex solutions. The discussion board is one location where instructors can easily communicate increased expectations while responding to student postings. The ability to ask critical and probing questions on the board can motivate students to respond in more complex and thoughtful ways. Email is a more individual forum that allows you to push students toward more thoughtful responses and solutions.

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<sup>6</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m17173/1.1/>>.

## Chapter 11

# Principle 7: Good Practice Respects Diverse Talents and Ways of Learning

### 11.1 Individualize for Course Composition - Principle 7 - Promising Practices<sup>1</sup>

In a perfect world, course content would be delivered to individual students at the exact moment of "need to know" and in the exact format for that individual student. Unfortunately, this is rarely realistic or achievable given current limitations. However, understanding the diverse talents, abilities, and backgrounds of a student can ameliorate the standardized approach to a significant degree. Understanding of the lived experiences of the students allows instructors to craft instructional content toward these experiences. Of course, to do this, you have to know your students.

Be sensitive to cultural differences that carry meanings different from your own perspective. A gesture or word in one language can carry a very different meaning in another language or culture.

Let's use language as an example. Many of us still carry some regional dialect and vernacular in our spoken language that is not found in Standard English. We may also use some of these expressions in our writing. It is important to establish expectations within the course that respect these differences. Equally important is to come to some understanding about a class norm concerning written language. Writing that falls outside this norm is not wrong or incorrect but it is best suited for certain situations and environments.

Do you know these IM abbreviations?

- 4COL
- AWTTW
- EG
- ITFA
- SSDD

Answers: 1. For crying out loud, 2. A Word to the Wise, 3. Evil Grin, 4. In the Final Analysis, 5. Same Stuff Different Day

Knowing more about your students and using this information to personalize illustrations and examples will be interpreted by students as concern. It will help them feel that they are respected for their contribution to the course and as individuals. Always respect the cultural and ethnic diversity of your students and encourage them to respect each other's in turn.

Diversity comes in all shapes and sizes. You will need to spend some time getting to know your students in some way. You establish the expectations for the course and it will be up to you to follow through and

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<sup>1</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m17176/1.1/>>.

reinforce positive behaviors that support the course goals. Remember that carefully defining small details like acceptable language establishes the norms for the course. Be sensitive to cultural differences and be responsive when issues are raised. Students will look to you as the example of how to handle conflict in an online course.

## 11.2 Cultural Implications - Principle 7 - Promising Practices<sup>2</sup>

Online education attracts all types of learners but it is important to realize that all learners are not alike. Each student has individual needs shaped by life experiences, culture, geographical influence, language, technical ability, and learning style.

Palloff and Pratt (2003) offer some cultural issues that are important to consider for online learners.

- Content - consideration that some content is inappropriate in some cultures
- Multimedia - Consideration to feature diversity to minimize stereotyping
- Writing - Cultural differences exist about the formality of written communication. Consideration for these differences is encouraged. Non-native English speakers may have some difficulty with written English
- Web design - Cultural differences exist in how text is organized and presented via the Web
- Role - Cultural differences exist in relation to student and instructor interaction

It is impossible to anticipate all needs during the design of the course. However, take care to learn a bit about each student and their needs as a learner. Although various design theories attempt to create courses that are culturally neutral, we suggest that most cannot anticipate the diversity found in distance courses. With that in mind, sensitivity toward cultural differences during the conduct of the course may be an approach that allows the most likelihood of success.

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<sup>2</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m17175/1.1/>>.



# Chapter 12

## Resources

### 12.1 Enrichment

#### 12.1.1 Enrichment for Principle 1

##### 12.1.1.1 Enrichment for Principle 1<sup>1</sup>

###### 12.1.1.1.1 Resources

Keys to Facilitating Successful Online Discussions

<http://www.uwsa.edu/ttt/raleigh.htm><sup>2</sup>

Improving your Teaching Presence in Distance Learning Courses from Worcester Polytechnic Institute

<http://www.wpi.edu/Academics/ATC/Collaboratory/Teaching/instructorpres.html><sup>3</sup>

Tips for increasing instructor presence in online courses.

The Art of Hosting Good Conversations Online by Howard Rheingold

<http://www.emoderators.com/moderators/artonlinehost.html><sup>4</sup>

This site provides a list of considerations to encourage and engage online discussion. The section on What a Host Does may prompt you to think differently about online discussion boards.

Crafting Questions for Online Discussions

[http://tlt.its.psu.edu/suggestions/online\\_questions/](http://tlt.its.psu.edu/suggestions/online_questions/)<sup>5</sup>

Explores different question types and strategies to extend the depth of online discussions. This site also includes information on planning your discussion.

Instant Messaging: Collaborative Tool or Educator's Nightmare by Robert Farmer (2003)

<http://naweb.unb.ca/proceedings/2003/PaperFarmer.html><sup>6</sup>

##### 12.1.1.2 Tips for Encouraging Student-Faculty Contact<sup>7</sup>

Tips for Encouraging Student-Faculty Contact

1. Since goals are more global than objectives, spend some time explaining the goals to students in the course. Goals are often presented in more user-friendly language and are easily understood by students. Goals also provide a framework to tie content to throughout the course so students better understand

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<sup>1</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m17208/1.3/>>.

<sup>2</sup><http://www.uwsa.edu/ttt/raleigh.htm>

<sup>3</sup><http://www.wpi.edu/Academics/ATC/Collaboratory/Teaching/instructorpres.html>

<sup>4</sup><http://www.emoderators.com/moderators/artonlinehost.html>

<sup>5</sup>[http://tlt.its.psu.edu/suggestions/online\\_questions/](http://tlt.its.psu.edu/suggestions/online_questions/)

<sup>6</sup><http://naweb.unb.ca/proceedings/2003/PaperFarmer.html>

<sup>7</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m17207/1.1/>>.

why they are completing certain assignments. Goals lend themselves to a friendly and informal style favored to connect students and instructors.

2. Providing some mechanisms for students to provide feedback on the conduct and content of the course presents you as approachable and concerned about learner growth. We recommend that you build some feedback mechanisms into the course so you have data as you revise the course for the future.
3. The use of technology to complete or submit assignments or activities should be carefully and clearly explained to students. Telling students to submit using the digital dropbox and explaining to students the steps necessary to submit yield very different outcomes.
4. Define, in very clear terms, required levels of student participation in the course. It is often helpful to illustrate the different possible levels of student participation using a rubric or point system.
5. Tone and expectations should begin to move students toward communicating with peers to better understand content and to support each other to learn the material.
6. You should take an active role in moderating discussions and providing feedback to students in ways that serve to model the behavior you expect from students.
7. Clearly explain communication expectations.
8. Provide models of acceptable and unacceptable responses to discussion postings and email.
9. Explain Netiquette.
10. Provide some verbiage about expected response time from you.
11. Clearly communicate the assignments and requirements for the course.
12. Use a video or audio introduction.
13. Announcements allow you to outline the week for the students and point them to key activities that must be completed.
14. Add audio messages into your course.
15. Students don't know you are watching the course unless they can see evidence that you have been there. Use postings, add new announcements, and provide feedback on assignments.
16. Encourage students.
17. Allow input from students about what they should learn, how they should learn it, and how it will be assessed. Most of you will have some content that is non-negotiable but will have other content that is less important to you. This content is fertile ground to allow students to have some control of the direction and form of learning.
18. Allow students the opportunity to critique and resubmit work. One way is to allow multiple submissions before the deadline with feedback provided to improve the deliverable. Grades are not assigned until the due date. You can also hold students accountable for higher standards on resubmitted work.
19. It is helpful to set aside a regular time to read and respond to the board. This is a good way to norm students to expecting responses from you at specific times.
20. Consider developing a FAQ section (frequently asked questions) on the board and update the questions throughout the semester. If you keep the questions generic and relative to the technical functionality of the board, you can use this FAQ in all online courses.
21. Allocate additional time during the first week of classes to assist students new to the discussion board.
22. It takes some time, but you need to norm students to using the discussion board for questions relevant to all course participants. This reduces your email overload. Encourage students to share knowledge on the board and to ask for knowledge they need on the board as well.
23. During the early part of the course, work at establishing community so students begin to experience the "social culture of the board."

## 12.1.2 Enrichment for Principle 2

### 12.1.2.1 Enrichment for Principle 2<sup>8</sup>

#### 12.1.2.1.1 Resources

Creating Collaboration by Jenifer Hofman

<http://www.learningcircuits.org/2003/sep2003/hofmann.htm><sup>9</sup>

Can This Collaboration Be Saved? Twenty Factors that can Make or Break any Group Effort by Paul Mattessich

<http://www.nhi.org/online/issues/129/savecollab.html><sup>10</sup>

Leading Online Learning through Collaboration by C. Roberts, M. Thomas, A. McFadden, & J. Jacobs

<http://jolt.merlot.org/vol2no3/roberts.pdf><sup>11</sup>

(My) Three Principles of Effective Online Pedagogy by Bill Pelz

[http://www.aln.org/publications/jaln/v8n3/v8n3\\_pelz.asp](http://www.aln.org/publications/jaln/v8n3/v8n3_pelz.asp)<sup>12</sup>

Discussion by the 2003 Sloan-C award winner for Excellence in Online Teaching presenting samples of techniques used to develop interaction and student ownership of learning.

Group Work in Distance Learning Courses from Worcester Polytechnic Institute

<http://www.wpi.edu/Academics/ATC/Collaboratory/Teaching/groupwork.html><sup>13</sup>

Benefits of group work, types of group assignments, and managing group assignments.

How to Structure Online Discussions for Meaningful Discourse by Patricia Gilbert & Nada Dabbagh

<http://www.aect.org/Divisions/DDseries3.asp?clientid><sup>14</sup>

Investigation into whether the type and degree of structure imposed on online discussion participants impacted the quality of student postings.

Tips for Virtual Teams by Penn State

<http://tlt.its.psu.edu/suggestions/teams/manage/virtualeam.html><sup>15</sup>

This site defines virtual teams and provides suggestions to begin virtual teamwork exercises and to define the communication rules. <http://tlt.its.psu.edu/suggestions/teams/> is the link to the site on Building Blocks for Teams and has some information on team dynamics and learning.

Virtual Meetings and Virtual Teams Using Technology to Work Smarter by Penn State (2005)

[http://www.psu.edu/president/pia/innovation/Virtual\\_Meetings\\_and%20Virtual\\_Teams2.pdf](http://www.psu.edu/president/pia/innovation/Virtual_Meetings_and%20Virtual_Teams2.pdf)<sup>16</sup>

This paper provides practical tips and considerations for meeting virtually.

Using Technology to Enhance Student Learning: Instructor- or Student-Moderated Discussion Boards - Which Are More Effective? By Tom Miner

[http://www.ccone.org/scholars/04-05/TomMiner\\_final\\_report.pdf](http://www.ccone.org/scholars/04-05/TomMiner_final_report.pdf)<sup>17</sup>

Study investigating Instructor-led vs. Student-led discussion boards

### 12.1.2.2 Strategies to Improve Dialogue<sup>18</sup>

#### 12.1.2.2.1

One important strategy to improve communication in online courses is sometimes called verbal and non-verbal immediacy. Originating in the work of Mehrabian (1971), this can be thought about as physical and verbal behaviors to reduce physical distance between individuals. This is important in the online course

<sup>8</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m17271/1.3/>>.

<sup>9</sup><http://www.learningcircuits.org/2003/sep2003/hofmann.htm>

<sup>10</sup><http://www.nhi.org/online/issues/129/savecollab.html>

<sup>11</sup><http://jolt.merlot.org/vol2no3/roberts.pdf>

<sup>12</sup>[http://www.aln.org/publications/jaln/v8n3/v8n3\\_pelz.asp](http://www.aln.org/publications/jaln/v8n3/v8n3_pelz.asp)

<sup>13</sup><http://www.wpi.edu/Academics/ATC/Collaboratory/Teaching/groupwork.html>

<sup>14</sup><http://www.aect.org/Divisions/DDseries3.asp?clientid>

<sup>15</sup><http://tlt.its.psu.edu/suggestions/teams/manage/virtualeam.html>

<sup>16</sup>[http://www.psu.edu/president/pia/innovation/Virtual\\_Meetings\\_and%20Virtual\\_Teams2.pdf](http://www.psu.edu/president/pia/innovation/Virtual_Meetings_and%20Virtual_Teams2.pdf)

<sup>17</sup>[http://www.ccone.org/scholars/04-05/TomMiner\\_final\\_report.pdf](http://www.ccone.org/scholars/04-05/TomMiner_final_report.pdf)

<sup>18</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m17273/1.2/>>.

to lessen the psychological distance between online communicators. Model and encourage the use of these behaviors in your interactions with students. Also provide some instruction or materials to help define these behaviors for students. Reinforce examples of these behaviors when noted in student communication with peers. We have included some examples below:

- Initiating discussions
  - Asking questions
  - Responding frequently and quickly
  - Using humor
  - Using self-disclosure
  - Addressing students by name
  - Praising
  - Demonstrating attentiveness
  - Demonstrating engagement
- (Baker, 2003; Gorham, 1988, & Hutchins, 2003)

Techniques like asking questions, praising, and demonstrating attentiveness tend to allow instructors to reinforce desired behaviors and to maintain the focus of the board on learning. Remaining visible and responding to show attentiveness and engagement are perceived by many students as concern for their learning and students report such activities as positives in most studies. There is a fine line between remaining visible and being too visible. Tip: Do not feel that you need to respond to every posting. We encourage you to respond to only a few each session to reinforce desired behaviors and activities. You might want to keep a checklist handy to keep track of who you have responded to so you can spread your response among the class. We have also heard many instructors report that the discussion shuts down when they go into the discussion too early.

Gunawardena and Zittle (2003) research an area known as social presence in online courses. Social presence is informally defined as the degree to which a person in an online environment is perceived as real. These researchers suggest a strong relationship between "student's perceived social presence and students' perceived learning" (p. 77) and indicate "students' perceptions of social presence in online courses are a predictor of their perceived learning" (p. 78). Verbal and non-verbal immediacy cues are related to social presence.

Online instructors want to carefully develop language that reinforces the idea that the instructor is concerned, responsive, and friendly. Instructors want to use tools to reinforce the written text. Emerging research (Oomen, 2007) suggests that audio feedback, audio introductions, etc. personalize the online instructor and are received positively by students.

### 12.1.2.3 Group Development<sup>19</sup>

#### 12.1.2.3.1 Group Development

When thinking about creating the environment to facilitate cooperation and collaboration, planning is important. The instructor should carefully and clearly define the learning activity and provide explanations for how students should communicate or connect to make this a cooperative activity. Tell the students acceptable ways to communicate and exchange information and materials. Is the activity to be conducted solely via email? Can students also use IM and chat to work on the project? What about phone calls? Defining the environment will help you and help the students.

Grouping strategies can help to make cooperative activities more manageable and provide structure for students. There are a variety of ways to make groups for these types of activities. Students can be grouped by areas of interest, experience with technology, topics, etc. Breaking a class into smaller learning groups and then rotating students between different groups promotes interaction and cooperation. For online courses, it is often useful to set up private space in the discussion area for these groups to meet.

<sup>19</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m17276/1.1/>>.

Tuckman (1965) described four stages of group development (forming, storming, norming, and performing) that may help students understand group development better and experience less frustration with the process.

Forming - members get to know one another, develop relationships, and explore the task .

Storming - group begins to organize tasks and divides responsibility.

Norming - members adjust individual behaviors for the good of the order; feedback, acknowledgement, and motivation increase.

Performing - members become interdependent and experience high cooperation, task orientation, and morale.

#### 12.1.2.4 Tips to Develop Reciprocity and Cooperation<sup>20</sup>

##### 12.1.2.4.1 Tips to Develop Reciprocity and Cooperation

1. Design learning activities that require collaboration.
2. Design initial interaction activities to develop trust quickly.
3. Encourage study groups.
4. Design activities that require students to work together to complete a shared document.
5. Emphasize collaboration through both the design of the course and the presentation of the content.
6. Use techniques that foster cooperation: peer reviews, group projects, learning teams, etc.
7. Encourage students to share contact information or use the Blackboard roster to seek assistance and to work on projects.
8. Many students do not know how to work in groups. Either directly teach these skills or make information available to students.
9. Consistently use language that places the expectation of cooperation and collaboration in front of the students.

### 12.1.3 Enrichment for Principle 3

#### 12.1.3.1 Enrichment for Principle 3<sup>21</sup>

##### 12.1.3.1.1 Resources

Active Learning in the Online Environment

<http://ctlactiveonline.project.mnscu.edu/><sup>22</sup>

Teach Online/ Pedagogy and Techniques/ Enlivening Techniques

[http://teachvu.vu.msu.edu/public/pedagogy/enlivening/index.php?page\\_num=2](http://teachvu.vu.msu.edu/public/pedagogy/enlivening/index.php?page_num=2)<sup>23</sup>

Virtual Resource Site for Teaching with Technology by the University of Maryland University College

<http://www.umuc.edu/virtualteaching/module1/strategies.html><sup>24</sup>

Listing, with examples, of ways to use technology for teaching and learning activities.

Incorporating Interaction into your Distance Learning Course from Worcester Polytechnic Institute

<http://www.wpi.edu/Academics/ATC/Collaboratory/Teaching/interaction.html><sup>25</sup>

Includes benefits of interaction and strategies for incorporating interaction.

Active Learning for the College Classroom by D. Paulson and J. Faust

<http://www.calstatela.edu/dept/chem/chem2/Active/main.htm><sup>26</sup>

Comprehensive listing and explanation of techniques for active learning applicable to online instruction.

<sup>20</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m17279/1.1/>>.

<sup>21</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m17269/1.2/>>.

<sup>22</sup><http://ctlactiveonline.project.mnscu.edu/>

<sup>23</sup>[http://teachvu.vu.msu.edu/public/pedagogy/enlivening/index.php?page\\_num=2](http://teachvu.vu.msu.edu/public/pedagogy/enlivening/index.php?page_num=2)

<sup>24</sup><http://www.umuc.edu/virtualteaching/module1/strategies.html>

<sup>25</sup><http://www.wpi.edu/Academics/ATC/Collaboratory/Teaching/interaction.html>

<sup>26</sup><http://www.calstatela.edu/dept/chem/chem2/Active/main.htm>

Scenes from a Classroom: making active learning work

<http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/teachlearn/tutorials/active/strategies.html><sup>27</sup>

A list of basic active learning strategies with active learning scenes (video scenarios) addressing common problems and suggested solutions.

How Interactive are YOUR Distance Courses? A Rubric for Assessing Interaction in Distance Learning by M.D. Roblyer and L. Ekhami (2000)

<http://www.westga.edu/%7Edistance/roblyer32.html><sup>28</sup>

Report on the use of a rubric to assess interaction in an online course. This tool may be a valuable addition to your assessment of your online instruction.

Using Cases in Teaching

<http://tlt.its.psu.edu/suggestions/cases/><sup>29</sup>

This site explains the anatomy of a case, provides tips for writing the case narrative and defining the assignment, and includes teaching tips.

Classroom Activities for Active Learning by University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

<http://ctl.unc.edu/fyc2.html><sup>30</sup>

General tips for Active Learning

Increasing Students' Interactivity in an Online Course by M. Cecil Smith & Amy Winking-Diaz

<http://www.ncolr.org/jiol/issues/PDF/2.3.3.pdf><sup>31</sup>

Discussion about instructional strategies for online discussion versus personal meaning making as an indicator of students' understanding.

### 12.1.3.2 Tips to Encourage Active Learning<sup>32</sup>

#### 12.1.3.2.1 Tips

1. Ask students to state their expectations for the course.
2. Some instructors require simple assignments to critique and share Websites on a particular topic or discipline. If you take the assignment a step further and require students to develop some deliverable where a group determines the critique score for each Web site - you will increase interaction and see more active learning.
3. Pose the hard discussion questions requiring critical thinking and problem solving.
4. Develop self-checking or mastery type quizzes to allow students to check their own understanding of the content.
5. Ask students to teach a particular topic within the discipline to their peers.
6. Encourage opinions supported by facts.
7. Ask students to reflect on their own learning.
8. Use simulations, case studies, role-plays, and real-life scenarios to prompt engagement with content.
9. Use peer review.
10. Develop shared writing assignments.
11. Occasionally, quote student postings as a means of summarizing a discussion.
12. Require students or groups to moderate discussion topics.
13. Constantly encourage students.

<sup>27</sup> <http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/teachlearn/tutorials/active/strategies.html>

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.westga.edu/%7Edistance/roblyer32.html>

<sup>29</sup> <http://tlt.its.psu.edu/suggestions/cases/>

<sup>30</sup> <http://ctl.unc.edu/fyc2.html>

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.ncolr.org/jiol/issues/PDF/2.3.3.pdf>

<sup>32</sup> This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m17280/1.2/>>.

## 12.1.4 Enrichment for Principle 4

### 12.1.4.1 Enrichment for Principle 4<sup>33</sup>

#### 12.1.4.1.1 Resources

Planning for Feedback in Your Distance Learning Course by The Northeast Texas Consortium

<http://www.netnet.org/instructors/design/interaction/strategies/feedback.htm><sup>34</sup>

Understanding Interactions in Distance Education: A Review of the Literature Veronica Thurmond and Karen Wambach

[http://itdl.org/journal/Jan\\_04/article02.htm](http://itdl.org/journal/Jan_04/article02.htm)<sup>35</sup>

Inside the Black Box: Raising Standards Through Classroom Assessment by Paul Black and Dylan Wiliam

<http://www.pdkintl.org/kappan/kbla9810.htm><sup>36</sup>

Discussion about the effect of formative feedback mechanisms on standards

Using Blackboard to get Student Feedback from the University of Texas

[http://www.utexas.edu/academic/diia/assessment/iar/how\\_to/technology/Bb\\_examples.php](http://www.utexas.edu/academic/diia/assessment/iar/how_to/technology/Bb_examples.php)<sup>37</sup>

Faculty members discussing ways to get increased feedback from students (video-based interviews).

Strategies for Providing Feedback by the Illinois Online Network

<http://www.ion.uillinois.edu/resources/tutorials/pedagogy/feedback.asp><sup>38</sup>

List of strategies to provide feedback to students.

### 12.1.4.2 Tips on Feedback<sup>39</sup>

#### 12.1.4.2.1 Tips on Feedback

1. Create a set of email responses to use when replying to student email. We encourage a system where you identify the content of the question (personal question, content question, assignment feedback, etc) and use a differentiated response for each. Often, telling a student you have received the information and will get a reply back in a certain time frame is enough to reinforce that you are available and that you received the message.
2. Try to return all grading in a reasonable time frame.
3. Acknowledge all student questions in some manner. Reference them to the FAQ, if you know the answer is there.
4. We encourage the use of a "code book" approach to feedback. It is relatively easy to craft generic responses to common errors in student work and to keep these responses in a document. Using some of the features available in common word processing applications allows you to paste this as a comment into the student document.
5. Set up individual student conferences via phone or chat to discuss student work.
6. Create practice tests for students that are graded by Blackboard so students can get feedback on their understanding of the content.
7. Personalize the feedback by inserting the name of the student.
8. Set aside scheduled time to read and respond to discussion postings. We encourage you to do this twice, once shortly after the board begins to respond to early postings and once later in the week to respond to those that post later.
9. Acknowledge good threads in a discussion to help students know they are on track.
10. Acknowledge exceptional postings.

<sup>33</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m17268/1.2/>>.

<sup>34</sup><http://www.netnet.org/instructors/design/interaction/strategies/feedback.htm>

<sup>35</sup>[http://itdl.org/journal/Jan\\_04/article02.htm](http://itdl.org/journal/Jan_04/article02.htm)

<sup>36</sup><http://www.pdkintl.org/kappan/kbla9810.htm>

<sup>37</sup>[http://www.utexas.edu/academic/diia/assessment/iar/how\\_to/technology/Bb\\_examples.php](http://www.utexas.edu/academic/diia/assessment/iar/how_to/technology/Bb_examples.php)

<sup>38</sup><http://www.ion.uillinois.edu/resources/tutorials/pedagogy/feedback.asp>

<sup>39</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m17278/1.1/>>.

11. Feedback includes steering a "discussion gone bad" back on topic.
12. Clearly state the grading criteria for the course.
13. Clearly state the grading criteria for individual assignments.
14. Schedule time when students can talk to you in "real time" so students can make appointments to chat online or call you on the phone.
15. Practice quizzes provide feedback to students.
16. Structure individual and group assignments requiring students to seek and apply feedback from peers.

## 12.1.5 Enrichment for Principle 5

### 12.1.5.1 Enrichment for Principle 5<sup>40</sup>

#### 12.1.5.1.1 Resources

Web Guidelines - Site Architecture and Navigation from the University of Texas

<http://www.utexas.edu/web/guidelines/sitearchitecture.html><sup>41</sup>

<http://www.utexas.edu/web/guidelines/index.html><sup>42</sup> (home page)

General information on site architecture and navigation guidelines.

Useit.com by Jakob Nielsen

[www.useit.com](http://www.useit.com)<sup>43</sup>

General site about organizing websites produced by one of the top usability/information design experts.

Navigation basics from various sources

<http://www.efuse.com/Design/navigation.html><sup>44</sup>

<http://www.webreference.com/dlab/9705/><sup>45</sup>

### 12.1.5.2 Tips to Emphasize Time on Task<sup>46</sup>

#### 12.1.5.2.1 Tips to Emphasize Time on Task

1. Indicate somewhere how much time students should spend on class activities per week.
2. Emphasize that online does not mean self-paced. You have expectations and firm due dates for assignments and activities and expect students to meet these dates.
3. Provide learning objectives for each module.
4. Structure responses to the discussion board so students are required to post well before the due date.
5. Use self-checks (graded by Blackboard) so students can check their understanding
6. Provide practice tests.
7. Create assignments requiring interaction and have firm due dates for the assignments.
8. Require students to post questions about the readings to the discussion board.
9. Use some type of point system to reward students willing to assume additional responsibility (like moderating the discussion board).
10. Make assignments and activities pertinent to the students.
11. Remind students of the time they have gained by not having to sit in class or travel to class.
12. Develop assignments that require students to submit draft assignments and to respond to your feedback on an assignment.
13. Design your course to encourage frequent interaction (student-to-student).
14. Organize your course so it is easy to navigate.

<sup>40</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m17270/1.3/>>.

<sup>41</sup><http://www.utexas.edu/web/guidelines/sitearchitecture.html>

<sup>42</sup><http://www.utexas.edu/web/guidelines/index.html>

<sup>43</sup><http://www.useit.com/>

<sup>44</sup><http://www.efuse.com/Design/navigation.html>

<sup>45</sup><http://www.webreference.com/dlab/9705/>

<sup>46</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m17275/1.1/>>.



### 12.1.5.3 Setting Priorities and Effectiveness vs. Efficiency<sup>47</sup>

#### 12.1.5.3.1 Setting Priorities and Effectiveness vs. Efficiency

##### Setting Priorities

Palloff and Pratt (2003, p. 79) provide a useful matrix to help students understand priorities.

Important but Not Urgent Important and Urgent

Not Important or Urgent Not Important but Urgent

It sometimes helps students to identify the amount of time spent on Not Important or Urgent activities. Socializing, watching television, or playing a video game are activities that use a great deal of time for little academic return. Students should schedule these into their days but some moderation is important.

Not Important but Urgent activities can be stressful for students. Often, this stress comes from some self-imposed deadline placed upon the student by themselves. Palloff and Pratt (2003, p. 80) suggest that answers to the question "What will be the consequences if I don't do this today?" may help students to understand that setting and keeping priorities is important but, everything can not be a priority. Again, moderation and planning is important.

Important but Not Urgent activities are often long-term assignments. Suggesting the use of a calendar to establish work schedules for long-term assignments may be beneficial.

Important and Urgent activities can disrupt the development of community in a distance course. If all students wait until the last minute to post or submit assignments, little time is left for reflection, analysis, and interaction.

##### Effectiveness vs. Efficiency

Using an example from Palloff and Pratt (2003, p. 82) may help students think about time management

Unimportant Things Done Well = low effectiveness but high efficiency

Important Things Done Well = high effectiveness & high efficiency

Unimportant Things Done Poorly = low effectiveness & low efficiency

Important Things Done Poorly = high effectiveness but low efficiency

### 12.1.6 Enrichment for Principle 6

#### 12.1.6.1 Enrichment for Principle 6<sup>48</sup>

##### 12.1.6.1.1 Resources and Tips to Communicate High Expectations

Pedagogy in Cyberspace: The Dynamics of Online Discourse by Xin, C., & Feenberg, A.

<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ehh&AN=24329394&site=ehost-live><sup>49</sup>

The article elaborates a model for understanding pedagogy in online educational forums.

##### Tips to Communicate High Expectations

1. Clearly state goals, learning objectives, and expectations for your course.
2. Provide real-world examples of how the content connects to the world outside the classroom.
3. Use objectives for each module or class meeting.
4. Begin each class with a question to frame the content to a real-world context.
5. Clearly state and demonstrate your expectations for quality.
6. Clearly state required participation on the discussion board.
7. Post models.
8. Model high standards in all correspondence.
9. Reinforce issues of quality while encouraging and supporting students.
10. Be enthusiastic about your content.

<sup>47</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m17277/1.1/>>.

<sup>48</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m17272/1.3/>>.

<sup>49</sup><http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ehh&AN=24329394&site=ehost-live>

## 12.1.7 Enrichment for Principle 7

### 12.1.7.1 Enrichment for Principle 7<sup>50</sup>

#### 12.1.7.1.1 Resources

Does Gender Matter Online? by M. McSporran & S. Young

[http://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&lr=&q=cache:Ft-LL1B\\_O4oJ:ace2005.unitec.ac.nz/research/ALTJpaper\\_9.pdf](http://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&lr=&q=cache:Ft-LL1B_O4oJ:ace2005.unitec.ac.nz/research/ALTJpaper_9.pdf)

Study findings indicate women scored higher than men in online coursework and provides explanation for some of these findings.

Do Gender and Learning Style Play a Role in how Online Courses Should be Designed?

<http://www.ncolr.org/jiol/issues/viewarticle.cfm?volid=4&IssueID=15&ArticleID=68><sup>52</sup>

Study findings indicate gender as a factor in the relationship between learning style and student engagement.

Introverts, Extroverts, and Achievement in a Distance Learning Environment by Offir, B., Bezalel, R. & Barth, I.

<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=25183499&site=ehost-live><sup>53</sup>

This study examined the relationship between cognitive style, based on Jung's (1971) theory, and achievement levels among 77 university students in a videoconference-based learning environment. Understanding student-related variables that affect learning also enables faculty to adapt instructions to meet the diverse needs of different students instead of adopting a "one-size-fits-all" approach to designing DL environments.

Impact of personalized learning styles on online delivery and assessment by Becker, K., Kehoe, J. & Tennent, B.

<http://www.emeraldinsight.com/Insight/viewContentItem.do?contentType=Article&contentId=1598233><sup>54</sup>

The purpose of the paper was to explore how different learning styles influence students preferences for flexible delivery and assessment methods.

Students learning styles and their preferences for online instructional methods by Butler, T., & Pinto-Zipp, G.

<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=cph&AN=22295805&site=ehost-live><sup>55</sup>

The article seeks to understand if there is a dominant learning style for students taking online classes? It was found that online students (N= 96) most dominant form of learning style was dual learning style and they preferred individual assignments and threaded discussions.

Cross-cultural Learning Styles in Higher Education

<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ehh&AN=24978816&site=ehost-live><sup>56</sup>

This paper highlights the importance of addressing the cultural and linguistic diversity of the student population in the design of online information resources, and in the planning and delivery of information literacy education.

Learning Styles: An overview of theories, models, and measures by Cassidy, S.

<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=13713883&site=ehost-live><sup>57</sup>

The paper focus on the use of Web-based learning environments for university students. The authors explored student's response times with the online environment showing that response times were based on familiarity with the learning environment, skill level and confidence with technology plus their preferred learning styles. The authors wanted to point out the importance of knowing how to adapt to individual issues when they arose while most learning environments adapts to the average learner.

Accommodating Learner Diversity in Web-based Learning.

<sup>50</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m17213/1.3/>>.

<sup>51</sup>[http://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&lr=&q=cache:Ft-LL1B\\_O4oJ:ace2005.unitec.ac.nz/research/ALTJpaper\\_9.pdf+author:%22McSporran](http://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&lr=&q=cache:Ft-LL1B_O4oJ:ace2005.unitec.ac.nz/research/ALTJpaper_9.pdf+author:%22McSporran%2C+S.+Young%22)

<sup>52</sup><http://www.ncolr.org/jiol/issues/viewarticle.cfm?volid=4&IssueID=15&ArticleID=68>

<sup>53</sup><http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=25183499&site=ehost-live>

<sup>54</sup><http://www.emeraldinsight.com/Insight/viewContentItem.do?contentType=Article&contentId=1598233>

<sup>55</sup><http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=cph&AN=22295805&site=ehost-live>

<sup>56</sup><http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ehh&AN=24978816&site=ehost-live>

<sup>57</sup><http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=13713883&site=ehost-live>

<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=12659380&site=ehost-live><sup>58</sup>

Discusses learning styles, multiple intelligences and diversity. Instructional strategies that business educators can use to ensure that all students have the opportunity to learn in their preferred style.

### 12.1.7.2 Tips on Diversity<sup>59</sup>

#### 12.1.7.2.1 Tips on Diversity

1. Recognize and reward creativity.
2. Offer alternative assignments in some areas of the course to allow students to have some control over their learning.
3. Use multiple points of assessment to gather more information on student learning.
4. Set a tone that conveys respect for diverse opinions.
5. Encourage students to seek alternative answers.
6. Understand that online coursework is difficult for some students.
7. Remain sensitive to possible cultural differences.
8. Remain open to other ways of completing assignments.
9. Be sensitive to the needs of online students and remember that many are juggling coursework with numerous other responsibilities.
10. Design activities that encourage analysis, synthesis, and application.

## 12.2 Successful Distance Education Students

### 12.2.1 Successful Distance Students<sup>60</sup>

#### 12.2.1.1 Successful Distance Students

Characteristics of Successful Online Students

The Illinois Online Network suggests ten characteristics of successful online students.

- Openmindedness about sharing experiences
- Written communication ability
- Self-motivated and self-disciplined
- Willingness to communicate when problems occur
- Willingness to commit to 4-15 hours of work per course per week
- Ability to meet minimum program requirements
- Openmindedness about applying critical thinking and decision-making to learning
- Access to a computer and connectivity to the Internet
- Willingness to thoughtfully consider ideas and issues before responding
- Belief that high quality learning is possible outside the traditional classroom

For students interested in online courses, they must have sufficient equipment and rights to access the course. Although access is improving, instructors should not assume that all students can access course materials to the same degree. This is especially true if video and audio are used throughout the course. Some students can use text-based materials just fine but do not have computer systems that can use audio and video well. The online environment allows collaboration across time and location, but it is most effective if learners are willing to share lessons from their own lived experiences and situations. Successful online students are comfortable in their ability to communicate using text. This doesn't mean that they are great writers as

<sup>58</sup><http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=12659380&site=ehost-live>

<sup>59</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m17267/1.1/>>.

<sup>60</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m17204/1.1/>>.

much as it means they work to communicate effectively by writing - clarifying misinterpretations, using cues to indicate emotion, and reading their own writings to minimize misinterpretation.

Successful online learners realize that online courses are a convenience. This realization helps them understand their responsibilities to meet course expectations and to communicate effectively, efficiently, and frequently for clarification. These learners understand that online courses are not easier and that time commitments are similar to face-to-face courses. These learners also understand the role of the instructor in online courses is more as a facilitator than as the source of all knowledge. These are the learners that begin to understand that part of the learning process resides within their control and they must seize control of the moment to impact their learning. They think deeply and critically about their responses and work to help others understand as well.

## 12.3 Resources for Web 2.0

### 12.3.1 Resources for Web 2.0<sup>61</sup>

#### 12.3.1.1 Resources for Web 2.0

Instructional Strategies for Blogging by Ruth Reynard

[http://campustechnology.com/articles/47775\\_1/](http://campustechnology.com/articles/47775_1/)<sup>62</sup>

Provides some pedagogical reasons for using blogs and covers the issue of individual learning voice

To Whom are these Texts Valuable?: An Inquiry Into Student Blogging by Kurtis Scaletta  
[http://www.inms.umn.edu/events/past/newresearch\\_2006/papers/scaletta.pdf](http://www.inms.umn.edu/events/past/newresearch_2006/papers/scaletta.pdf)<sup>63</sup>

Project report on uses of blogs by students.

Use of innovative technologies on an e-learning course by Weller, M., Pegler, C., & Mason, R.

<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=17621633&site=ehost-live><sup>64</sup>

The researchers at UK Open university studied 4 technologies used in higher education; he technologies were: blogging, audio conferencing, instant messaging and Harvard's Rotisserie system.

Content Delivery in the "Blogsphere. By Ferdig, R., & Trammell, D.

<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ704748&site=ehost-live><sup>65</sup>

In this article, the authors describe the pedagogy behind blogs. They also address the reasons why blogs should be used as one of many teaching and learning tools, as well as describe the potential benefits of blogs for educators. Drawing on their own research and teaching, they will conclude with specific strategies for using blogs in the classroom.

Podcasting and Video Integration into the Learning by Crawford, C. Environment.

<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ehh&AN=24978708&site=ehost-live><sup>66</sup>

Studies effectiveness of podcasting and videoblogging in education (PDF).

The New Student-Teacher Channel. by Harper, V.

<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=19132672&site=ehost-live><sup>67</sup>

This article reports on the potential of blogging to improve learning by boosting self-disclosure between teachers and students.

Bloggng for Enhanced Teaching and Learning by Flatley, M.

<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ehh&AN=15933535&site=ehost-live><sup>68</sup>

This article discusses the use of weblogs to enhance the group project experience of students. The study clarifies how much the teacher can learn about the students' experience of learning by using blogs. (PDF)

<sup>61</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m17205/1.1/>>.

<sup>62</sup>[http://campustechnology.com/articles/47775\\_1/](http://campustechnology.com/articles/47775_1/)

<sup>63</sup>[http://www.inms.umn.edu/events/past/newresearch\\_2006/papers/scaletta.pdf](http://www.inms.umn.edu/events/past/newresearch_2006/papers/scaletta.pdf)

<sup>64</sup><http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=17621633&site=ehost-live>

<sup>65</sup><http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ704748&site=ehost-live>

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<sup>68</sup><http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ehh&AN=15933535&site=ehost-live>

Educational Wikis: Features and Selection Criteria by Schwartz, L., Clark, S., Cossarin, M & Rudolph, J.

<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ehh&AN=13565619&site=ehost-live><sup>69</sup>

This report discusses the educational uses of the 'wiki,' an increasingly popular approach to online community development. (PDF)

Blogging AND RSS–The "What's It?" and "How To" of Powerful New Web Tools for Educators by Richardson, W. (2004).

<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=12592551&site=ehost-live><sup>70</sup>

Discusses the impact of Weblogs and Real Simple Syndication (RSS) technologies on the way students and teachers use the Internet. (HTML).

## 12.4 General Face-to-Face Teaching Tips

### 12.4.1 General Face-to-Face Teaching Tips<sup>71</sup>

#### 12.4.1.1

A Berkeley Compendium of Suggestions for Teaching with Excellence by Barbara Gross Davis, Lynn Wood, and Robert C. Wilson (1983)

<http://teaching.berkeley.edu/compendium/><sup>72</sup>

This site contains general teaching tips for the university classroom and is organized by techniques.

The Penn State Teacher II by Diane M. Enerson, R. Neill Johnson, Susannah Milner, and Kathryn M. Plank (1997)

<http://www.schreyerinstitution.psu.edu/pdf/PennStateTeacherII.pdf><sup>73</sup>

This is an organized pdf document outlining designing a class, matching objectives to methods, measuring learning, and collecting feedback to improve teaching and learning.

A Brief Summary of the Best Practices in College Teaching by Tom Drummond (2001)

<http://www2.gsu.edu/%7Ewwwctl/resources/Best%20Practices.htm><sup>74</sup>

This is an organized grouping of instructional practices organized under twelve headings:

1. Lecture Practices
2. Group Discussion Triggers
3. Thoughtful Questions
4. Reflective Responses to Learner Contributions
5. Rewarding Learner Participation
6. Active Learning Strategies
7. Cooperative Group Assignments
8. Goals to Grades Connections
9. Modeling
10. Double Loop Feedback
11. Climate Setting
12. Fostering Learner Self-Responsibility.

<sup>69</sup><http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ehh&AN=13565619&site=ehost-live>

<sup>70</sup><http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=12592551&site=ehost-live>

<sup>71</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m17206/1.3/>>.

<sup>72</sup><http://teaching.berkeley.edu/compendium/>

<sup>73</sup><http://www.schreyerinstitution.psu.edu/pdf/PennStateTeacherII.pdf>

<sup>74</sup><http://www2.gsu.edu/%7Ewwwctl/resources/Best%20Practices.htm>

## Index of Keywords and Terms

**Keywords** are listed by the section with that keyword (page numbers are in parentheses). Keywords do not necessarily appear in the text of the page. They are merely associated with that section. *Ex.* apples, § 1.1 (1) **Terms** are referenced by the page they appear on. *Ex.* apples, 1

- A** active, § 12.1.3.2(48)
- B** Blackboard, § 1.1(1), § 2.1(3), § 2.2(4), § 3.1(7), § 3.2(8), § 3.3(8), § 4.1(9), § 4.2(9), § 5.1(11), § 5.2(12), § 5.3(13), § 5.4(14), § 6.1(17), § 6.2(18), § 6.3(18), § 6.4(20), § 6.5(21), § 7.1(23), § 7.2(24), § 7.3(25), § 7.4(26), § 8.1(29), § 8.2(30), § 8.3(30), § 8.4(31), § 9.1(33), § 9.2(34), § 9.3(34), § 9.4(35), § 10.1(37), § 10.2(38), § 10.3(38), § 10.4(39), § 10.5(39), § 10.6(40), § 11.1(41), § 11.2(42)  
blended, § 12.4.1(55)  
blog, § 12.3.1(54)
- C** contacts, § 12.1.1.2(43)  
Cooperation, § 12.1.2.4(47)
- D** development, § 12.1.2.3(46)  
dialogue, § 12.1.2.2(45)  
distance, § 12.1.1.2(43)  
Distance Education, § 1.1(1), § 2.1(3), § 2.2(4), § 3.1(7), § 3.2(8), § 3.3(8), § 4.1(9), § 4.2(9), § 5.1(11), § 5.2(12), § 5.3(13), § 5.4(14), § 6.1(17), § 6.2(18), § 6.3(18), § 6.4(20), § 6.5(21), § 7.1(23), § 7.2(24), § 7.3(25), § 7.4(26), § 8.1(29), § 8.2(30), § 8.3(30), § 8.4(31), § 9.1(33), § 9.2(34), § 9.3(34), § 9.4(35), § 10.1(37), § 10.2(38), § 10.3(38), § 10.4(39), § 10.5(39), § 10.6(40), § 11.1(41), § 11.2(42)  
distance education, online learning, students, § 12.2.1(53)  
diversity, § 12.1.7.1(52), § 12.1.7.2(53)
- E** education, § 12.1.1.2(43)  
Effectiveness, § 12.1.5.3(50)  
Efficiency, § 12.1.5.3(50)  
enichment, § 12.1.3.1(47)  
enrichment, § 12.1.1.1(43), § 12.1.2.1(45), § 12.1.4.1(49), § 12.1.5.1(50), § 12.1.6.1(51), § 12.1.7.1(52)
- F** face-to-face, § 12.4.1(55)  
faculty, § 12.1.1.2(43)  
Faculty Development, § 1.1(1), § 2.1(3), § 2.2(4), § 3.1(7), § 3.2(8), § 3.3(8), § 4.1(9), § 4.2(9), § 5.1(11), § 5.2(12), § 5.3(13), § 5.4(14), § 6.1(17), § 6.2(18), § 6.3(18), § 6.4(20), § 6.5(21), § 7.1(23), § 7.2(24), § 7.3(25), § 7.4(26), § 8.1(29), § 8.2(30), § 8.3(30), § 8.4(31), § 9.1(33), § 9.2(34), § 9.3(34), § 9.4(35), § 10.1(37), § 10.2(38), § 10.3(38), § 10.4(39), § 10.5(39), § 10.6(40), § 11.1(41), § 11.2(42)  
feedback, § 12.1.4.2(49)
- G** group, § 12.1.2.3(46)
- L** learning, § 12.1.3.2(48), § 12.1.7.2(53)  
links, § 12.1.1.1(43)
- O** online, § 12.1.7.2(53)  
Online Teaching, § 1.1(1), § 2.1(3), § 2.2(4), § 3.1(7), § 3.2(8), § 3.3(8), § 4.1(9), § 4.2(9), § 5.1(11), § 5.2(12), § 5.3(13), § 5.4(14), § 6.1(17), § 6.2(18), § 6.3(18), § 6.4(20), § 6.5(21), § 7.1(23), § 7.2(24), § 7.3(25), § 7.4(26), § 8.1(29), § 8.2(30), § 8.3(30), § 8.4(31), § 9.1(33), § 9.2(34), § 9.3(34), § 9.4(35), § 10.1(37), § 10.2(38), § 10.3(38), § 10.4(39), § 10.5(39), § 10.6(40), § 11.1(41), § 11.2(42)
- P** podcast, § 12.3.1(54)  
principle2, § 12.1.2.1(45), § 12.1.2.2(45), § 12.1.2.3(46)  
principle3, § 12.1.3.1(47), § 12.1.3.2(48)  
principle4, § 12.1.4.1(49)  
principle5, § 12.1.5.1(50)  
principle6, § 12.1.6.1(51)  
principle7, § 12.1.7.1(52), § 12.1.7.2(53)  
principles, § 12.1.1.1(43)  
Priorities, § 12.1.5.3(50)  
Promising Practices, § 1.1(1), § 2.1(3), § 2.2(4)

- promisingpractices, § 12.1.7.1(52)
- R** Reciprocity, § 12.1.2.4(47)
- S** Setting, § 12.1.5.3(50)
  - strategies, § 12.1.2.2(45)
  - student, § 12.1.1.2(43)
- T** Task, § 12.1.5.2(50)
- teaching, § 12.4.1(55)
- Time, § 12.1.5.2(50)
- timeontask, § 12.1.5.2(50)
- tips, § 12.1.1.2(43), § 12.1.2.4(47),  
§ 12.1.3.2(48), § 12.1.4.2(49), § 12.1.5.2(50),  
§ 12.4.1(55)
- W** web 2.0, § 12.3.1(54)
  - wiki, § 12.3.1(54)

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