

# MOE Online Class Quality Guidelines

The following guidelines were developed by the MiraCosta Online Educators committee to inform online faculty of required elements for Distance Education classes, offer a means for instructors to develop and redesign online classes, foster conversation in departments about online instruction, and provide a foundation for improved faculty support.

## PART I: Essential elements for classes that include distance education

*Essential elements are required by the department, the district, and other mandates as included in AP 4105. Many of them can be implemented using the examples in the Good Practices section, below.*

### Instructors of online and hybrid classes must:

1. **Abide by any departmental directives in the course outline of record**, including course description, course content outline, performance objectives, assignments, methods of instruction, methods of evaluation, required materials, student learning outcomes, and any specifications of how the course is or is not to be taught as an online/hybrid section as specified in Form A.
2. **Abide by the MiraCosta syllabus checklist**, which requires the inclusion of the following (including h, i, j, and k as unique for online/hybrid classes):
  - a. Course prefix and number
  - b. Semester and year
  - c. Instructor name and contact information
  - d. Student Learning Outcomes
  - e. Program and Institutional Learning Outcomes as applicable
  - f. Required materials
  - g. Field trips or alternative assignments
  - h. Policy describing the frequency and timeliness of instructor-initiated contact
  - i. Policy describing how, where, and when instructor provides feedback
  - j. Description of how, where, and when course documents are made available to students

- k. Support services available to online students.
  - l. DSP&S statement
3. **Ensure regular effective contact** between instructor and students establishing expectations on the frequency and timelines of such contact, including frequent, quality, instructor-initiated interaction, feedback, and managing unexpected instructor absences.
  4. **Create an environment of academic integrity**, monitor progress, and track attendance.
  5. **Uphold institutional procedures** to authenticate students.
  6. **Meet the accessibility requirements** in state and federal regulations.

## PART II: Good practice in classes that include distance education

*The following are designed to help faculty apply **Chickering and Gamson's seminal Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education** to online classes. The list includes examples that will vary in their applicability across classes and disciplines, but are intended to encourage creativity and exploration.*

### 1. Encourages student-faculty contact

#### A. Providing opportunities for interaction and communication between student and instructor.

*Examples might include:* a help forum for getting information about the class, an assigned early post or activity to ensure students are active in the course, using course management system tools to monitor student engagement and achievement, synchronous online sessions, asynchronous discussion board, emails and chat.

#### B. Providing opportunities for students to contact the faculty for support.

*Examples might include:* in-person office hours; online office hours using tools such as web conferencing, chat, or other online messaging tools; email, phone, social media.

**C. Establishing a clear sense of instructor ‘presence’ in the class.**

*Examples might include:* instructor-created videos or voice, a photo of the instructor, an introduction to the instructor, instructor participation in online discussion boards as appropriate, instructor announcements.

**D. Initiating contact with students.**

*Examples might include:* reaching out to students who are falling behind, not robustly participating, and/or are failing; provide suggestions on how they will catch up; connect them with student support services.

## **2. Encourages cooperation among students**

**A. Providing opportunities for interaction and communication student to student, as appropriate to the class.**

*Examples might include:* a help forum for getting information about the class, an introductory forum to build class community, synchronous online sessions, asynchronous discussion board, group projects.

**B. Providing opportunities for collaboration among students, as appropriate to the class.**

*Examples might include:* idea generation, problem solving, peer feedback/grading exercises, group projects, open assignments.

**C. Establishing norms for appropriate interaction.**

*Examples might include:* providing examples of appropriate critical and supportive comments, sharing or collaboratively creating ground rules for communication (e.g. netiquette), encouraging broad participation and diverse viewpoints, responding/intervening when students are inappropriate or inaccurate.

## **3. Encourages active learning**

**A. Providing opportunities for interaction between student and content.**

*Examples might include:* an assigned early post or activity to ensure students are active in the course; short video lectures/screencasts; other forms of multimedia created by the instructor, a publisher, or obtained as an open educational resource.

**B. Providing opportunities for students to engage in a variety of types of learning activities.**

*Examples might include:* webquests, internet searches, presentations, group meetings, video with assessments, audio lectures, reflection, self- and

peer-assessment, activities at various levels of Bloom's Taxonomy, adaptive learning activities, etc.

#### **4. Gives prompt feedback**

**A. Including ongoing strategies to measure content knowledge and skills.**

*Examples might include:* weekly low-stakes quizzes, automatically graded assignments, quizzes, tests, or projects.

**B. Providing opportunities for students to receive appropriate feedback about their performance.**

*Examples might include:* grades, individual instructor feedback, group feedback from the instructor, peer feedback, automated feedback on objective quizzes, instructor summaries and comments in discussion forum, feedback to the class on each assignment, weekly assignments or quizzes for formative assessment.

#### **5. Emphasizes time on task**

**A. Organization and ease of navigation.**

*Examples might include:* menu organized as weeks with dates; modules organized progressively; course content organized into manageable "chunks"; consistent use of colors, fonts, icons, and other visuals to communicate information and ease navigation.

**B. Helping to focus learning time.**

*Examples might include:* providing time estimates for weekly activities to help keep students on track, creating a course calendar, pointing students to time management resources if they need them.

**C. Using available and supported technologies.**

*Examples might include:* use of Google suite, use of a learning management system, adoption of publisher materials, instructions on how to set up accounts student is required to use in the class, guidance and options for students to maintain privacy when non-MiraCosta technologies are used, links to the Student Helpdesk.

**D. Providing resources that are clearly linked to the activities on which students will be assessed.**

*Examples might include:* rubrics, grading guidelines, assignment practice, low-stakes quizzes.

**E. Linking course content and activities to student learning outcomes.**

*Examples might include:* an introduction to each module/unit of study that includes key outcomes and descriptions of how the course content and activities help students achieve the outcomes; a syllabus component or study guide that links outcomes, content, and assignments.

**6. Communicates high expectations**

**A. Providing clear class information.**

*Examples might include:* listing of learning objectives and grading policy on the syllabus; clear instructions and reminders of grading standards as each task is assigned; ensuring that outcomes, content, and assessment are aligned and made explicit; providing expectations for appropriate communication in the class; providing clear information to students at the start of the semester about how to get started in the class; regular updates and reminders to the class via announcements, email, social media.

**B. Helping students develop critical thinking and/or problem-solving skills.**

*Examples might include:* exercises applying course skills to real-world or academic problems, activities analyzing content, activities requiring students to synthesize and create, reflection and self-evaluative activities, peer instructional opportunities.

**C. Creating assignments designed to encourage students to do their best work.**

*Examples might include:* large assignments broken into multiple steps over time, activities situated in authentic contexts, assignments requiring personal perspectives and/or reflection, assignments requiring instructor or peer review of a draft, use of plagiarism detection software, assignments incorporating self-evaluation.

**7. Respects diverse talents and ways of learning**

**A. Providing content and activities supporting a variety of communication modalities and student learning preferences.**

*Examples might include:* screencasts navigating students through the class, textual explanations of video and audio material, videos of lectures or other content, providing multiple versions of material for different preferences, providing additional materials to support remedial or advanced learners, providing assignment completion options when possible to students.

**B. Ensuring content and activities are accessible to the greatest extent possible and in compliance with MiraCosta, state, federal, and accreditation policies and regulations.**

*Examples might include:* providing content material that is properly formatted/styled for assistive technologies, providing alternate text for images, providing captions and/or transcripts for videos, enabling individual learners requiring accommodation to have additional time to complete activities.

**C. Providing links and encouragement to a variety of student support services (online and on site).**

*Examples might include:* student help desk, tutoring, writing center, library, online learning orientation, counseling.

**D. Providing opportunities for students to give meaningful feedback on their experience in the class.**

*Examples might include:* mid-semester survey, student reflections on learning, open discussion.

**E. Fostering a respectful and inclusive class climate. See 2.C above.**