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Principles for Quality Online Teaching

Effective online teaching combines awareness of course design with strategies for supporting learners. The more than two million students who attend California’s community colleges are not only racially, physically, and cognitively diverse, but also face social and emotional barriers which may impact their success. Part of the California Community College mission is to serve all of these students. The following five principles articulate teaching strategies and behaviors which work hand-in-hand with the course design elements outlined in the OEI Course Design Rubric to support student success.

The principles were developed from the original @ONE Standards for Quality Online Teaching and best practices supported through current research and the input of thought leaders from the CCCs. The principles focus on the interconnections between student success and *teaching*. Underpinning the principles is a focus on continuous professional development to support growth, adapt to technological innovation, and develop teaching strategies that support California community college students.

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Effective online teachers are present within their course.

Community college students are more likely to come from underserved populations and are inclined to feelings of self-doubt in academic settings. When learning online, our students need to know they have an instructor who cares and is there to support them, and that they are part of a vibrant learning community. Effective online teachers mindfully cultivate their presence at the course level and one-on-one with students. These interactions foster a relationship based on trust, which is the foundation of a learning community.

This principle underscores:

- Evaluating and incorporating digital tools to support the development of a learning community;
 - Providing a supportive environment for all learners;
 - Incorporating tools and activities to support student-to-student interaction and presence;
 - Using multiple tools to support instructor-to-student interaction.
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2

Effective online teachers apply equitable methods to promote student access and success while acknowledging institutional obstacles.

Students find purpose in their learning process when they can connect with the instructor, and when learning objectives and the course content connect with their personal experiences. Applying equitable methods promotes student access and success while acknowledging institutional obstacles. This principle addresses learning barriers in the online learning environment and introduces effective practices to improve equitable outcomes across disciplines, moving us toward equity-minded online classrooms that are welcoming, supportive, and student-centered.

This principle enables:

- Developing culturally aware course content and assessments, and inclusive pedagogies;
- Supporting students as they navigate institutional expectations while enhancing their digital literacy;
- Improving students' sense of belonging and increasing engagement;
- Building capacity for creating equity-minded institutions;
- Aligning online teaching and learning to college success plans

3

Effective online teachers respond to student needs and use data for continuous course improvement.

Effective teaching is inherently dynamic. Each time we teach a course, present a lecture, or engage our students in a learning activity, we *teach* when we respond to student questions and feedback “in the moment.” Effective teachers use experience to modify a lesson from semester to semester. Great online courses are not simply copied from semester to semester without significant changes, or allowed to run on autopilot, but rather are taught dynamically and improved with each iteration.

This principle supports:

- Applying student self-assessment to guide learning opportunities;
 - Using formative and summative assessment and course analytics to monitor student interaction and learning and responding appropriately;
 - Leveraging communication tools to support student success;
 - Developing plans for improving courses each time they are taught.
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4

Effective online teachers teach and model ethical online interaction, while helping students develop digital literacy that will poise them for success.

In the connected era, students will be most successful after college if they have a digital presence that promotes their unique abilities and strengths. Online instructors are poised to play a powerful role in the development of our students’ digital footprint. Students aspire to be like their instructors who actively model safe and professional use of digital tools and resources. Effective online teachers understand that engaging students in the web is an important part of becoming digitally literate and, as such, learning is not tied to a textbook.

This principle emphasizes:

- Developing one’s own professional digital presence;
- Using and remixing digital Open Educational Resources (OER) to facilitate active learning;
- Establishing a learning culture that promotes curiosity and critical examination of online resources while fostering digital literacy and media fluency;
- Providing opportunities for students to create content that can be shared outside of a learning management system;
- Fostering a learning environment that encourages students to connect with and learn from a global audience.

5

Effective online teachers recognize ongoing professional development is a central component of their success.

Because technology is dynamic, our understanding of the most effective and responsive means to connect with students must be as dynamic.

Ongoing professional development, then, is a central component to effective online teaching.

Within the CCC ecosystem, some ways faculty can meet this principle are by:

- Participating in the CCC community of practice, including, but not limited to, CCC sponsored webinars, blogs, newsletters, and social media;
- Attending conferences focused on online teaching, including the Online Teaching Conference and other in person events;
- Engaging in ongoing professional development for online instructors;
- Sharing in discipline-specific conversations about online teaching.

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