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- LMC & 4CD Distance Education Documents

- ▶ [Distance Education Charter \(Working Draft\)](#),  May 2014
- ▶ [LMC Distance Education Strategic Plan](#) , February 2010
- ▶ [LMC Strategic Plan Update \(Working Draft\)](#),  May 2014
- ▶ [LMC Substantive Change Proposal](#) , December 2012
- ▶ [4CD Distance Education Council Charge](#),  May 2014
- ▶ [4CD Learning Management System Work Group Charter](#),  March 2014
- ▶ [LMC Distance Education Policy](#), September 2008
- ▶ [LMC Distance Education Best Practices](#), August 2008
- ▶ [Position Paper for Online Education at LMC](#),  March 2004

+ Research Articles on Distance Education & Case Studies

+ Accessibility Information

- Guidelines, Surveys, Standards & Recommendations for Distance Education

- ▶ [ACCJC Accreditation Reference Handbook: Policy on Distance Education and on Correspondence Education](#),  (page 52) June 2013
- ▶ [ACCJC Guide to Evaluating Distance Education and Correspondence Education](#),  June 2013
- ▶ [Academic Senate for the California Community Colleges, Ensuring the Appropriate Use of Educational Technology](#),  Adopted Spring 2008
- ▶ [California Code of Regulations](#),  Title 5 CA ADC § 55200 - § 55210. Article 1. Distance Education
- ▶ [California Community Colleges Distance Education Accessibility Guidelines](#), January 2011
- ▶ [Guidelines for Required Instructional Materials in the California Community Colleges](#) , January 2013
- ▶ [Board Policy Report on Student Authentication](#),  Oct 10, 2013
- ▶ [CCC Student Authentication Summary Report](#) , 2011-12

- Distance Education Organizations, Training & Resources

- ▶ [Academic Senate for the California Community Colleges, CURRICULM: Distance Education](#) 
- ▶ [Association of College and Research Libraries \(ACRL\) Distance Learning Section](#) 
- ▶ [California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office: Distance Education Division](#) 

DISTANCE EDUCATION BEST PRACTICES GUIDE

Los Medanos College

Developed in conjunction with the Distance Education Committee
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INTRODUCTION

There are three major documents supporting online instruction at Los Medanos College.

1. *Distance Education policies and procedures* – The parameters under which online instruction operates at LMC.
2. *Distance Education Best Practices* – Practical guidance in instructional design and pedagogy for your online course.
3. *Blackboard handbook* – Step by step instructions for the most of the tasks you'll undertake with Blackboard, the course management system (CMS) currently being used by LMC.

This is the Distance Education Best Practices Guide. We have worked diligently over the years to develop better online classes to serve the demand for completely and partially online classes, and the needs of our online students. Currently, LMC offers over 40 completely online classes. Also, many of our "face to face" classes are enhanced with an online component.

Online instruction is really all about four things:

1. Designing - A rich, accessible ONLINE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT.
2. Fulfilling - The Course Objectives.
3. Creating - A dynamic LEARNING COMMUNITY which engages and sustains the class.
4. Interacting - With your students frequently and effectively.

We have designed these guidelines to be a process as well as a reference. Whatever your subject area, these strategies for success will help you design and teach a "best practices" online class. We discuss BEST PRACTICES in the order you will need them, as you begin to develop your own "best possible" online class right from the start.

This document is a work in progress. Let us know if you have other best practices strategies which should be added to this document!

I. WHY DESIGN AND TEACH AN ONLINE CLASS ?

Designing an online class requires extra work, especially at the beginning. Here are some reasons to train, design and teach online through LMC:

- *Institutional Support* LMC fully supports its faculty driven effort to provide more high quality completely online and partially online (also referred to as hybrid) classes to its students.
- *Active SGC approved and supported Distance Education Committee* LMC has an active and dynamic Distance Education committee which meets twice a month on Mondays from 12:30 – 2:00 pm in Room 409. Contact Margaret Hertstein to be added to the mailing list: mhertstein@losmedanos.edu
- *Trained facilitators and certified and degreed instructors* LMC offers many Blackboard and Online Education flex activities and Online Education courses to help newcomers get started, and support existing online instructors in their desire to improve.
- *Blackboard classrooms:* LMC uses Blackboard, the most widely used Course Management System (CMS). Blackboard is used by many of our transfer institutions and feeder high schools. It is intuitive and "forgiving"; both faculty and students will find it consistent, predictable, and easy to navigate.
- *Online office hours proportionate to your online load* LMC offers online instructors the ability to have office hours proportionate to their online load.
- *Demand for online classes from our diverse student population* in East Contra Costa County, and elsewhere. Due to our population boom in East County and the consequent traffic problems, online classes are in demand by students in our service area . Many online classes fill early.
- *LMC's reputation* for well designed and highly interactive online classes.
- *Enjoy the immediacy and interactivity of the "Online Learning Community"* which you create with your online students as they explore their unlimited opportunities to learn.
- *Enjoy the ease and effectiveness* of interacting with your students 24/7.
- *Acquire valuable new skills and pedagogy* teaching online classes. Many adjunct teachers are becoming excellent and enthusiastic online instructors in order to fill the demand for online teachers – and eliminate those hours on the freeway.

II. WHAT DO WE MEAN BY "BEST PRACTICES"?

"Best Practices" is a term we use to describe an ongoing body of the most innovative, up-to-date and effective ways to design and teach online classes. Over the years we have developed the following Best Practices Guidelines as we learn from our Distance Education Committee colleagues, from our graduate coursework, from such excellent resources as California Virtual Campus (<http://www.cvc.edu>) and Sloan Consortium (<http://www.sloan-c.org>) and from our own shared experience designing and teaching online classes.

Like Sloan C's "Effective Practices" site, this Best Practices guideline is a work in progress. It is meant to be a living document, and we invite and encourage online instructors to contribute to its continual updating and improvement.

III. BEST PRACTICES: PROCESS AND TIMELINE

What follows is a checklist of such "Best Practices" which we hope will be useful to you. They are arranged in the order you will need to develop, approve, design, market and teach your online class. Get help and advice from your department and the Distance Education Committee. Also find out the due dates by which you will need to submit your COOR (Course Outline of Record) and Online Supplement to the COOR in order to get your class approved by the LMC Curriculum Committee. There is an "at a glance" Best Practices Checklist on page 26 of this document, for quick reference. It is cross-referenced with this timeline for your convenience.

A. About a year before you begin to design your online course...

DO SOME RESEARCH, TAKE SOME COURSEWORK, AND DEVELOP INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT FOR YOUR ONLINE CLASS. A year or more ahead of the date you wish to offer your online class, you should:

1. *Do some research.* Browse through the online course catalogue at California Virtual Campus: <http://www.cvc.edu> to see what other colleges are offering. If you can, get permission from someone in your department or through California Virtual Campus to observe a good online class in your discipline.
2. *Take coursework in Online Teaching.* Complete a course, flex session or other instruction in the design, pedagogy, and teaching of an online course. This can be offered here at LMC (using Blackboard), or elsewhere, through another accredited program such as those of Foothill College (Etudes) or Cerro Coso College. These programs offer Certificates in Online Teaching at a modest fee. One of the best Certificate in Online Teaching programs is offered through [CSUEB](#); it is a one year, 20 quarter unit certificate which may be applied to their M.S. in Online Teaching and Learning. CSUEB also uses Blackboard.
3. *Shadow an experienced online teacher's online class, from start to finish.* Ask an experienced online instructor – preferably in your Department - if you can shadow his or her class and observe its design and operation.
4. *Work with your Department, and get their input and approval to offer your class online.* Discuss with your dept. chair and other members what courses they most need to go online. Most Departments are eager to have at least a few classes online. But some courses work better than others in the online environment and some departments have developed guidelines, such as which and how many online classes to offer.
5. *Work with your Dean, to get manager-level advice and support for your course.*

Work with your managers *before* you submit the Course Outline of Record to them - make sure they know you are working with your department and others who can help you develop the best possible course. Let them know how this course will serve students in your department, why you feel it is needed, and how it will fit into your department's program.

6. *If you are designing an online version of an existing class*, read the existing Course Outline of Record to determine what the course level learning outcomes are and think about how to meet these objectives in an online classroom. Read the models of our Online Supplements on the Curriculum Committee web page for reference. <http://www.losmedanos.edu/intra-out/cur/default.asp> and adapt them as your templates.
7. *If you are designing an entirely new online class*; read the models of new online class Course Outline of Record on the [Curriculum Committee Webpage](#) and adapt them as templates. LMC also offers Flex Workshops in COOR design. You may want to offer your new online class as a 900, or experimental class. Ask your department chair, your dean, and an experienced online instructor for help as well.
8. *Complete the Online Supplement to the COOR*. Before you are ready to submit the COOR for department approval, you will need to submit The Online Supplement to the Distance Education Committee for review and assistance. This Online Supplement will document how you will maintain regular, effective student teacher contact and demonstrate how the course level student learning outcomes (CSLO's) can be met in an online classroom. Various models of online supplements can be found on the [Curriculum Committee Webpage](#).
9. *You are now ready to begin building your online class*. It is time to request a Blackboard Classroom from our System Administrator. Please contact our System Administrator, currently Clayton Smith (csmith@losmedanos.edu), when you want to start building your online classroom.
10. *Please use a Blackboard classroom here at LMC*. Our students are familiar with Blackboard; many of them already know how to use it, as they have used it in high school, as well as LMC, and can access all of their Blackboard classrooms from one place, the "My Courses" page. Blackboard is intuitive, easy to use, and contains all the features which instructors and students need in one online system. In addition, many of our transfer institutions, such as CSUEB, use Blackboard. We are giving students "Blackboard" skills they will find useful for many years.

11. Read *Building Learning Communities in Cyberspace* by Dr. Rena Pailoff and Dr. Keith Pratt. This is essential reading – and one of the most inspiring books on the value of online teaching, and of creating an online community in your classroom.

B. Six months or so ahead of start date: design and “frontload” your classroom

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER: “FRONTLOADING” YOUR ONLINE CLASSROOM

Once you have gathered ideas and support from all your resources, you will want to begin designing and “frontloading” your classroom. The design of the online course should promote ease of access, navigation, interactivity, and stimulate individual and [collaborative and constructivist learning](#). Course design should accommodate as many learning styles as possible. Consistent and logical design will help your students “click” easily to find what they need. Blackboard classrooms are simple and user-friendly; students can easily click through the navigational buttons on the left side of the screen to find what they need: Announcements, Faculty, Course Documents, Discussion Board, Communications, Class Tools. Instructors can vary the titles of these buttons if they wish – for example, rename “Course Documents” as “Lessons and Handouts”. You may wish to change “Faculty” to your own name.

Here are some suggestions for designing a “best practices” online classroom. Think about some of the good courses you’ve observed, the books you’ve read, the sites you’ve visited, the classes you have taken --- as you design and “frontload” (add content to) your new classroom.

1. *Consistency and redundancy are good things*. Be consistent and redundant in your classroom design, weekly schedule and overall format. Help your students by making due dates, visual format, and keywords reliable and *predictable* throughout the course. All weekly assignments, for example, might be due at the same time, same date, such as 11pm Sunday night. Students also *need* redundancy and reminders; they appreciate seeing the same information in the Announcements Page, the Discussion Board forum, and in a weekly email reminder. Copy/paste your info from one form to another; if you need to update, update the Announcements Page as well as the Discussion Board. Discrepancies cause confusion.

2. *Students also appreciate careful, redundant step-by-step directions.* Before the first day of class, for example, you might want to email a WELCOME TO CLASS letter to your students, with step-by-step directions for logging into class and posting their Introductions and Replies in the Week One Forum on the Discussion Board. It's important to encourage students to socialize right from the beginning, to help them create their online community. You might also encourage students to find a study partner after they've introduced themselves, and partner up with an online classmate if possible.
3. *Good design pleases the eye, and stimulates learning.* You might want to post an eye catching Course Banner on your Announcements Page, and change it weekly. You don't want to post a large banner, as it will obscure your weekly Announcements. Eye-catching Course Banners can amplify your weekly assignment as well as engage critical thinking and the imagination. For example, if you are teaching a unit on the novel Tracks, by Louise Erdrich, you might post a photo the author in your classroom, and add a link to her biography at the top of your Announcements Page. JPG, GIF, or PNG image files can be uploaded into Blackboard.
4. *How do you organize your "content" buttons and your "tool" buttons so that students can find what they need quickly?* Blackboard offers a lot of options. We can re-title buttons, or we can use the given titles. We generally post the Course Syllabus and Course Overview under "Course Information". Your syllabus should contain class description, plagiarism and add/drop policies, learning objectives, grading system, and contact information, just like your "f2f" syllabus. Your Course Overview should give students a detailed outline of all weekly assignments, due dates, and grade points for the entire semester. "Frontloading" your Course Information in this way helps your students manage their time, schedule their work, and prepare for each week's assignment in advance.
5. *Colorful content attracts the eye, arouses interest in the assignment, and provides accessibility.* Blackboard now has many design features which are easy to use. You can type attractive, formatted text into the Discussion Board, Announcements, Course Information, and other content areas, and include images in the text as well as hyperlinks, using the icons on the toolbar. You don't need to use Frontpage or Dreamweaver to create these attractive, accessible pages, though as you become comfortable with your online classrooms you may wish to use such applications.

7. *Good design is also logical and consistent.* It's a good idea to provide step-by-step instructions, whether it's a new task, or a familiar one. Students will appreciate your "click here, then here, then here" instructions, no matter how computer savvy they are. Here's an example of step-by step "log in" directions which you can use to show students access your Blackboard classroom:

HERE'S HOW TO LOG INTO YOUR BLACKBOARD CLASSROOM

1. To access your online classroom go to: <http://online.losmedanos.edu>
2. Click on the User Login button
3. Enter your USERNAME (first initial + full last name + last 3 digits of your Student ID # such as pgarcia123) in the USERNAME text box
4. Enter your PASSWORD (your birth date – such as 070476 if you had been born on July 4, 1976) in the PASSWORD text box
5. Click on the LOGIN button.
6. Under the MY COURSES box, click on the link to ENGL 100 - College Composition (FA 08, #0001)
7. You are now on our ANNOUNCEMENTS page! Read the ANNOUNCEMENTS carefully and follow instructions. Spend at least 2 hours browsing through your new online classroom on the first day: read your HANDOUTS, your DISCUSSION BOARD and your CLASS TOOLS

C. Three months or so ahead of start date – check your new classroom for ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) Compliance, and make changes if necessary.

GOOD DESIGN CREATES ACCESSIBILITY AS WELL AS EASE OF USE.

While [Blackboard is entirely in compliance](#) with [ADA Online Classroom Guidelines](#) (Americans with Disabilities Act), there are also a number of best practices design strategies which you can use to make your class even more accessible and easy to use. Good design will help all your students find what they need, and use what they find.

Here are some tips to make your class more accessible to everyone:

1. Advise students of accessibility strategies such as those on their "View" menu, which will enlarge the font on a web page or reposition the page on their screen.
2. If you create links to other websites, make sure they offer accessibility options such as "rollover" descriptions, audio clips, long underlined, brightly colored links, large type, and "chunked" script, such as the script you're reading now.

3. Advise students to print out their course documents if needed, and show them how reduce large type, eliminate images, and select/copy/paste the document to a new page of Word, to reduce its size -- then print it out. Remember how you hate to read online? So do your students.
4. Advise students to take a break from the screen and rest their eyes frequently.
5. Blackboard offers an extensive handbook on accessibility, with many ideas you can easily integrate into your classroom:
<http://www.blackboard.com/company/accessibility.aspx>
6. For additional assistance with accessibility contact the DSPTS office/High Tech Specialist at 439-2181 x3279

D. Three months ahead of start date: Designing for “community”

GOOD DESIGN CREATES COMMUNITY

You will know when your online class is really starting to click when you see students “meeting” in your “Student Union” area, communicating frequently with you and their peers, helping each other, emailing you to get clarification on assignments, and generally making sure that the class works for everyone.

Good design can help foster online community in your class, and increase student retention and success. Students who feel connected to each other will stay in an online class, and collaborate, and succeed.

Here are some ideas to help you develop a sense of sociability, fun and community in your online classroom:

3. *Create a “Student Union” area* at the top of your Discussion Board, and call it “Café 100” or “Student Union”. Tell students that this is their “place in space” to meet, recruit workshop partner or group members, or just to “meet” your study buddy and talk about the assignment.
4. *Create a Student Services area* where your students can find links and contact numbers for LMC’s Reading Writing Center, Counseling Center, EOPS, Library, Transfer Center and Scholarship Office.

5. *You might also design an “LMC Orientation” assignment in your Student Services area, which gives points for finding and making an appointment with a counselor, or doing a campus "treasure hunt" to find campus resources, collect information on campus as well as online, and then share what they find out about LMC Student Services resources.*
6. *Create a “HELP!” Forum on your Discussion Board where students can go to ask for and offer help - where the experienced students can guide the “newbies”.*
7. *Design and teach Team Projects to be posted on your Discussion Board. Assign team leaders and specific tasks. Build your projects with specific goals and outcomes in mind, and give teams a specific time schedule for completing tasks. Group projects can promote collaborative learning and community. Or they can create division and complaints. Ask Team Leaders to report any problems immediately, and not to try to handle “shirkers” or “obsessive” members themselves. Blackboard allows you to create Groups with separate email, discussion board, and chat, where teams can meet and discuss their work. Team leaders may wish to manage Group Rooms for their projects.*
8. *Schedule weekly virtual chats using Blackboard’s collaboration feature. Half hour chats can help a class ask questions and participate in a lively guided discussion, with an almost face to face class level of interactivity. Chats create community, but they should be optional and extra credit, since scheduling issues will always leave some students out. But you can schedule half the chats on Wednesday nights, and half the chats Thursday nights, to accommodate as many students as possible. Chats can also be recorded so that those who can’t attend can get a sense of the discussion.*
9. *Teach and model respect, courtesy, tolerance and inclusiveness. In your course syllabus make it clear that class bullies or insensitive language toward any person or group will not be tolerated. Monitor your Discussion Boards to see if there are any trouble spots. Make your classroom a safe place to discuss readings and issues, as you would your on-campus classroom. Build in content which explores multicultural themes, honors women and people of color, and encourages research in issues of gender, class, and educational equity. One of the fascinating aspects of the online classroom is that we don't know what our students look like, or even what gender they may be. While this is sometimes this is a distinct advantage, it can also allow us to forget how diverse our students are, or the issues of diversity in the larger "real life" community for which we are preparing them.*
10. *Accommodate diverse learning styles. Use every strategy you can to accommodate visual, aural and kinesthetic learning, as well as verbal learning. Most students need a number of different approaches. The online classroom and*

the Internet are rich in resources. Don't forget to post step-by-step instructions for accessing these resources.

11. *Include student ideas and suggestions in the class process.* Include a "Suggestions Box" in your Discussion Board. Ask students for suggestions and help – encourage them to collaborate with you in creating this online community. One of the mottos of online teaching has become "guide on the side; not sage on the stage." Create your own evaluations for students to fill out mid semester and at the end of semester. Use their ideas, and thank them for helping you improve the class.
12. *Use graphs, images templates, outlines and models in your handouts.* Design your content with more "scaffolding" – more visual aids, more student assignment models, such as good student essays. Rely more on templates, step-by-step instructions, suggested outlines, process lists and checklist pages than you might in your face to face class. Include links to online handbooks and study skills sites such as the Online Writing Lab and other resources.
13. *Create a brief informative lesson for each weekly or bi-weekly assignment* and post these lessons in sequence in Course Documents or Assignments. Perhaps change the "Assignments" button title to "Lessons and Handouts". Parts of your lesson can be quickly copied and pasted on to your Announcements Page, a Discussion Board Forum, and into an email reminder message at the beginning of the week or unit. Students would then have potentially four contact places to learn about the assignment, the due dates, etc.
14. *Save time later! "Frontloading" an online class like this does take time...* but much of what you do now will save you time later in this class and in future classes. Many, if not most, online instructors simply "roll over" their online classrooms from one semester to the next – have a copy of the classroom created for the subsequent semester.
15. *Use your imagination! You know your own classes and teaching style best!* Think of all the ways you prepare your present syllabus, course overview, lesson plans and resources to provide a systematic, cumulative learning experience for your students in your face to face classes. How can you translate all your "style" and teaching expertise into an online classroom? What are the advantages of an online environment? The disadvantages? How can we design an online classroom to approximate, and in some ways surpass, a face to face classroom in terms of student interest and success?

E. Two months before your class starts: Marketing and Outreach

EARLY OUTREACH AND MARKETING CAN HELP YOU BUILD ENROLLMENT AND IMPROVE STUDENT SUCCESS AND RETENTION

Let's assume that your new online class has been approved by your department, the Curriculum Committee, and scheduled for the following semester. You've designed it carefully and "frontloaded" it with your content. Congratulations! Now you should start marketing and reaching out to new and prospective online students. Online education is inherently competitive, as you know; students can go to <http://www.cvc.edu> and take any online course in the state of California for the same tuition. It is worth a little effort to market your class before it is officially opened for enrollment. While many online classes fill quickly, a new online class with an unfamiliar faculty name may have a bit more trouble enrolling. There are a number of ways of marketing your new class:

1. *In the print schedule* Be sure the Schedule Descriptor is clear and inviting. You can also arrange a quarter page display ad in the Schedule of Classes for your new class with enough lead time. Contact the Marketing Department (x3245) or your Department Chair for the requirements and relevant due dates.
2. *Post flyers on and off campus.* Post flyers around campus and mail them to local libraries and cafes and request them to "post and distribute" your flyers.
3. *List your new online class in the CVC catalogue.* Make sure your new totally online class is listed in the [California Virtual Campus](#) course catalogue. Contact our Blackboard System Administrator, Clayton Smith, to make sure your new online class is listed.
4. *Email your former Blackboard students.* If you have taught hybrid or partially online classes using Blackboard, you can still access your former students' email addresses. You can use the Blackboard email feature in these previous classrooms to notify former students that you are teaching online classes which they may be interested in taking.
5. *Free newspaper ads.* You can place a free ad with [Backpage.Com](#) and place it in the "classes/workshops" section to attract online students in the Bay Area.

F. Two weeks before your class starts: Outreach to New Students

EMAIL YOUR NEW STUDENTS WITH A “WELCOME LETTER”

At about this time students already enrolled in your class will have been placed in your Blackboard classroom. Communicate with them by using the email feature in Blackboard. In addition, their email addresses will appear on your Web Advisor class roster, which you should check frequently for new names. It is a good idea to contact your online students ahead of the start date:

1. *Early outreach builds trust and creates community.* Consider placing in the schedule descriptor an instruction to have students email you as soon as they enroll. While some students will contact you, most will not. You want to welcome all of your students to their new class and send them their First Day Handout (Course Syllabus and Overview) as much as a month ahead of the class start date, so they know what to expect in your class. You will save yourself and your students much time, and avoid many problems if you do so.
2. *Early outreach assures that your students are prepared to take an online class.* Few new online students know how demanding online classes are, in terms of technology requirements, self discipline, motivation, and time management. You will increase their chances of success and retention if you have students respond to a questionnaire such as this one: [ARE YOU READY FOR AN ONLINE CLASS?](#). Such a questionnaire will alert students to the rigors of online learning, and prepare them for the demands of your online class.
3. *Early outreach builds enrollment.* Students who have had early email contact with the instructor are pleased and surprised at this interaction. They will often tell their peers about your class and build enrollment.
4. *How to “harvest” email addresses for early outreach:* You may use your Web Advisor roster to harvest student email and snail mail addresses. It may take about fifteen minutes to do this, but you will save yourself time and avoid problems later. Your task as an online teacher is much easier if your students are *prepared* to learn as soon as your class starts. Early outreach builds community, enrollment, student success, and student retention.

G. Start date: strategies for building community, improving retention and student success from “Day One”

FIRST DAY OF CLASS

The first day of class is hectic and exciting, just like the first day of an on-campus class. No matter how well you have prepared them, a number of “lost” students will email you frantically that they cannot log in, or they don’t know where the online class meets, or they can’t afford the textbook, and do you have a lab copy (you should have several on file at your department office, in fact). Answering these emails quickly, kindly, with a bit of humor and a silly smiley face emoticon may make the difference as to whether that student stays in class or disappears.

You continually need to show students that you're *there*, and that you are *engaged* in their learning. The more you can personalize, humanize, and face to face their online learning experience, the better. Email and the Internet can make this goal easy and convenient for both student and instructor. Here are a few other Day One “must do” items:

1. *Be sure to make your classroom available.* From your classroom’s Control Panel select Settings, then select Availability, click on the Available radio button and click on the Submit button.
2. *Make sure your student emails are correctly entered into the Blackboard system.* It’s worth your time to get students to correct their email addresses on the first day of class. You will know whether you have “bad” email addresses when they get returned to you by the dreaded “Mailer Demon”. Send your “bad” email holders a snail mail letter giving them directions how to log into class and correct their email address immediately. You will be able to access your students’ snail mail addresses via Web Advisor. Here is a “step-by-step” which you may copy/paste into your “bad email” letter and also onto your Announcements Page:

Please be sure your email address is correctly entered into your Blackboard Classroom:

- 1) **Log into class**
- 2) **Click on Tools Button**
- 3) **Click on Personal Information**
- 4) **Click on Edit My Personal Information**
- 5) **Enter the correct email in the email field**
- 6) **Click on Submit - and you’re done!**

3. *Make sure all your students have these three things* in their inbox on the morning of “Day One”:
 - Welcome to Class + Step by Step log in instructions
 - Course Syllabus – office hours, policies, contact information
 - Course Overview – detailed week by week assignment schedule
4. *Have an “Introductions” forum for your first week’s assignment.* Ask students to introduce themselves in a paragraph or so, and reply to their colleagues. This assignment builds community while also getting them used to using the discussion board. Consider asking them to post photos of themselves if they can. You might construct an “each one reach one” kind of “ice breaker” in which students must interview each other and then “report” to the class on their partner’s goals, interests, and affiliations. You might assign a “workshop partner” post requiring students to choose a partner to share the results of their campus resources “treasure hunt” (see below)
5. *Consider assigning an orientation “treasure hunt” of online and on campus LMC Resources,* with questions such as “Where is the Transfer Center?”, “What is an “Ed Plan” and “How do you make an appointment with a counselor?”. Studies show that students who have regular contact with a counselor and an Education Plan are more likely to succeed and transfer than those who don’t.
6. *Make sure that the Course Syllabus, Course Overview and First Day Handouts are posted in your “Lessons and Handouts” area and that your Discussion Board Forum correlates with your Course Overview.*
7. *Answer first week student “help!!” questions as soon as possible.* These are moments of panic for the student – they need answers a.s.a.p. – from you and/or their peers. Much of the information they need at this point can be copied and pasted from your Announcements Page instantly into your reply message. Prompt replies to these emails can prevent frustration, panic – and drop-outs.

H. Early semester strategies for success (yours and theirs)

Here is a checklist of strategies which will help you create and sustain a vital "learning community" in your online class, and help students succeed, from in the early weeks of class:

1. *Project your own friendly, humorous, sympathetic personality through cyberspace.* You're lively and personable in your on campus classes...find ways to translate your humor and kindness through cyberspace. Develop what is called an "e-personality" and project it through your email, class announcements, grading responses and other forms of communication. Be extra friendly, kind, humorous, spontaneous, flexible and understanding, especially at first. Use emoticons. Use informal language. This is hard stuff for your new online students. They are stressed out enough, already.
2. *All of your winning face to face classroom qualities and expertise can make it through cyberspace to assure your students that you are a real, caring person, who wants to help them succeed.* Email replies can be brief and immediate. Just answer them as quickly as possible, straight to the point, maybe with a friendly emoticon smile near your signature.
3. *Monitor and participate in your Introduction Discussion Board Forum.* Post and contribute a paragraph or two about yourself, and a photo, to an Introduction forum for the first week's assignment. Give your students a chance to get to know each other, and the classroom. Meet and greet them each by name, and invite them to post pictures as attachments.
4. *Monitor and participate in each of your weekly or bi-weekly Class Discussions on the Discussion Board.* You don't have to reply to each and every student – just guide the discussion a bit, and add information, questions, links and resources, as you would in a face to face classroom discussion. Encourage students to answer other students' questions before stepping in. Summarize or redirect a discussion as needed.
5. *Invite student emails, and post your "protocols" for email courtesy.* Ask students always to include their name, the class and section number in each email message to you. Assure them that you will answer email a.s.a.p. – within one business day.
6. *Ask experienced online students to help the "newbies".* Encourage students to ask for help from their peers, leaving messages in their "Café 100" forum. Help them reach out to each other for help and assignment clarification, if possible.
7. *Consider adding students until the end of the Add period for online classes.* Online classes usually suffer higher attrition, and a full roster two weeks into class will assure better enrollment and retention numbers, and higher class morale.
8. *Schedule one or more face to face orientation meetings.* Partially online or hybrid classes allow students and instructor plenty of face to face interaction and

online classes can benefit from two or three face to face meetings, especially near the beginning of the semester.

9. *Create a photo gallery with names and face.* Some online teachers take digital photographs of each student at a face to face orientation meeting and post them in a “gallery” forum on the discussion board, and invite students to add a brief biography and perhaps a website or myspace.com URL if they wish.
10. *You don't have to grade everything.* You might want to assign an optional ungraded “class discussion post” now and then, in place of a graded assignment post. These class discussions can be the most intense learning experiences in the virtual classroom, just like face-to-face discussions. They offer students a class participation experience which has several advantages: shy students often participate more online in an asynchronous ongoing discussion than they would in a face to face real time discussion, the discussion is ongoing, 24/7 - students and instructor can post at their convenience, and read other posts at their convenience
11. *Praise good posts and good participation.* Praise students for “showing what they know” in class participation. Students need to know their comments are acknowledged and appreciated. Online classes do require lots of participation – and every post shows how well students think, deliberate, and write – as well as what they have read and learned. Students must quote good sources, add links and in-text citations to document their research and “show what they know” – in every post, whatever the content of the class. Exceptional posts might earn an “EXCELLENT POST, MS X” from the instructor, for all their classmates to read, model and admire.
12. *Try to maintain a timely response regimen with regard to grading assignments.* Don't assign so many tasks that you don't have time to give feedback and grade students fairly and in a timely manner. Bi-weekly graded assignments may better serve the online student and class than weekly assignments. Try to post grades within a week or two after the due date, as you would in a face to face class.

13. *Mid term Student Evaluations.* Give students a chance to let you know how the class is going for them, and to express their comments anonymously. A discussion board forum can be set up in Blackboard to allow anonymous posts. Read and respond to comments by making changes if appropriate and necessary. Listen to your students; this is their class, their learning experience, which everyone is "constructing" together. (One of the slogans for online learning describes the instructor as "Guide on the side, not sage on the stage.") Thank them for feedback and make changes if necessary. Ask these questions, minimally:

1. How is the class working for you?
2. What do you like about the class?
3. What needs improvement?
4. Other comments?

14. *"Total Points So Far" updates.* Send out weekly or bi-weekly grade updates, if you use the point system; tell students how many points are now possible, and direct them to divide their total points by the class total points to determine their grade so far. Students should always be aware of their status in the class. Students can access their grades via the Tools button in the Blackboard classroom.

15. *Solicit "grade review" requests.* Invite students to contact you by email or chat if they need grade consultation. Encourage students always to ASK FOR HELP. Online students can so easily disappear into cyberspace without this kind of personal attention from the instructor. It costs you very little in terms of time; and it may save your students, and your class, from failing.

16. *Prevent plagiarism.* This starts with teaching what plagiarism is as many students simply don't know. They don't realize that copy/pasting information from a website without attribution is wrong, and that there are serious consequences for "lifting" material from a web site and trying to pass it off as their own work. LMC's English Department Plagiarism Policy is typical of many: First offense - F on the assignment, office visit; Second offense, a F in the course, and a note to the chair of the department, which puts the student on a "watch list". But first, instructors need to "teach" students what plagiarism is, and use models and exercises that:

- a. demonstrate plagiarism.
- b. demonstrate how easy it is for instructors to detect and prove plagiarism.

How do we detect and prove internet plagiarism? Online instructors know each student's "writing signature" very early in the class, as most communication with students is in writing. When you see a suspiciously high level writing and vocabulary usage in an assignment copy a sample sentence into a Yahoo or Google search. Much, if not most, of the time one of the sites on the first page of

search results will be the location from which the student plagiarized the material. You can then confront the student privately, via email or in person, with the evidence while discussing the meaning of plagiarism and its consequences.

17. *Anti-Impersonation Strategies:* Another criticism of online classes is that students may hire or persuade another student to "impersonate" or do his/her work for him. This may also occur in face to face classes-- but it is rare. Online instructors can have an advantage here, because all online classes require students to "show what they know" in writing. We become familiar with the student's unique "writing signature" before the semester begins, from his or her email. Keep student emails and compare them with later work, to prevent both plagiarism and impersonation. This is another reason to consider having face to face meetings. A student is less likely to use an impersonator if they know someone will need to go to a number of on campus meetings.
18. *Accessibility strategies:* Keep checking your class and links for accessibility. Visually impaired students give up and drop out if the going gets too tough. Many online students are physically or visually disabled, and online classes are the only way they can pursue a college education. We need to make sure that our online classes are ALWAYS as accessible to these students as possible. Encourage students to let you know if they have any health or vision problems - and refer back to our Course Design area for tips and links to keeping your classroom accessible.
19. *Check for no-shows, and email them a "letter of concern":* As the mid-semester mark approaches, pay attention to which students are posting, and which are not. Consider telephoning students who have not posted to the previous week's forum, and ask if you can help. A bit of intervention at this point can make the difference whether a student stays in the class or disappears.
20. *If a student should drop the class, or simply disappear – email this student a "letter of concern".* If you can see from your Web Advisor roster that the student has in fact dropped your class, email the student a kindly "good-bye, sorry it didn't work out" letter, and a brief little survey to determine why they have dropped your online class. The Distance Education Committee is developing a survey like this now and we need this data to determine how we can improve retention in online classes.

I. Ongoing and mid-semester strategies for success (yours and theirs)

To avoid a “mid semester slump” and possible drop-outs, pay particular attention to individual students at risk – just as you would in your on campus classes. Here are some ideas to help you reach out to these students and keep them on track:

1. *Mid-semester “grade chats”*: Offer student’s mid-semester online grade chats to discuss their grades. This will reassure students that they are doing all right, (or not) and help them get back on track if need be. Your attention to them at this point can prevent them from dropping the class.
2. *Encourage students to check their grades frequently, and send you a “grade review request” if need be*. Students need to know how they are doing in the class at all times. Some are more experienced than others, about adding up points, or averaging your letter grades. Invite them to talk to you about their grades and to request "Grade Reviews" if they don't understand a grade.
3. *Email your “phantoms” and schedule an on campus office visit*. Ask them to chat with you in your office or come to your computer classroom to work with the online classroom. Some are just too embarrassed to admit they are falling behind, and just need some extra outreach from you to re-connect with the class.
4. *Keep up the Virtual Chats and schedule Office Chats online* using Blackboard chat or other chat tools such as SKYPE or CCC CONFER that can add voice and web cam capability to your online chats.
5. *Have “field trips” to museums, theatre performances, etc*. Add some face to face experiences which your students can anticipate, discuss and review in the weekly chat or class discussions: take them to local theater performances, conferences, comet-sightings and the like. A field trip can bring students together and help them create the connections they need to stay in the class.

J. Assessment

Assessment of learning outcomes adheres to the same rules and holds to the same standards and criteria as those of your face to face assignments. Assessment asks this question: How do you know students have learned the "lesson" you want to teach? How have students shown they can perform the outcomes we have set for this class?

Study the COURSE OUTLINE OF RECORD and ONLINE SUPPLEMENT for your online class again. Over time learning outcomes and the assessment of those learning

outcomes are being added to each LMC Course Outline of Record. Your class must fulfill these outcomes, whether it is a face to face, partially online, or online class.

In general the only difference between an online assessment and a face to face assessment is that the online assessment must include evidence a high degree of student/student and instructor/student interactivity. Online classes may use different strategies to produce the desired outcome – use of video or audio clips to assess a debate or speech in a speech class, for example. Reading comprehension assessment in an English 100 (1A) class may rely more strongly on appropriate integration of quotes from good sources to show how well students have understood and can apply their reading in their writing assignments. Online students, generally speaking, must “show what they know” in writing, on the discussion board or in a chat session. Otherwise, the criteria and standards are the same as those you would apply to a face to face assignment.

For example, a "Socratic" or “open ended” question" (see the Appendix for links to Constructivism in Online Learning) for an ENGLISH 1A assignment may go something like this:

Please post a two paragraph FWA (formal writing assignment) in response to the following question:

“Please read your “What is Race?” (Moore, KRON) article carefully. How do Dr. Sylvia Spenger and Dr. Luigi Cavalli Sforza explain our notions of “race”? What does each have to say about the “illusory nature” of race? Or the origins of the concept of race? How are their comments similar or dissimilar? What are your thoughts on this topic? Use paraphrase and direct quotes to support your one or two paragraph response. Cite your sources in MLA format. Reply and respond thoughtfully to 3 other student posts.

A good (late semester) answer would begin with a restatement of the question as a thesis, then address each question in the prompt, paraphrasing ideas from a good source, and adding direct quotes as appropriate, citing them in MLA format. The “A” level post would be original and insightful, well organized and coherent.

Your “Lessons and Handouts” area should include a rubric which outlines how you grade student work – what an “A” paper looks like, a “B” paper, and so on. Students can then check their own papers against this rubric and see how their papers can improve. Here is a rubric for “Formal Writing Assignments” in an English 1A class:

<p>FWA RUBRICS, GLOSSARY AND CHECKLIST FORMAL WRITING ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINE</p>
--

All your ESSAY posts in this class must be FWA quality. That means you need to write and rewrite, edit and proofread carefully. Here is a RUBRIC, or way to tell whether your writing meets FWA standards, and what you need to do to improve your writing -- and your grade:

<u>A PAPERS</u>	<u>B PAPERS</u>	<u>C PAPERS</u>	<u>D/F PAPERS</u>
PROOFREADING			
No grammar errors	1-5 grammar errors	6-10 grammar errors	11+ grammar errors
No spelling errors	1-5 spelling errors	6-10 spelling errors	11+ spelling errors
DEVELOPMENT			
Good Ps + Qs + ()s	OK Ps + Qs + ()s	Poor Ps + Qs + ()s	No Ps + Qs + ()s
Specific examples	Some good examples	Vague; few examples	No specific examples
Good facts, data, good research and sources	Some good facts, some good research	Mostly generalities; very little research	No research, just biased assumptions
Good anecdotes	OK use of anecdote	Poor use of anecdote	No anecdotes
ORGANIZATION			
Good Thesis Statement	OK Thesis Statement	Poor Thesis Statement	No Thesis Statement
Good Topic Sentences	OK Topic Sentences	Poor Topic Sentences	No Topic Sentences
Relevant Logical Supporting Sentences	Mostly Relevant Supporting Sentences	Some Relevant Supporting Sentences	No relevant supporting sentences
COHERENCE			
Repeats Title Key Word in Thesis Statement	Some relationship between Title and essay	Poor relationship between Title and essay	No relationship between Title and essay
Uses TRANSITION WORDS well	Uses TRANSITION WORDS adequately	Poor use of TRANSITION WORDS	No sense of how to use logical sequence or transitions
Good use of REPEATED KEY WORDS	Some use of REPEATED KEY WORDS	Poor use of REPEATED KEY WORDS	No sense of how to use KEY WORDS at all
Smooth transitions			

from S->S/ P->P	OK transitions from S->S/ P->P	Poor transitions from S->S/ P->P	No sense of transitions; no coherence at all
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<p>ORIGINALITY</p> <p>Original, honest, unique - shows thorough research yet expresses original ideas in a passionate personal voice; good use of Ps and Qs to support original ideas. Shows a sense of discovery and scholarship; fun to read; enjoyable</p>	<p>Struggles to find original “voice” but is honest and shows good effort; contains some cliches and assumptions; pretty good use of Ps and Qs to support somewhat original ideas. Shows some sense of discovery, occasionally difficult to read</p>	<p>Some of the writing based on vague beliefs, assumptions and cliched ideas; some researched, but shows limited understanding of how to use Ps + Qs and not much effort to support ideas, cliched and trite; may be very difficult to read</p>	<p>Unreadable, incoherent, filled with so many editing errors that the reader simply cannot follow the thread.</p> <p>Plagiarized or copied – if so, assignment gets an F for the student’s first offense, and student is dropped for the second offense</p>
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The advantage of an online post, (for an English assignment, anyway) is that students must “show what they know” in writing, and therefore, every post helps students improve their reading and writing skills. Every good late semester English 100 post shows the depth of their reading comprehension, the quality of their writing, as well as the quality of their research.

Some of the ASSESSMENT CRITERIA you may wish to consider in evaluating this assignment, to restate the rubric, will include the following:

- 1) Does it address the assignment? Is it "On topic"?
- 2) Does it employ academic and unbiased sources?
- 3) Does it employ critical thinking skills such as comparison, analysis, evaluation inference and interpretation?
- 4) Does it effectively integrate facts, examples, paraphrase and quotes?
- 5) Does it demonstrate good organization? Does it have a clear thesis statement? Relevant support? Clear topic sentences? Clear point of view?
- 6) Does it employ good transition words and repetition of keywords?
- 7) Does it demonstrate student/student interactivity? Has the student replied and responded with peer reviews and/or developed the ongoing discussion board "conversation" with new ideas?
- 8) Does it demonstrate the student's own "voice" and originality? Do we see a unique personal point of view, not just copycatting from other sources or other posts?

You might remind students now and then that PLAGIARISM is easy to detect and easy to prove – the instructor can simply “google” a sentence of suspicious text to find the exact site from which the student has copied it. COPYCATTING is also easy to detect and prove, since Blackboard records the exact time each student posts his work. The “copycat” is then, obviously, the later post.

K. Last four weeks of class: grade reviews, evaluations, and closure

Everyone gets a bit harried toward the last two weeks of class. Urge students to take a deep breath, and outline the final projects and due dates clearly. About four weeks before class ends, calculate and post their current letter grades in the Blackboard Grade Center, so they know exactly where they stand. Invite them to ask for “grade reviews” to improve their grades if necessary – and possible. You don’t want any surprises as the grading cycle ends; most students have a vague idea what their letter grade will be, but some do not. All students appreciate knowing where they stand.

Here are some ideas to help you and your students finish up in style, and relative ease:

1. *Offer students a series of Quizzes and a Practice Final to prep them for the real Final Exam.* Make sure your students have used the Blackboard assessment system successfully before you give a high point final exam. Testing in Blackboard is fairly straightforward for most students, but may be confusing to some, especially those with less Internet experience. Blackboard allows for a lot of flexibility in quizzes, tests, and exams. See the Blackboard Handbook for help in creating and administering assessments.
2. *Post your grade rubrics and grading system in your Course Syllabus – and then repost your “countdown” grades – during the last two weeks of class, so that students know when their final projects are due, and their point value.* It is very important to you and to your students, that they know what their grade is before going into Finals Week. You don't want any surprises at this point.
3. *Plan your final assignments and exam so that you have time to enter grades in Blackboard a couple of days before you enter them into Web Advisor.* Students may then have an opportunity to contact you before the grades are official, and point out any mistakes you may have made. Experience has shown that students have been right far more often than they have been wrong about their carefully watched grade points.
4. *One of the marks of “guide on the side” teaching is the willingness – even, eagerness - to listen to your students, and act upon their reasonable requests, especially where grades are concerned.*
5. *Final exams – is it really so easy to cheat?* One of the criticisms of online classes is that students can cheat on midterm and final exams. Many online instructors require face to face or proctored final exams for this reason. In "content" classes, where students must memorize facts and events, face to face exams may be a good option. Blackboard has many testing features or options which can, for example, require passwords, randomize test questions, prevent “backtracking” or taking the exam more than once. You may wish to use such options in your final exam. Under such conditions, students would have difficulty cheating on any exam. Some instructors email group or individual essay questions to their students with a strict turnaround limit, and some instructors use voice or video technology to give and receive exams. If you weight your final exam heavily, you may want to have it proctored in the Assessment Center or require a face-to-face exam.
6. *Give students a chance to say good bye.* Post a “Hail and Farewell” forum on the discussion board at the end of each semester to say goodbye and allow students to

say goodbye to you and to each other. Online communities become as intense as “in-person” communities. Ask students to share plans for the future, and encourage them to share email addresses and keep in touch. Much like your Introduction forum, the Hail and Farewell forum allows students to communicate and bond with each other as it provides closure to the class. You'll enjoy reading these posts, as students reminisce about the class and share plans for the future.

7. *Ask students for a Final Class Evaluation.* Blackboard and other course management systems have an "Anonymous" option in the discussion board to allow students to give anonymous class evaluations. They also have the ability to give surveys, which are also anonymous. It's a good idea to invite a final class evaluation from your students. You can learn a lot from such surveys, even if they are as simple as the following:

1. What did you like most about this online class?
2. What do you think needs to be improved?
3. Other comments and suggestions?
4. Is this your first online class?
5. What other online classes might you want to take?

L. After your class is over... ask yourself how you'd like to change it

After you have posted your grades on Blackboard and Web Advisor, you can take a deep breath and relax. There may be a few email "grade review requests" and some may warrant a grade change -- just as with face to face classes. But your main task is to self evaluate the class, and determine how you may improve your class.

Print out all your mid-term and final class evaluations and read them carefully. Read your Hail and Farewell posts. What did your students write about the class? Are there a number of consistent complaints? Four or five students who have the same issue? Please listen to these students, take stock and see what other online instructors have to say. Above all, take student comments seriously and try to act on them as you design your next class or "tweak" this class for its next semester.

You may wish to leave your classroom available to students after it is completed so they can go back and look at individual grades or specific work they did in the class. **MAKE THE CLASSROOM UNAVAILABLE** early in the next semester as this reduces the visual clutter students see when they first log in to Blackboard and helps them more easily find the new semester's classrooms.

M. Evaluating your online class

What follows is an “at-a-glance” checklist of the criteria covered so far, by which to evaluate an online class. You can use it to evaluate your own class -- or assist in the evaluation of another online instructor's class.

These are the elements a mentor or experienced online instructor can spot quickly and evaluate:

CLASS DESIGN AND FORMAT

- Does the instructor display a welcoming cyber personality, in the informal manner of writing?
- Is the weekly format consistent?
- Are assignments consistent, predictable and redundant?
- Has every effort been made to create accessible web pages within the classroom, using Word, Frontpage or Dreamweaver?
- Is the classroom attractive? Are there attractive "banners" which enhance the week's lesson?
- Are instructions and assignments clear and well written? Does instructor provide models, examples, resources, and step-by-step instructions?
- Are the Course Documents, Lessons and Handouts areas clearly “buttoned” down on the left side of the screen?
- Is the class "rich" and as fully "frontloaded" as possible?
- Is the complete Course Overview posted?
- Is the Course Syllabus posted?

SENSE OF COMMUNITY

- Is the instructor projecting a warm, humorous, friendly "e-persona"?
- Is instructor using "netiquette" in your emails?
(<http://www.albion.com/netiquette>)
- Is there a "Student Union" or Cafe forum?
- Is there an Introduction forum?
- Are almost all students posting consistently to the assigned forums and addressing the assignments?
- Has the instructor encouraged or assigned workshop partners or a few projects?
- Has the instructor assigned at least a few group projects?
- Is the instructor posting comments to class discussions during the discussion, as well as responding to the posts at grading time? Are the comments general and constructive?
- Is there an orientation activity?
- Is there a "Student Services" Area?

INTERACTIVITY?

- Does the instructor practice early outreach to new students, to make sure they understand how to access the classroom?
- Does the instructor respond to emails quickly?
- Does the instructor offer feedback and grading in a timely manner?
- Does instructor actively engage in the ongoing (Asynchronous) discussions?
- Does the instructor offer one or two face to face meetings? Encourage office visits on campus or during online office hours?
- Does the instructor attend to "grade review requests" promptly?
- Do students engage each other in discussion, and work together in group projects?
- Does the instructor participate in weekly class discussions?
- Does the instructor praise fine work, and indicate it as a model, in his/her replies to student work on the discussion board?
- Does instructor hold weekly chat sessions?
- Does instructor teach and model respect and courtesy in the classroom, honor diversity and provide a safe environment for discussion?
- Does instructor solicit and incorporate student suggestions and evaluations?

CONSISTENCY AND PREDICABILITY

- Are due dates fairly well consistent and adhered to?
- Is the weekly schedule consistent and predictable?
- Are similar items always found in the same areas?
- Are Handouts or Course Documents near the "surface" and not hidden away in too many folders?

IS THE COURSE FULFILLING ITS LEARNING OUTCOMES?

- Are your assignments attached to one or more learning objectives?
- Are your assessments demonstrating that students are learning?
- Are students addressing the assignments well?
- Are students finding your assignments clear and relevant?

STUDENT EVALUATIONS

- Requested twice a semester?
- Responded to and acted upon?

STUDENT SUCCESS

- Do at least 3/4 of the enrollees remain in your class, and succeed in it?
- Do students sign up for instructor's other online classes?
- Do student sign up for other online classes?
- Do students succeed in the next class in the sequence? (You'll need institutional data to determine this one)

WHAT ARE OTHER INDICATORS OF A GOOD ONLINE CLASS?

Please send us suggestions for this and all sections of the Best Practices Guidelines: mpuccioni@losmedanos.edu , lhuffman@losmedanos.edu, csmith@losmedanos.edu

IV. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

area: "place" where content or tools are located in a classroom, such as Course Documents

asynchronous: not at the same time; as in discussion board learning is "asynchronous" because students post at different times, read posts at different times, available 24/7

accessible: legal term for ease of use for visually and physically disabled students

browse: skim or scan through a class or content area: "browse" the discussion forums

constructivism: learning theory which informs most online education; creating a learning environment which encourages students to "construct" their own learning experience together.

Face-to-face: on campus, in a physical classroom or other "real time, real place" meeting

frontload: to build your complete class before start date, as much as possible
"guide on the side" not "sage on the stage" - constructivist, student oriented teaching

interactivity: instructor/student contact and student/student ongoing interaction

learning styles: ways in which students learn, online or face to face, such as "visual" learning, "oral learning" and "verbal" learning styles

learning community: the improbable, but real sense of "class cohesion " interdependency, trust and willingness to learn, and to take risks engendered in a supportive online class; the ability for invisible strangers to become partners and friends in pursuit of learning

navigate: to click from one area to another in a classroom; to click from one website to another on the Internet in order to find what we are looking for (and more)

rich: diverse, deep, content filled, navigable, serendipitous, learning-opportunity filled classroom environment

synchronous: real time or at the same time communication, conducted using chat portion of Blackboard or an outside application or web site like Skype or CCC Confer

V. RESOURCES

CALIFORNIA VIRTUAL CAMPUS

<http://www.cvc.edu>

SLOAN CONSORTIUM

<http://www.sloan-c.org>

CONSTRUCTIVISM AS A PARADIGM FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

<http://www.thirteen.org/edonline/concept2class/constructivism/index.html>

CONSTRUCTIVISM IN ONLINE LEARNING

<http://edpsychserver.ed.vt.edu/workshops/tohe1999/online.html>

NETIQUETTE

<http://www.albion.com/netiquette/>

ONLINE ACCESSIBILITY

<http://www.access-board.gov/adaag/about/AIA>

ACADEMIC SENATE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA GUIDELINES

http://www.academicsenate.cc.ca.us/Publications/Papers/good_practice_distance.html

CALIFORNIA VIRTUAL CAMPUS BEST PRACTICES GUIDELINES

<http://pdc.cvc.edu/resourcecenter/>

SLOAN CONSORTIUM EFFECTIVE PRACTICES

<http://www.sloan-c.org/effective/index.asp>

CONSTRUCTIVIST TEACHING AND LEARNING ONLINE

<http://edpsychserver.ed.vt.edu/workshops/tohe1999/tohe2.html>