Course Design

Expectations	Recommended Best Practices

For online courses, instructors will post, on a web site outside the learning management system (LMS), or in a guest accessible area of the LMS,
 	
• A welcome letter explaining
   o Instructions on how to access the course
   o The basic structure and pattern of the course
   o Place or time requirements
   o Contingency plan for technical failures
 	
The course follows a defined schedule.
 	
Chunk or group course content in a way that is logical and consistent.
 	
Learning activities should have a narrow focus, with short intervals between assessments.
 	
Approximately one half of all coursework should be completed by midterm.
 	
Faculty may individualize a course schedule to meet the needs of a student. It is the instructor's responsibility to provide the student with a revised course schedule. Under no circumstances should a course be completed in less than 4 weeks.
 	
For blended classes, clearly link before class, in class, and after class activities.
	A course syllabus should be electronically available, to include
	
	   o Expected student participation levels
	   o Explanation of how to submit assignments, including any special instructions for file naming or format.
	
	Show how course activities align with course objectives.
	
	Include a graded assignment in the first week of class designed to ensure students have reviewed course information and understand course expectations.
	
	Provide time in the first week to acclimate students to technology and foster class socialization.
	
	Follow-up with students who do not meet minimum expectations.
	
	Provide relevant, supplemental learning resources, via print or electronic means, including
	
	• lecture notes
	• summaries of the readings
	• vocabulary/glossary items
	• sample test questions
	• Internet assignments
	• self-assessments
	• grading rubrics
	• suggested/recommended readings
	• audio or video segments (10 minutes or less per segment)
	• presentation slides
	• links to student services and resources
	
	Establish an area where students can communicate topics less related to the assignment.
	
	Create opportunities for students to provide feedback on structure of the course.

Preparedness of distance learning faculty

Expectations	Recommended Best Practices
Instructors teaching distance learning courses will Use and understand learning technologies - Have access to a computer with an Internet connection. - Understand basic computer skills, including file structure, copying and moving files, windows features and terminology. - Navigate the Internet. - Understand the limits imposed by low-bandwidth connections to the Internet. - Demonstrate an understanding of intellectual property issues related to teaching on the Internet. Build a basic course in an LMS that is compliant with the Best Practices. Demonstrate knowledge of pedagogies suited for the environment in which they teach. Evidence may be - An online teaching demonstration - Application of a quality assessment tool to a distance learning course - Prior online teaching experience within the last two years and using a common LMS - Completion of a Teaching Online at IVCC course	Complete an appropriate external learning experience equivalent to at least two credit hours of graduate study. Examples include the Illinois Online Network's Making Virtual Classrooms a Reality (MVCR) courses. - Complete the Online Learning Overview course before the first offering of an online course, or concurrently in the first teaching semester. - Complete other courses leading to the Master Online Teacher (MOT) Certificate. Complete an in-house "Teaching Online at IVCC" course. Apply a quality assessment tool to a completed unit of a distance learning course. Attend workshops offered through CETLA. Explore new technologies to facilitate your course. Complete the Web Author Checklist and maintain a current IVCC Web site.

Communication/Interaction

Expectations	Recommended Best Practices
Course design should encourage both student-to-student and student-to-instructor interaction. Define the timeframe in which students can expect to receive responses to questions, and establish when the instructor is/is not available. A 1-2 working day response time is considered acceptable. Take into consideration that course activities may necessitate shorter response times. Instructor is available, supportive, and flexible.	Respond to student questions within 24 hours. Maintain a personal or course Web page containing: - Instructor name - Email address - Phone number - Mailing address - Office hours Establish instructor's role when online discussions are used. Use multiple communication methods (FTF, phone, or electronic) to communicate with students who have not participated in the initial days of the course, or who have failed to maintain progress in the course. Facilitate optional test review sessions preceding test dates. Times should be scheduled to meet the needs of adult students. Hold virtual office hours (synchronous chat sessions) to provide increased opportunities for interaction between students and with instructor. Integrate social networking tools to the extent to which they can help meet course learning objectives.

Assessment and Evaluation

Expectations	Recommended Best Practices
Assessment deadlines should be identified in the course calendar or schedule. Students should receive prompt feedback on assessments Clearly explain assignments. Provide multiple assessment techniques to appeal to different learning styles, to promote critical thinking skills, and to promote student-to-student interaction. Examples include - group projects - exercises - research assignments - essays or essay questions - portfolios - discussion boards - peer review - case studies - journaling & blogging - traditional, proctored exams - open-book, electronic quizzes	For deadlines, be specific. Include the time of day by which an assignment is due in addition to the date. Consider whether technical assistance is available near the designated deadline. Include frequent, low-stakes assignments. For blended courses, provide graded assessments in both the online and face-to-face components. Communicate what constitutes reason for missing established due dates, and how it will impact the student's grade. Establish instructor policy for resetting unsuccessful electronic test attempts. Provide sample work to illustrate assignment expectations.