

DE Committee Best Practices Document

Best Practices 2019-20

Adapted from the [OEI-CVC Rubric](https://onlinenetworkofeducators.org/course-design-academy/online-course-rubric/) (<https://onlinenetworkofeducators.org/course-design-academy/online-course-rubric/>)

Opportunities for Student-Student Interactions

- Opportunities for student-initiated interaction with other students and the instructor are clearly available and encouraged.
- Student-to-student interaction that reinforces course content and learning outcomes is required as part of the course.
- The course includes communication activities that are designed to build a sense of community among learners.
- Guidelines explaining required levels of student participation (i.e., quantity and quality of interactions) are provided.

Weekly opportunities for students to engage in more than one of the following:

- Asynchronous discussion forums
- Group assignments
- Group chat
- Student Lounge/Café (student-initiated discussion forum)
- Weekly check-ins (beginning of the week discussion with some open-ended prompts)
- Peer review
- Collaborations (tools that allows students to share and/or collaborate on documents)
- Social media or other accessible tools for interaction.
- Messaging *however instructors do not have visibility to this and cannot track.

Opportunities for Student-Instructor Interactions

- Instructor initiates contact prior to or at the beginning of course.
- The instructor provides students with his/her plan to engage in regular effective contact using CMS communication tools that includes expected time frames for responses to inquiries, discussion board posts, and feedback on assignments and assessments.
- The instructor's role for supporting course technology is explained to students, and links to technology support are provided.
- Contact information for the instructor is easy to find and includes expected response times.

Prior to the course:

- Send welcome communication
- Communicate course updates, reminders and other relevant information

Weekly use of more than one of the following:

- Email/Message using CMS tools (initiated by student or instructor)
- Virtual Office Discussion (open for the entire semester)
- Instructor Announcements
- Individual or group chat
- Virtual Conference Sessions
- Comments/Feedback on discussions, assignments, and other assessments (Comments can be text, audio, or video)

Opportunities for Student-Content Interactions


- Content is organized into visibly distinct learning units or modules based on weeks/major themes, etc.
- Demonstrable objectives are included in the individual learning units/modules.
- Unit content and activities are aligned with unit objectives.
- Page content is chunked in manageable segments using headings that facilitate online reading.
- Content is delivered through a variety of modalities that are accessible, such as text, audio with transcripts, captioned video, images and/or graphics with alternate text, are used to create student-centered learning.
- Course makes use of multiple Course Management System (CMS) tools for weekly content delivery
 - Pages, discussions, chat, collaboration, virtual conference tools, groups, etc.
- Course design includes instructions for learners to work with content in meaningful ways (e.g. instructing students to take notes during a video, explaining the purpose of an external resource).
- Individualized learning opportunities, such as remedial activities or resources for advanced learning are provided, such as self-check quizzes, resource pages, supplemental materials, reflective writing, etc.

Assessments

- Assessment activities lead to the demonstration of learning outcomes.
- Assessments relate/align with the course objectives and content.
- Multiple and regular assessments are administered throughout the course. Examples include quizzes, discussion forums, practice problems, draft writing,
- Assessments include both mix of low stakes (formative) and high stakes (summative) assessments (never more than 30% of overall grade)
- Rubrics or descriptive criteria for desired outcomes are present for all assessments.
- Instructions clearly explain to students how to successfully complete the assessments.
- The course includes a clear plan for providing meaningful, timely feedback on assessments.
- The course provides opportunities for (non-graded) student self-assessment with feedback.
- The course provides opportunities for individualized support or resources for students.

[Navigating Accessibility \(https://online.smc.edu/courses/3333/pages/accessible-canvas-pages\)](https://online.smc.edu/courses/3333/pages/accessible-canvas-pages)

- **[Content Pages \(https://online.smc.edu/courses/3333/pages/accessible-canvas-pages?module_item_id=542402\)](https://online.smc.edu/courses/3333/pages/accessible-canvas-pages?module_item_id=542402)** consistently use heading styles (i.e. Heading 2, Heading 3, etc.).
- **[Lists \(https://online.smc.edu/courses/3333/pages/accessible-canvas-pages?module_item_id=542402\)](https://online.smc.edu/courses/3333/pages/accessible-canvas-pages?module_item_id=542402)** are created using the Bullet or Numbered List tool in the rich text editor.
- Links are **[descriptive \(https://online.smc.edu/courses/3333/pages/accessible-canvas-pages?module_item_id=542402\)](https://online.smc.edu/courses/3333/pages/accessible-canvas-pages?module_item_id=542402)** and avoid redundancy; links avoid using non-descriptive phrases; and underlining is only used to denote active hyperlinks.

- **Table cells** (<https://online.smc.edu/courses/3333/files/3905437/download?wrap=1>)  (<https://online.smc.edu/courses/3333/files/3905437/download?wrap=1>) designated as row and/or column headers allow screen readers to **read table cells** (<http://www.smc.edu/StudentServices/DisabilityResources/AccessibleTechnology/Pages/Word.aspx#Tables>) in the correct order.
- There is sufficient **color contrast** (<https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/>) between foreground and background to meet **Section 508 standards** (https://online.smc.edu/courses/3333/pages/section-508-standards?module_item_id=198926).
- **Visual elements** (https://online.smc.edu/courses/3333/pages/accessible-canvas-pages?module_item_id=542402) (color, bolding, all caps) are not used as the sole way to convey importance or meaning.
- Every image (including those used in Pages, Discussions, Quizzes and Assignments) uses **descriptive alternative text** (https://online.smc.edu/courses/3333/pages/accessible-canvas-pages?module_item_id=542402) that includes any text visible in the image, does not contain "image of" or "picture of", and uses "" if the image is purely decorative.
- **Every slide** (<http://www.smc.edu/StudentServices/DisabilityResources/AccessibleTechnology/Pages/PowerPoint.aspx>) has a unique title, reading order is properly set (slides use pre-set layouts), and all images/charts include **alternative text** (https://online.smc.edu/courses/3333/pages/accessible-canvas-pages?module_item_id=542402). All text is visible in Outline View so that it can be read by assistive technology.
- **Microsoft Office** (https://online.smc.edu/courses/3333/pages/create-accessible-files-in-word?module_item_id=198925) and **PDFs** (https://online.smc.edu/courses/3333/pages/create-accessible-pdf-files?module_item_id=198924) pass the Accessibility Check (**Microsoft Office** (<https://support.office.com/en-us/article/make-your-content-accessible-to-everyone-with-the-accessibility-checker-38059c2d-45ef-4830-9797-618f0e96f3ab>) and **Adobe** (<https://www.adobe.com/accessibility/products/acrobat/using-acrobat-pro-accessibility-checker.html>)) and **Section 508 compliant** (https://online.smc.edu/courses/3333/pages/section-508-standards?module_item_id=198926).
- Spreadsheets include labels for the rows and columns, detailed labels for any charts, and is accompanied by a textual description of the spreadsheet, drawing attention to key cells, trends, and totals.
- **Accurate transcripts** (<http://www.smc.edu/StudentServices/DisabilityResources/AccessibleTechnology/Pages/Captioning.aspx>) are included for audio, closed captioning for video, and narrative descriptions are available when possible.
- Live broadcasts include a means for displaying synchronized **captions** (<http://www.smc.edu/StudentServices/DisabilityResources/AccessibleTechnology/Pages/Captioning.aspx>).
- Multimedia is not set to auto-play.
- Multimedia (including gifs and images) do not blink or strobe.