SOUTHERN OREGON UNIVERSITY

Distance Education Handbook

A Resource for Instructors

Provided by the SOU Distance Education Center

January 2010

About this Handbook

This handbook is intended to serve as a resource for faculty by providing information about resources and support available through SOU as well as recommendations for developing and delivering effective online courses.

The Southern Oregon University Distance Education Handbook was prepared by the Distance Education Center in consultation with SOU faculty and staff. Special thanks are due to Terry DeHay, Sherry Ettlich, Shawn Foster, Joan McBee, Geoff Mills, Rene Ordonez, Vicki Purslow, Lore Rutz-Burri, Kay Sagmiller, Hart Wilson, and Josie Wilson.

It is important to note that online courses and instructors are subject to the standard practices, procedures, and criteria which have been established for traditional courses at SOU including, but not limited to, faculty involvement in course development and approval, instructor compensation, selection of online instructors, pedagogical determinations about appropriate class size, and oversight of online programs to ensure conformity with existing institutional policies and procedures.

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Introduction to SOU Distance Education

Welcome to Distance Education at Southern Oregon University. The purpose of this handbook is to provide information about resources and support available through SOU as well as recommendations for developing and delivering effective online courses.

The SOU Distance Education Center

The SOU Distance Education Center is located in Room 321 of Hannon Library. We are committed to providing individualized instruction and support to faculty developing and teaching in our online programs. We invite you to call on us at any time.

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Faculty Resources on the Distance Education website:
http://www.sou.edu/distancelearning/faculty/

Student Resources on the Distance Education website:
http://www.sou.edu/distancelearning/students/index.html

The SOU Distance Education Center is committed to expanding the University's programs to provide students with increased access to high-quality educational experiences using online delivery tools. We support faculty in the design, development, and delivery of online courses. We also provide workshops and training materials to ensure faculty and students are successful in teaching and learning online.

Defining Distance Education

The Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities defines *distance education* as:
> A formal educational process in which the majority of the instruction occurs when students and instructor are not in the same place. Instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous.

We offer three types of distance education courses at SOU:

- **Online** - All instruction occurs over the Internet using Blackboard, our campus course management system.

- **Two-Way Video** – Select courses are delivered using interactive video. These courses meet on a regular day/time using two-way video transmission. We presently transmit to sites in Medford, Klamath Falls, Grants Pass, Roseburg, and Coos Bay.
- **Hybrid** - A hybrid course is a combination of online course work and on-site or two-way video meetings. For example, some hybrid courses meet every other week, while others meet only at the beginning and end of the term.

This handbook uses the term "online course" as the contents address the development and delivery of online and hybrid courses.

Institutional Support and Resources

Online courses are developed as a part of the approved curriculum within the related academic unit of the University. Courses that are new to SOU (that have not been previously delivered face-to-face or hybrid) must be approved by the SOU Curriculum Committee or Graduate Council and Faculty Senate. It is the responsibility of the instructor to obtain permission from the Department Chair to develop a new course, regardless of delivery method. The Department Chair may also invite an instructor to develop an online course when the need arises.

The SOU Distance Education Center does not create the curriculum, but will consult with Academic Deans and Department Chairs to recommend modalities and best practices in planning distance education programs.

Blackboard

Online courses should be delivered using the campus course management system, Blackboard. The rationale for using one system is to provide a familiar environment for students taking other online courses at SOU. From Blackboard, instructors can link to external websites and resources, post course documents, conduct asynchronous discussions, administer online exams, and collect digital assignments.

Blackboard is accessible through the MySOU portal at http://my.sou.edu. You will need a network account to access MySOU. Contact the SOU Faculty and Staff Help Desk at (541) 552-6900 or HelpDesk@sou.edu if you do not know your network account information or encounter issues using MySOU or Blackboard.

To request a Blackboard course site for your online course, instructors must complete the SOU Blackboard Course Request Form available on the Faculty/Staff tab in the MySOU portal. Course sites are typically created one business day after the request is submitted.

Each term, the Distance Education Center conducts workshops to teach faculty how to use Blackboard. The workshop calendar is accessible at:
http://www.sou.edu/distancelearning/faculty/ws_schedule.html.
Instructors may also request individualized training by contacting the Distance Education Center.

Faculty Development in Distance Education

SOU offers a variety of professional development opportunities to prepare and support faculty teaching online that include face-to-face and online formats. A schedule of professional development workshops geared towards online teaching can be found on the Distance Education Center web site at: http://www.sou.edu/distancelearning/faculty/ws_schedule.html.

Online Course Development

All new courses must be approved through the standard SOU new course proposal process. Instructors can find guidelines and forms related to the instructional process at:
http://www.sou.edu/provost/curriculum.html

The Distance Education Center offers instructional design support and technology training to SOU instructors creating online courses. Instructional design support includes, but is not limited to, outlining the course development process, providing recommendations for engaging online students, creating study guides and other course materials, providing access to a course template, producing multimedia, and researching online resources. Instructors are encouraged to utilize the skills and expertise of the Distance Education Center staff, as needed.

Instructors are also encouraged to make use of the Online Course Readiness Checklist (Appendix A). The form provides suggestions for creating quality online courses in alignment with the six categories of the Rubric for Online Instruction (Appendix B). Upon request, the Distance Education Center can provide assistance with applying the rubric to online courses.

Course Loading and Compensation

Instruction of online courses is loaded the same as face-to-face courses. Full-time faculty may teach online as part of their teaching load or on overload at the applicable pay rate. Payment for teaching online is provided by the academic department. The Department Chair will determine how the online course is loaded for the instructor. If the course is taught out of load, the Department Chair will determine the level of compensation according to Collective Bargaining Agreement guidelines. Exceptions require the approval of the Academic Dean and the Provost.

Course Enrollments

Departments will determine appropriate enrollment caps in online courses based on perceived course demand. If uncertain, an enrollment cap of 24 students per section is an appropriate starting point, with the flexibility of adjusting the enrollment cap in subsequent offerings of a specific course.

The process to determine the minimum number of enrollments necessary to offer a distance education course is the same as the policy for on-campus courses. The Department Chair is responsible for monitoring student enrollments in online courses and determining when it is necessary to cancel an online course due to insufficient enrollments.

Online Course Evaluations

Faculty members teaching online courses should be evaluated in the same manner as all other faculty members in accordance with the current collective bargaining agreement and/or institutional policy. Departments are encouraged to develop a process that is consistent with current practices.

The Distance Education Center can support the administration of online course evaluations at the request of the Department Chair. Sample evaluation forms for online courses are available from the Distance Education Center.

Accessibility

Students with documented disabilities will need consideration in much the same way that they do in traditional face to face formats. The Offices of Distance Education and Disability Services can assist faculty with these considerations. Faculty can find extensive resources on the Disability Services site at: http://www.sou.edu/access/dss/facstaffhome.shtml

Copyright Compliance

Interpretation and application of U.S. Copyright Law as it applies to distance education remains ambiguous. In many cases, what is considered fair use in the traditional classroom is considered copyright infringement when delivered online. Instructors developing and teaching online courses agree not to include third-party copyrighted material unless appropriate approval (in writing) is provided, or royalty fees were paid for such materials.

The faculty course developer should identify and disclose to the University the use of all third-party materials. Copies of disclosures and permission forms should be kept on file in the department. If the faculty member provides additional copies of copyright disclosures and forms, the Distance Education Center will be happy to keep a record for future reference.

The SOU Distance Education Center can work with faculty developing online courses to determine fair use of materials. Instructors are also encouraged to review the Copyright Clearance Center's Campus Guide to Copyright Compliance available at http://www.copyright.com/Services/copyrightoncampus/basics/index.html.

Intellectual Property

Faculty should be willing to share course content of online courses in the same manner they would share face-to-face course content. If a faculty member terminates employment with SOU, it is expected that they will provide access to a complete course site. The faculty member may also take with them the content developed for the online course. For further details are available in Section 6.2 of the OUS "Internal Management Directives on Licensing, Patent, Educational, and Professional Materials Development and Copyright Policies and Procedures" located at: http://www.ous.edu/about/polipro/files/IMD%201-08.pdf

Best Practices in Online Course Design and Delivery

Southern Oregon University is committed to providing high-quality online educational experiences to our students. The following sections provide best practices in online course design.

Getting Started

Faculty who are new to teaching online or who wish to explore new technologies to enhance an existing online course are encouraged to contact the SOU Distance Education Center to schedule a meeting with an instructional designer to maximize learning and teaching processes using the most appropriate technological tools.

Based on extensive research and best practices in distance education, the Distance Education Center offers a course template for developing a quality online course. We recommend using the template as the foundation upon which to build a new course, customizing it as necessary. The template provides the basic course structure and navigation, introductory information modules, and suggestions for content to enhance the course site. Using the template also speeds up development time for your online course. For more information, or to access the course template, contact the SOU Distance Education Center.

While no two courses are the same, there are important elements that should be a part of every online course:

- Detailed syllabus

- Course content

- Opportunities for Interaction

- Opportunities for Feedback

- Assessment

- Accessibility

Detailed Syllabus

A syllabus represents a **formal academic agreement** between an instructor and students. Rather than a schedule of events, a syllabus serves as an *academic contract* defining how students can successfully meet the objectives of the course. All instructors are required to provide their students a detailed syllabus at the start of each quarter in every class. Changes to a syllabus after the course has begun are not recommended and may only be made in the case of unusual and extenuating circumstances.

The syllabus provides a basis upon which to resolve academic misunderstandings: it is the official document of record regarding all classroom activities and policies. The distribution of a detailed syllabus at the start of the course ensures that each student has received a written statement of policy. Without such a record, misunderstandings between students and faculty can occur. Students should be encouraged to consult the syllabus throughout the course and to ask questions about the course or the syllabus.

The elements of a syllabus for an online course are no different than the elements of a syllabus for a face-to-face course. SOU provides faculty with a syllabus template to assist with the creation of a well-developed, comprehensive document to serve faculty and students. The template identifies the following elements to be included in a syllabus:

1. Course Title and Identification
2. Instructor Contact Information
3. Course Description
4. Course Goals or Outcomes
5. Required Texts and Materials
6. Recommended Texts and Readings
7. Class Format or Outline
8. Assignments and Expectations
9. Attendance Policy
10. Grading Policy
11. Academic Honesty Statement
12. Academic Support/ADA Statement
13. Other Policies as Needed
14. Course Plan
15. Disclaimer

A description of each element in the Standard Syllabus Outline is provided by the SOU Center for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment at http://www.sou.edu/ctla/syllabus-design.doc.

Course Content

Technology provides a variety of tools for delivering content to students. Before developing an online course, faculty should consider:

1. When teaching in a traditional classroom, how do they deliver content to students?
2. When teaching in a traditional classroom, what interactions do they use with their students?

Answering these questions will be helpful in selecting tools and techniques to deliver course content to students. The *Online Instructional Method and Tools Matrix* (Table 1) provides suggestions for techniques and tools based on preferred instructional methods. The SOU Distance Education Center can help faculty identify ways to adapt their preferred teaching methods to the online environment.

When presenting course materials online, breaking them into small, manageable units or modules increases student awareness of the conceptual structure of each unit and also allows for greater flexibility in pacing their learning (Johnson, 2003).

Quality online courses are well-organized and easy to navigate. An easy way to organize course units or modules is by using folders. Each folder can be labeled with the name of the unit and the dates of completion for all work within the unit. Folders should include all reading assignments, lecture materials, supporting websites or activities, links to discussion board threads, etc. for the unit represented by the folder. This practice helps students easily locate all the materials and complete all the tasks for a given unit.

Aesthetic appeal is another aspect of designing and delivering course materials. While the determination of whether or not something is aesthetically appealing is often a matter of personal preference, there are some general practices that should be considered when designing course materials and course sites.

- File naming systems should be consistent so that students always recognize when a file is a lecture, supplemental reading, assignment, etc. Including the unit/module number in the file name helps students stay organized.

- Font colors and styles should be consistent.

- White space is important. Lines and lines of text are boring and often difficult to read on a computer screen.

- Text should be broken up text by using brief, concise sentences; bullets and numbers are best for lists. Images can be inserted to help students visualize concepts. Sometimes text does not explain a concept as well as a simple image can.

Table 1

Online Instructional Method and Tools Matrix

Instructional Method	Techniques	Online Tools/Resources
Cooperative Learning	Multimedia Presentations	Windows MovieMaker, PowerPoint, Audacity, or Garage Band
	Research Project	Blogs, Wikis, Group Pages
	Student-Led Instruction	Discussion Board or Elluminate
Demonstration	Video Clips	Streaming Video, You Tube
	Text and Images	PowerPoint Presentations
Discovery	Research Projects	Wikis
	Web Quests	Internet/Library Searches
Discussion	Asynchronous Discussion	Blogs, Course Email, Discussion Board
	Synchronous Discussion	Bb Chat, Skype, Elluminate
Drills	Exercises featuring multiple choice, fill in the blank, crosswords, matching/ordering, short answer, jumbled sentences	Hot Potatoes
	Self-tests	Quizzes
Presentation or Lecture	Narrated Slides/Images	PowerPoint Presentations
	Podcasts	Streaming Audio/Video Files
	Video Clips	You Tube Videos
	Written Lectures/Lecture Notes	Word/Rich Text/HTML Files
Problem-Solving	Problem-Based Learning	Word/Rich Text/HTML Files Group Pages
Simulations and Tutorials	Animations	Flash
	Self-Paced Modules	HTML Files
	Video Clips	MERLOT, WikiMedia, Wisc-Online, World Lecture Hall

Opportunities for Interaction

In online courses, interaction can occur in three ways:

- Students interacting with course content;

- Students interacting with one another; and

- Students interacting with the instructor.

It is a good practice to intentionally design for all three of these types of interactions to occur in online courses. Below are some tips to accomplish that goal.

Interaction with Course Content
Provide students with time and opportunity to learn to use and interact with the resources provided.

- Think beyond the standard assignments of reading a textbook and writing a paper. The Internet is a rich reservoir from which to draw materials and activities for students. It is easy to find audio and video files, journal articles, news reports, interactive tutorials, simulations, and more with a few clicks. To locate academically relevant materials on the web, visit:

  - Hannon Library's Online Teaching Resources
    http://hanlib.sou.edu/distance/onlineteachingsources.html

  - New York Times Video Library http://video.on.nytimes.com/

  - Open Education Resources (OER) Commons http://www.oercommons.org/

  - OpenLearn Courseware from Open University http://openlearn.open.ac.uk/

  - Wisc-Online http://www.wisc-online.com/

  For additional support locating and integrating online resources into a course, contact the Distance Education Center or Hannon Library.

Interaction with One Another
The most common way to include interaction in an online course is through the use of online discussions. There are two types of online discussion:

1. Synchronous – discussion occurs when everyone participates at the same time.
2. Asynchronous – participants need not be present at the same time. The discussion occurs in a series of postings ("threads") that can be read and responded to at any time.

While both formats are appropriate in an online environment, asynchronous discussion occurs most often in online courses, primarily because of the flexibility it provides for everyone to

participate at any time, from any place. The Discussion Board on Blackboard can be used to facilitate asynchronous online discussion.

- If discussion is an important part of assessing student learning and if meaningful contributions are desired, discussions should represent a significant portion of the overall grade.

- Rubrics for grading online discussions encourage high-quality postings on the discussion board. Communicate the minimum number of postings required of each student for each discussion and hold students to the criteria listed in the rubric. An example of a well-developed rubric for online discussion is available on SOU's Center for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment site at: http://www.sou.edu/ctla/Bb-response-rubric%20.doc.

Due dates for primary and secondary postings on the discussion board can be staggered so that discussion is deep and meaningful. For example, require that all initial responses by students be posted by Thursday of each week, while all secondary responses and beyond are posted by Saturday. This technique also helps students manage their workload for the class.

SOU has access to Elluminate, a web-conferencing system that allows for synchronous discussion with visual aids. Contact the Distance Education Center for more information to learn more about using synchronous discussion in online courses.

Student-to- student interaction can also be developed in the following ways:

- Student-to-student interaction can be promoted in the first week of an online class by using an icebreaker activity. An icebreaker establishes individual presence, opens the lines of communication between students, and allows students an opportunity to practice using tools within the course management system (Conrad & Donaldson, 2004). It is during this first exercise that faculty can help students build a learning community in which they feel accepted and supported. Online icebreakers are available at:

    Using Online Icebreakers to Promote Student/Teacher Interaction
    http://www.southalabama.edu/oll/jobaidsfall03/Icebreakers%20Online/icebreakerjobaid.htm

    Illinois Online Network's Technology Tip of the Month: Ice Breaker
    http://www.ion.illinois.edu/resources/pointersclickers/2002_01/index.asp

- Offer a variety of communication options for students: email, discussion board, chat, web-conferencing, and telephone are most common.

- Engage students with collaborative learning assignments. Break the larger class into small online groups and have them

    o Give and receive feedback on individual papers

    o Locate, share, and critique resources and report group findings to the entire class

- o Work through a case study online

- o Debate a topic

- o Discuss ways they would apply theories or concepts to real-world situations

- o Complete a research project and write a paper together

- Create a "Help" or "Assistance" forum on the discussion board and encourage students to post questions or problems for their classmates to answer. Let students help one another.

- Create a social space on the discussion forum for students to use for discussions not directly related to the assigned course discussion. Label this area "The Coffee Shop," "The Water Cooler," "Just for Fun," or a catchy title that relates to the course discipline. Make it a place where casual conversation and sharing can occur.

Interaction with the Instructor
Many of the techniques used to engage students with the content and with one another will ultimately lead to communication with the instructor.

- Instructors should make time to periodically communicate with students on an individual basis via email. Some exchanges with students may also take place via telephone.

- Faculty should be explicit in how they expect students to communicate with them and state how they will communicate with students.

An extensive list of interactive techniques is available at the University of Central Florida's Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning resource site: http://www.fctl.ucf.edu/TeachingAndLearningResources/CourseDesign/Assessment/content/101 _Tips.pdf.

Opportunities for Feedback

One of the challenges associated with teaching and learning online is that the participants lose the physical cues that confirm when someone is following the concepts and materials related to the course (Johnson, 2003). To compensate for the lack of physical cues, faculty must intentionally design online courses to include opportunities for giving and receiving feedback. Feedback can be creative; it does not always have to be in the form of formal, written messages to each student.

Below are some tips for using feedback in online courses.

- Provide clear feedback to each student periodically using email or in comments attached to digital assignments links on Blackboard.

- Inform students of the method(s) to be used for providing individualized feedback and state how often they can expect to hear from the instructor.

- Track student progress weekly to identify and assist at-risk students promptly.

- Use the Gradebook in Blackboard to record student progress. Encourage students to refer to the Gradebook to track their own progress and consider adding a course tool link to the navigation links in your course site for "My Grades."

- When possible, return exams, papers, and assignments within one week of submission.

- Respond to students' discussion board postings in a timely manner. It is not necessary to respond to every single posting, but it is appropriate to acknowledge when students have posted exemplary work, are headed in the wrong direction, or are having an interesting discussion about course content. Acknowledging students posts demonstrates teaching presence.

- Create "Assignment" links on Blackboard so that students can confirm successful submission of their assignments and easily receive files and comments from the instructor.

- When practical, if students submit assignments via email, reply to each student confirming receipt of the assignment. When possible, let students also know when they can expect to receive a grade on the assignment. This reduces student anxiety about whether or not their work has been received and creates a realistic timeframe for when students can expect to receive a grade and feedback (Johnson, 2003).

- Consider offering online office hours using a web-based conferencing tool such as Elluminate® or through the Virtual Classroom or Chat features in Blackboard. Contact the Distance Education Center for information and training on tools available.

- Create open book review quizzes in Blackboard that are automatically graded so that students receive immediate feedback. Consider allowing students to complete the review two or three times, with the highest score recorded as a small portion of the overall grade.

- Send or post a weekly summary message to the class to clarify any areas perceived as problematic for students and to acknowledge their work in the course for that week.

- Provide options for peer review and feedback. Consider grouping students into dyads or triads to exchange papers/assignments with their group members.

Instructors need feedback from students as well.

- Create a discussion forum in Blackboard where students can post questions to the instructor related to course materials, content, or assignments. These questions can pinpoint problem areas or identify where further explanation may be necessary.

- Use the survey feature on Blackboard to conduct periodic anonymous surveys of students so that improvements can be made to the course in the coming weeks and in coming terms.

Assessment

Assessment serves multiple purposes in the online environment. It provides an opportunity to monitor student progress and performance throughout the term. It also provides an indicator of progress for students, which enables them to take on greater responsibility for their own learning. Simonson et al. (2000) provide the following recommendations for using assessments in online courses:

- Consider the use of ongoing, non-graded, and self-paced assessments to help students assess their own progress.

- Assessment should not be an afterthought. Rather, course materials and assessments should be developed to match course objectives.

- Develop assessments that not only measure a student's progress and understanding, but also the ability to transfer skills and knowledge beyond the learning environment.

Many of the same techniques used to assess learning in the traditional classroom can be used in the online environment. Those techniques include:

- Essays

- Multiple choice tests

- Research papers

- Short-answer tests

If these techniques are appropriate measures of achievement, by all means, continue to use them—with some adjustments to accommodate the online environment, of course. Alternative assessments offer options for gauging student progress. Consider using some of the following assessment techniques in online courses:

- Blogging

- Case study discussion/writing

- Collaborative writing projects

- Electronic portfolios (e-portfolios)

- Reflective journaling

- Student-created podcasts or other multimedia

- Student-led discussions

All assessments should be appropriately aligned with learning objectives. Rubrics can help faculty and students assess learning on each assessment. For assistance with designing alternative assessments and rubrics, contact the Distance Education Center or the Center for Teaching and Learning.

To meet student authentication requirements listed in the recently-revised Higher Education Act, departments and programs are encouraged to periodically verify online student identity. The most common method of student verification is requiring proctored examinations. Departments or programs are encouraged to designate specific online courses that will require one or more proctored exams. Departments or programs requiring proctored exams in online courses should set guidelines for qualified proctors and provide students with appropriate and timely information for arranging proctoring services. The Distance Education Center can provide recommendations and examples of proctoring guidelines for adaptation.

Students are responsible for locating a qualified proctor to administer each exam. Students are also responsible for any fees incurred for proctoring services. The Consortium of College Testing Centers (CCTC) is a free referral service that will assist students with locating a testing center http://www.ncta-testing.org/cctc/find.php.

Other methods of student authentication include requiring students to respond to a series of personal questions before beginning an exam as well as in-home devices that utilize biometrics technology. The Distance Education Center can provide additional information about student authentication tools and techniques upon request.

Appendices

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Appendix A
Online Course Readiness Checklist

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Course Name/Number   _____

Instructor/Designer   _____

Category I- Learner Support And Resources

A. Information about Being an Online Learner
- ❏ Tips for being a successful online student
- ❏ Link to Distance Education Resources page
- ❏ Link to Hannon Library   http://hanlib.sou.edu/
- ❏ Link to SOU Academic Support Services   http://www.sou.edu/access/
- ❏ Link to DS   http://www.sou.edu/distancelearning/current/disability.html
- ❏ Contact information for Distance Education Coordinator
- ❏ Contact information for Student Help Desk

B. Course-Specific Resources
- ❏ Instructor contact information (phone, email, office hours, preferred communication method, expected response time)
- ❏ Academic Department contact information
- ❏ Course title, course description, and prerequisites
- ❏ Textbooks and other instructional
- ❏ Link to SOU Bookstore   http://soubookstore.collegestoreonline.com/

C. Resources Supporting Course Content
- ❏ Links to web sites with information related to course content
- ❏ Links to professional organizations or associations related to course content

Category II - Online Organization and Design

A. Course Navigation and Organization
- ❏ Syllabus can be easily located
- ❏ Links to external sites are active
- ❏ Course materials are organized in a clear, logical manner
- ❏ Course materials are easily located (within three clicks)
- ❏ Course content is labeled appropriately and consistently
- ❏ Delivery of course materials is consistent and evenly paced

B. Course Syllabus
- ❏ Follows SOU syllabus template
- ❏ Includes expectations of instructor availability and response times
- ❏ Delineates instructor's expectations of students
- ❏ Outlines entire course schedule
- ❏ Includes policies on cheating and plagiarism

C. Site Aesthetics
- ❑ Font style is consistent and easy to read
- ❑ Images support course content
- ❑ Pages are not text-heavy and feature adequate white space
- ❑ Uses contrasting text and background colors

D. Design Consistency
- ❑ Course layout is consistent
- ❑ Navigation is clear
- ❑ Spelling and grammar are consistent and correct
- ❑ All written materials are concise
- ❑ Written communication is friendly and supportive
- ❑ Clear instructions are provided for each module and related tasks

E. Accessibility
- ❑ Images are optimized for quick downloading
- ❑ Images include text descriptions
- ❑ Materials are available in alternative formats
- ❑ Transcripts of audio and video files are available
- ❑ Links to files and web pages are self-describing
- ❑ Color is not used as the sole way to identify or categorize information

Category III- Instructional Design and Delivery

A. Promoting interaction and communication
- ❑ Conducts an online "icebreaker"
- ❑ Students and instructor introduce themselves and respond to one another in first week
- ❑ Student input is not evaluated as "right" or "wrong"
- ❑ Student participation in discussions is tracked and comprises a percentage of final grade
- ❑ Students are engaged in course site consistently throughout the course

B. Aligning Objectives and Activities
- ❑ Learning objectives are stated for each module/lesson
- ❑ Learning objectives describe measurable outcomes
- ❑ Steps for achieving learning objectives are clearly stated
- ❑ Assignments are aligned with learning objectives
- ❑ Course materials are reviewed repeatedly for reinforcement

C. Activities to Engage Students with Content
- ❑ Addresses multiple learning styles through the use of varied activities:
  - ❑ Audio or Video
  - ❑ Student Self-Check Tests
  - ❑ Expert Interviews
  - ❑ Crosswords or Word Searches
  - ❑ Matching Exercises
  - ❑ Animations
  - ❑ Webquests
  - ❑ Student-Created Media

D. Activities for Developing Higher-Order Thinking
- ❑ Includes a variety of activities that appeal to various learning styles
  - ❑ Asynchronous Discussion
  - ❑ Online Debates
  - ❑ Collaborative Projects
  - ❑ Journaling/Blogging
  - ❑ Compare/Contrast
  - ❑ Peer Review
  - ❑ ePortfolios
  - ❑ Problem-Solving

Category IV- Assessment and Evaluation of Student Learning

A. Assessing Student Readiness for Learning
- ❑ Course pre-requisites are clearly stated and enforced
- ❑ Methods for completing and submitting assignments are clearly defined

B. Assessment Strategies
- ❑ Rubric is provided for evaluating online discussion
- ❑ Rubrics are provided for each assessment activity
- ❑ Quantity and scope of assessments are appropriate
- ❑ Assessments are aligned with learning objectives
- ❑ Assessments are sequenced and varied
- ❑ Students are not assessed solely on tests and quizzes
- ❑ Due dates are posted for all assessment activities

C. Feedback
- ❑ Opportunities for immediate feedback provided through self-grading assignments
- ❑ Frequent and substantial feedback offered from instructor
- ❑ Samples of assignments and instructor's commentary on their quality are posted
- ❑ Students are encouraged to pose questions to one another
- ❑ Students have opportunities to provide peer feedback (with guidelines)
- ❑ Students conduct periodic self-evaluations (with guidelines)

Category V- Innovative Teaching with Technology

Selection of Appropriate Tools and Media
- ❑ Communication tools support learning objectives and course content
  - ❑ Discussion Board
  - ❑ Email
  - ❑ Web-Conferencing
  - ❑ Synchronous Chat Room/Office Hours
  - ❑ Announcements
  - ❑ Tele-Conferencing

- ❑ Media selection supports learning objectives and course content
  - ❑ Animation
  - ❑ Podcasts
  - ❑ Graphics/Photos
  - ❑ CD or DVD Supplement
  - ❑ Screen Captures
  - ❑ Video
  - ❑ PowerPoint Presentations
  - ❑ Web Sites
- ❑ Instructions for using communication tools and media are provided
- ❑ Options are available for students on dial-up modem

Category VI - Faculty Use of Student Feedback

A. Course Content and Instruction

- ❑ Students have opportunity to provide feedback at intervals
- ❑ Provision made to conduct end-of-course evaluation
- ❑ Students are encouraged to share resources related to course content
- ❑ Instructor invites students to point out unclear instructions or glitches in technology
- ❑ Instructor solicits open-ended feedback from students
- ❑ Instructor demonstrates willingness to promptly resolve content or technology problems within the course
- ❑ Instructor demonstrates willingness to modify aspects of the course based on student feedback

Adapted from:

Sederberg, L.J. (2003). *Rubric for Online Instruction.* Chico, CA: California State University, Chico. Retrieved September 22, 2008 from http://www.csuchico.edu/tlp/resources/rubric/rubric.pdf.

Van Duzer, J. (n.d.). *Instruction Design Tips for Online Learning.* Retrieved October 2, 2008, from http://www.csuchico.edu/tlp/resources/rubric/instructionalDesignTips.pdf.

APPENDIX B

Rubric for Online Instruction
(Used with permission)

	Baseline	**Effective**	**Exemplary**
Learner Support & Resources	A. Course contains limited information for online learner support and links to campus resources.	A. Course contains some information for online learner support and links to campus resources.	A. Course contains extensive information about being an online learner and links to campus resources.
	B. Course provides limited course-specific resources, limited contact information for instructor, department and/or program.	B. Course provides some course-specific resources, some contact information for instructor, department and program.	B. Course provides a variety of course-specific resources, contact information for instructor, department and program.
	C. Course offers access to a limited number of resources supporting course content.	C. Course offers access to some resources supporting course content.	C. Course offers access to a wide range of resources supporting course content.

Rubric for Online Instruction- continued
(Used with permission)

	Baseline	**Effective**	**Exemplary**
Online Organization & Design	A. Much of the course is under construction, with some key components identified such as the syllabus.	A. Course is organized and navigable. Students can understand the key components and structure of the course.	A. Course is well-organized and easy to navigate. Students can clearly understand all components and structure of the course.
	B. Course syllabus is unclear about what is expected of students.	B. Course syllabus identifies and delineates the role the online environment will play in the course.	B. Course syllabus identifies and clearly delineates the role the online environment will play in the total course.
	C. Aesthetic design does not present and communicate course information clearly.	C. Aesthetic design presents and communicates course information clearly.	C. Aesthetic design presents and communicates course information clearly throughout the course.
	D. Web pages are inconsistent both visually and functionally.	D. Most web pages are visually and functionally consistent.	D. All web pages are visually and functionally consistent through-out the course.
	E. Accessibility issues are not addressed.	E. Accessibility issues are briefly addressed.	E. Accessibility issues are addressed throughout the course.

Rubric for Online Instruction- continued
(Used with permission)

	Baseline	Effective	Exemplary
Instructional Design & Delivery	A. Course offers limited opportunities for interaction and communication student-to-student, student-to-instructor and student-to-content.	A. Course offers some opportunities for interaction and communication student-to-student, student-to-instructor and student-to-content.	A. Course offers ample opportunities for interaction and communication student-to-student, student-to-instructor and student-to- content.
	B. Course goals are not clearly defined and do not align to learning objectives.	B. Course goals are defined, but may not align to learning objectives.	B. Course goals are clearly defined and aligned to learning objectives.
	C. Learning objectives are vague or incomplete and learning activities are absent or unclear.	C. Learning objectives are identified and learning activities are implied.	C. Learning objectives are identified and learning activities are clearly integrated.
	D. Course provides few visual, textual, kinesthetic and/or auditory activities to enhance student learning.	D. Course provides some visual, textual, kinesthetic and/or auditory activities to enhance student learning.	D. Course provides multiple visual, textual, kinesthetic and/or auditory activities to enhance student learning.
	E. Course provides limited or no activities to help students develop critical thinking and/or problem-solving skills.	E. Course provides some activities to help students develop critical thinking and/or problem-solving skills.	E. Course provides multiple activities that help students develop critical thinking and/or problem-solving skills.

Rubric for Online Instruction- continued
(Used with permission)

	Baseline	**Effective**	**Exemplary**
Assessment & Evaluation of Student Learning	A. Course has limited activities to assess student readiness for course content and mode of delivery.	A. Course has some activities to assess student readiness for course content and mode of delivery.	A. Course has multiple timely and appropriate activities to assess student readiness for course content and mode of delivery.
	B. Learning objectives, instructional and assessment activities are not closely aligned.	B. Learning objectives, instructional and assessment activities are somewhat aligned.	B. Learning objectives, instructional and assessment activities are closely aligned.
	C. Assessment strategies are used to measure content knowledge, attitudes and skills.	C. Ongoing strategies are used to measure content knowledge, attitudes and skills.	C. Ongoing multiple assessment strategies are used to measure content knowledge, attitudes and skills.
	D. Opportunities for students to receive feedback about their own performance are infrequent and sporadic.	D. Opportunities for students to receive feedback about their own performance are provided.	D. Regular feedback about student performance is provided in a timely manner throughout the course.
	E. Students' self-assessments and/or peer feedback opportunities are limited or do not exist.	E. Students' self-assessments and/or peer feedback opportunities exist.	E. Students' self-assessments and/or peer feedback opportunities exist throughout the course.

Rubric for Online Instruction- continued
(Used with permission)

	Baseline	**Effective**	**Exemplary**
Innovative Teaching with Technology	A. Course uses limited technology tools to facilitate communication and learning.	A. Course uses some technology tools to facilitate communication and learning.	A. Course uses a variety of technology tools to appropriately facilitate communication and learning.
	B. New teaching methods are applied to enhance student learning.	B. New teaching methods are applied to innovatively enhance student learning.	B. New teaching methods are applied and innovatively enhance student learning, and interactively engage students.
	C. Multimedia elements and/or learning objects are limited or nonexistent.	C. Multimedia elements and/or learning objects are used and are relevant to student learning.	C. A variety of multimedia elements and/or learning objects are used and are relevant to student learning throughout the course.
	D. Course uses Internet access and engages students in the learning process.	D. Course optimizes Internet access and effectively engages students in the learning process.	D. Course optimizes Internet access and effectively engages students in the learning process in a variety of ways throughout the course.

Rubric for Online Instruction- continued
(Used with permission)

	Baseline	**Effective**	**Exemplary**
Faculty Use of Student Feedback	A. Instructor offers limited opportunity for students to give feedback to faculty on course content.	A. Instructor offers some opportunities for students to give feedback to faculty on course content.	A. Instructor offers multiple opportunities for students to give feedback to faculty on course content.
	B. Instructor offers limited opportunity for students to give feedback on ease of online technology in course.	B. Instructor offers some opportunities for students to give feedback on ease of online technology in course.	B. Instructor offers multiple opportunities for students to give feedback on ease of online technology in course.
	C. Instructor uses student feedback at the end of the term to help plan instruction and assessment of student learning for the next term.	C. Instructor requests and uses student feedback a couple times during the term to help plan instruction and assessment of student learning for the rest of the term.	C. Instructor uses formal and informal student feedback on an ongoing basis to help plan instruction and assessment of student learning throughout the term.

APPENDIX C
References

The following resources were consulted in the creation of this handbook:

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