

# What Works Well

In Online Teaching at PCC



**Portland  
Community  
College**

## What Works Well

**M**any factors have changed since online learning began at PCC over 20 years ago. One constant, however, has been what students report they like about the online classes that are taught well. When students describe a successful, positive online experience, they refer to frequent interactions with their instructor and classmates, timely and high quality feedback from their instructor, and a strong instructor presence in the class.

Portland Community College strives to support student success in all online courses and to foster a shared understanding of effective online teaching practices for course delivery. The intent of this document is to create an opportunity for reflection and dialogue about online teaching at PCC in order to create opportunities for instructors to improve online teaching practices.

### THIS DOCUMENT PROVIDES:

- **A description of effective practices** specific to online instruction as demonstrated in online classes taught at PCC.
- **Guidance** for new and experienced online instructors.
- **An opportunity for reflection** and dialogue about online teaching at PCC.
- **An opportunity to align online courses** with PCC values and institutional goals.

## OVERVIEW

### 1 INSTRUCTOR DELIVERY OF COURSE

Instructors deliver courses that incorporate student-instructor interaction and instructor communication.

### 2 INSTRUCTOR PRESENCE

Instructors are present and communicate with students in the course on a weekly basis.

### 3 CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Instructors continuously improve their online delivery knowledge, skills, and course components.

### 4 INSTRUCTOR PREPARATION

Instructors meet PCC's expectations for training and preparation in technical skills, online teaching pedagogy, and course design in order to develop and deliver an online course.

### 5 COURSE MONITORING

Instructors closely monitor student and course activity and communicate, as needed, about the status of their courses and course materials.

### 6 COURSE DESIGN

Online courses are designed using the PCC Quality Matters rubric and peer review process.

### 7 INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES

Instructors & courses comply with institutional policies & practices.

### 8 TECHNOLOGY USE & SUPPORT

Instructors have appropriate technical skills to manage online teaching, can access and use the Learning Management System effectively, can provide basic technical support to students, and direct them to resources that support their success.

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## 1. INSTRUCTOR DELIVERY OF COURSE

Instructors deliver courses that incorporate student-instructor interaction and instructor communication.

### Practices:

- Facilitate discussions or other forms of interaction effectively; intervene to redirect inappropriate behavior.
- Give timely, detailed, and personalized feedback.
- Assess student learning frequently.
- Engage students and provide feedback early enough for students to adjust their performance.

## 2. INSTRUCTOR PRESENCE

Instructors are present and communicate with students in the course on a weekly basis.

### Practices:

- Develop sense of community in the course.
- Deliver news updates.
- Engage with students using discussions, chat, group work, or other tools to deepen understanding of content.
- Communicate intended schedule for course participation to students.
- Include a self-introduction.

- Provide multiple contact methods to students:
  - Primary contact is through the learning management system's email.
  - Secondary contact is through PCC email. Per compliance with FERPA, instructors do not use personal email to conduct business with students.
  - Provide a PCC phone number with voice mail.
- Respond to student communications within 48 hours, optimally within 24 hours Mon-Fri.
- Response time during weekends and holidays are at the discretion of the instructor. Response times to students will be communicated to students, preferably within the syllabus.
- Alert the academic department chair when unable to deliver online instruction due to illness or extended absence away from a computer. Arrange for a substitute instructor and alert students of absence.

### 3. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Instructors continuously improve their online delivery knowledge, skills, and course components.

#### Practices:

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- Explore new teaching strategies.
- Use assessment information, student performance, and course evaluation to improve course.

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## 4. INSTRUCTOR PREPARATION

Instructors meet PCC's expectations for training and preparation in technical skills, online teaching pedagogy, and course design in order to develop and deliver an online course.

### Practices:

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- Successfully complete the sequence of trainings as outlined and provided by the Distance Education Department before teaching an online class for the first time.
- Adhere to the Letter of Agreement outlining the development timeline, terms, and completion process of courses.
- Department/SAC selects instructors who have an appropriate level of knowledge of online pedagogy to create effective learning experiences for their students.
- Department/SAC selects instructors who have an appropriate level of instructional design knowledge to be able to design easy-to-use course components and navigation.

## 5. COURSE MONITORING

Instructors closely monitor student and course activity and communicate, as needed, about the status of their courses and course materials.

### Practices:

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- Adopt strategies for maximizing student retention.
- Contact inactive students no later than Friday of week one to reinforce the need to participate. Consider using one of the following methods:
  - Documented phone call
  - Direct email from PCC email
- Utilize the Course Progress Notification (CPN) system.
- Engage in heightened monitoring of student progress throughout the first few weeks and actively communicate with students when they get behind.
- Fix courseware glitches, such as broken links, typos, and mistakes, as needed.

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## 6. COURSE DESIGN

Online courses are designed using the PCC Quality Matters rubric and peer review process.

### Practices:

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- Include a discussion topic for student introductions.
- Provide interactive content, course components, and navigation that reflect the standards as outlined in the PCC Quality Matters Rubric.
- Align activities, assignments, and assessments with course outcomes.
- Use D2L tools, for example, Student Help Desk widget on homepage, to make it easy for students to find help.
- Courses reflect the minimum course design standards as outlined in the PCC Quality Matters rubric.
- Courses are reviewed using the PCC Quality Matters standards and PCC's Accessibility Guidelines, recommended by the reviewers, and approved by the Division Dean before they are offered.



## 7. INSTITUTIONAL PROCEDURES

Instructors and courses comply with institutional policies and practices.

- Follow the Accessibility Guidelines for Online Course Content established by PCC; doing so provides compliance with requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) regarding accessibility.
- Comply with institution's policies and practices on copyright.
- Participate in course assessment on a regular basis consistent with institutional or department practices.
- Achieve the same student learning outcomes as campus-based courses.
- Meet college expectations for syllabi, which will include the required elements as outlined in the PCC syllabus standards document.

### Practices:

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- Include specific first week participation requirements and the associated No Show (NS) deadline in at least one of the following: the course welcome message, the attendance section of the syllabus, or a PCC email to the class roster.

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- Follow procedures and timelines from the Distance Education department (DL) for course management tasks. Information will be sent via the dlfaculty Google group email list and posted at <http://www.pcc.edu/about/distance/faculty/management>.
- Adjust course start and end date settings within D2L, if necessary.
- Provide support and contact information when using external instructional resources, such as publisher content.
- Complete and post the Course Information Page (CIP) prior to the registration period for the term the course will be offered. Course CIPs should inform class selection and unusual required activities, including on-campus / in-person / synchronous virtual meetings, technology requirements, lab activities, and course materials.  
If a proctored exam(s) is required for a class, the following information is provided:
  - The number of proctored exams.
  - When and where the instructor will offer the exam(s).
  - Alternative arrangements for students who cannot come to a PCC campus for proctored exams.
- Ensure information from the CIP is consistent with the course syllabus.
- Do not modify or remove any of the *Intro to Online Learning* module content to ensure consistent orientation to online learning for students.

## 8. TECHNOLOGY USE & SUPPORT

Instructors have appropriate technical skills to manage online teaching, can access and use the Learning Management System effectively, can provide basic technical support to students, and direct them to resources that support their success.

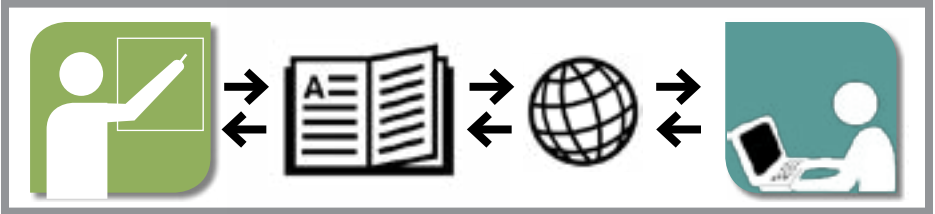
### Practices:

- Use the college adopted Learning Management System when teaching online courses.
- Use supported tools and materials. Support for tools and materials may be provided by the college, a vendor, or instructor. Information is provided to students on support procedures for all tools and materials used in the course.
- Monitor communication from the College and <http://alert.pcc.edu> in the event of an unplanned outage. Monitor communication from the Distance Education department via the faculty listserv, college email, or <http://twitter.com/pccdlstatus> for status updates.
- Provide students with instructions about how to proceed with course work and any adjusted due dates should a significant D2L or MyPCC outage occur that impacts course work being turned in.

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- Communicate with students regarding outages during and immediately following an outage as soon as possible via college email regarding the impact of the outage on the completion of course work, due dates, or other schedule changes.
- Backup the course shell/content after making significant changes.
- Publisher provided materials and homework platforms should be tested for accessibility prior to adoption.
- Instruct and frequently remind students to use *<http://online.pcc.edu>* to access D2L courses directly.

## DEFINITIONS



### Course Delivery:

Parts of an online course that teach students via instructor presence and student-instructor interaction; delivery can involve use of asynchronous or synchronous tools.

### Course Design:

Parts of an online course that teach students via navigation, static content, interactive content, and opportunities for student-instructor interaction that promote, guide, or direct student learning behaviors.

### Course Monitoring:

Instructor behaviors related to maximizing student participation and completion of the course. Monitoring also includes communicating about system outages and fixing courseware glitches such as broken links, typos, mistakes, ideally before they are discovered by students.

### Instructor Presence:

Instructor behaviors characterized by being communicative, actively engaged, and present with students in the course. Instructor presence is enhanced by high levels of student-instructor interaction and instructor communication.

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## DEFINITIONS

### Interactive Content

Content objects, such as programmed simulations, computer-adaptive activities, or scored quizzes that change or adapt while students experience them. Students learn from interactive content by actively engaging with it. Content objects that are programmed to “teach” content via two-way communication; see also Student-Content Interaction.

### Static Content

A content object, such as instructor communications, articles, photographs, or videos that remain static while students experience it. Students engage with static content in self-directed learning activities.

### Student-Instructor Interaction

Mutually coherent exchanges between a student and instructor. Interaction consists of “loops” that begin from the student’s perspective, i.e., interaction occurs when communication sent by a student receives a response from the instructor. Interaction can involve use of asynchronous or synchronous tools. Exchanges between people should not be supplanted by responses from interactive content.

### Student-Content Interaction

Mutually coherent exchanges between a student and interactive content object. Interaction consists of “loops” that begin from the student’s perspective; interaction occurs when communication sent by a student receives a response from the content. Interaction can involve use of asynchronous or synchronous tools.

## COUNCIL MEMBERS

**The Distance Learning Advisory Council (DLAC) membership** includes faculty members, Division Deans, and staff from the campuses and the Distance Education Department:

Name	Title	Campus
Alfred McQuarters	Div Dean - Math, Sciences & CTE	Southeast
Alison Apotheker	Instructor - Comp & Lit	Rock Creek
Andy Freed	Manager - DL Tech & Support	Distance Ed.
Angela Berdahl	Instructor - Comp & Lit	Rock Creek
Barbara Lave	Instructor - CAS/OS	Rock Creek
Betsy Julian	Div. Dean - Science & Tech	Rock Creek
Charmagne Ehrenhaus	Div Dean - Business, Computer Tech & Real Estate	Sylvania
Carey Larson	Online Student Svc Facilitator	Distance Ed.
Dan Wenger	Div. Dean - Arts & Professions	Cascade
Dan Dougherty	Instructor - CIS	Sylvania
Frank Goulard	Instructor - Mathematics	Sylvania
Greg Kaminski	eLearning Facilitator	Distance Ed.
Heather Guevara	Instructor - Sociology	Sylvania
Loraine Schmitt	Dean - Distance Education	Distance Ed.
Loretta Goldy	Dean - Instruction (Interim)	Sylvania
Lori Wamsley	Instructor - Education	Cascade
Noreen Brown	Instructor - CAS/OS	Cascade
Rebecca Robinson	Instructor - Mgmt. & Supervisory Dev.	Southeast
Rebecca Ross	Instructor - Mathematics	Southeast
Steve Beining	Manager - eLearning & Instr. Tech	Distance Ed
Susanne Christopher	Div. Dean - Math, Science & CTE (Interim)	Southeast

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## In Online Teaching at PCC



PCC faculty members provided feedback and

suggestions about this document through both online and on-campus discussions.

For additional comments, contact the **Faculty Help Desk** at 971-722-8227

For resources supporting effective online teaching, go to <http://www.pcc.edu/dl>.



Follow the “**Instructional best practices**” link.

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