

# Effective Strategies for Quality Online Teaching & Learning

Monterey Peninsula College is committed to fostering student learning and success by providing excellence in instructional programs, facilities, and services at its main campus in Monterey, the Public Safety Training Center in Seaside, Education Center at Marina, and MPC Online. Recognizing this commitment, a group of faculty representing the Academic Senate and Institutional Committee on Distance Education led the process of compiling these *Effective Strategies for Quality Online Teaching & Learning* to guide online teaching and learning at MPC.

The *Effective Strategies for Quality Online Teaching & Learning* are intended to help instructors discover how to translate characteristics of high quality teaching and learning into the online environment (including both fully online and web-enhanced face-to-face courses). These effective strategies also serve as the foundation for student and faculty support, distance education planning, and professional development.

The *Effective Strategies for Quality Online Teaching & Learning* fall into six categories:

1. Course Organization & Design
2. Course Syllabus, Learning Objectives, & Introductions
3. Course Content & Materials
4. Communication & Collaboration
5. Assessment & Evaluation
6. Learner Support Resources

Use these effective strategies as both a reference and a road map, to give you an idea of where to begin and/or how to improve your existing courses.

Please contact MPC Online team with questions or for help in applying these strategies!

*These effective strategies have been adapted from the iNACOL National Standards for Quality Online Courses, and CSU, Chico Rubric for Online Instruction.  
Adopted February 6, 2014 by the MPC Academic Senate.*

# Effective Strategies for Quality Online Teaching & Learning

## Category 1: Course Organization & Design

**Goal:** Create a well organized, easy to navigate and understandable course structure that supports student learning.

- Course content is organized clearly and consistently, flows in a logical progression (e.g., weekly format, topical format), and is easily accessible (findable) to students.
- Each unit (week or topic) includes an overview describing the objectives, activities, assignments, assessments, and resources provided.
- Clear instructions or prompts for how and where to begin any online activities are provided throughout the course and may include: timeframe for participation, time requirements, and expectations for communication.
- Visual design is clean, professional, and appropriate for the course/content; consistent throughout the course; and design elements (e.g., font size, color, multimedia) reflect accessibility considerations.
- Titles of links, folders, and labels are clearly named and consistent throughout the course.
- Appropriate tools and media are used to increase student engagement and promote active learning.

## Category 2: Course Syllabus & Introductions

**Goal:** Develop an effective syllabus and introduction for your course and communicate course goals and learning objectives to guide students to appropriate student learning outcomes.

- Instructor provides students with a welcome message, information about getting started with the online course, where to find course content and tools used in the course and technical support.
- Course SLOs and objectives are listed in the course and clearly state what students will know or be able to do at the end of the course.
- The course syllabus is linked from the home page of the course and includes specific information about the online components of the course including:
  - Online communication and etiquette/netiquette expectations
  - Expectations for academic integrity and use of copyrighted materials
  - Expectations for instructor availability and responsiveness (turn-around time for answering e-mail, grading, etc.)
  - Technical skill expectations and technical support contact information
  - Instructions for accessing resources on and off campus (as appropriate to the course)
  - Instructor role in answering course and technical questions
  - A clear statement of grading policies and practices

## Category 3: Course Content & Materials

**Goal:** Provide accessible course content and instructional materials that support course goals and learning activities.

- The course content includes a variety of current and relevant course materials, resources, and multimedia (including visual and auditory elements) to support course SLOs based on the needs of the learners and format of the class.
- The relationship between the instructional materials, learning activities, and learning objectives is clearly explained.
- All course materials are available in accessible electronic format. Multimedia course materials (e.g. video and audio) are closed captioned and designed for accessibility.
- Use of instructional materials complies with copyright regulations or falls under Fair Use guidelines.

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## Category 4: Communication & Collaboration

**Goal:** *Design effective communication and collaboration activities that support your course goals and objectives and support student learning.*

- Course design includes communication activities (both before and during the first week of the course) that confirm student engagement and participation and the instructor follows college guidelines to address non-responsive students.
- Course communication includes regular, substantive contact between instructor and students that is initiated by the instructor.
- Course includes a variety of communication activities that:
  - are appropriate to the SLOs and content being assessed
  - foster a sense of community by promoting interaction between members of the class
  - encourage participation
  - support student engagement and promote active learning
- Communication activities include clear and descriptive instructions for student performance, expectations for participation, and criteria for evaluation (such as a list of expectations, rubrics, grading forms, or model submissions).
- Course provides opportunities for students to offer feedback (including anonymous feedback) about the course.
- Instructor communicates with students through official means of communication (LMS or MPC email) in a manner that protects the confidentiality of student information, as required by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

## Category 5: Assessment & Evaluation

**Goal:** *Incorporate a variety of assessment activities to provide frequent practice, facilitate grading and timely feedback, and assess learning.*

- Course design includes assessment activities (both before and during the first week of the course) that confirm student engagement and participation.
- The course includes a variety of online assessment activities that are appropriate to the SLOs and content, help students develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills, support student engagement, and promote active learning.
- Assessment instructions clearly state the criteria for the evaluation and include clear and descriptive instructions for student performance and how to achieve the assessment objectives (such as a checklist of requirements, grading form, rubric, and/or model submission).
- The course provides students with opportunities to develop content mastery that incorporates timely feedback.
- Grades and comments/feedback are posted online to allow students to monitor and track their own progress throughout the semester.
- Course assessments use techniques and tools designed to promote academic integrity while preventing dishonesty.

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## Category 6: Learner Support & Resources

**Goal:** *Communicate campus support and resources available to your support student learning.*

- Students are encouraged to complete an online orientation for taking an online course before starting the coursework.
- Technologies required for participation in the course, both on and off campus, are clearly communicated to students. Access to required technology is facilitated through links to download required software and plug-ins and posted locations of campus computer labs.
- Links to the technical support and student tutorials are included in the course syllabus and also available as links from the MPC Online course home page.
- Links to the academic support and student services, as appropriate to the course, are included in the course syllabus and also available as links from the MPC Online course home page.