**Quality framework: *Best practices criteria for online and blended delivery***

What does a high quality online course look like? COL has endorsed a set of best practices to guide online and blended course design and implementation. These best practices aim to create awareness to the different components and criteria that affect quality online teaching and learning:

1. Learner Support and Resources
2. Instructional Design
3. Online Organization and Design
4. Innovative Teaching with Technology
5. Assessment and Evaluation of Learning
6. Learner Feedback

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| **Best Practices Criteria: Learner Support and Resources** |
| 1. Course contains detailed information for online learner support and links to campus resources. (i.e. techhelp contact info (email, tel.), links to institutional library, to student services, etc. *Include detailed description of available learner support*).
2. Course provides a variety of course-specific resources (i.e. requisites and pre-requisites, minimum technical skills, explanation of course communication tools, detailed course schedule), contact information for instructor, department and program, including response turnaround times for questions, instructor feedback, marking and discussion postings.
3. Course includes an introductory section that clearly orients learners to how the course is structured and to what is expected of learners.
4. Course offers access to a wide range of resources supporting course content (links to journal articles, relevant videos, open textbooks, etc.).
5. **Blended courses** include a clear explanation about the relationship between face-to-face (f2f) and online components.
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| **Best Practices Criteria: Instructional Design** |
| 1. Course offers opportunities for interaction and learner engagement through appropriate and accessible communications strategies.
2. Course goals are clearly defined and learning objectives throughout the course are aligned with the course goals.
3. Learning objectives are identified at the appropriate level for the course. Learning activities and assessment are clearly integrated and aligned with the learning objectives.
4. Course provides a variety of appropriate learning activities that are meaningful, relevant and contextual to learners.
5. Course provides activities to help learners develop critical thinking / problem-solving skills.
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| **Best Practices Criteria: Innovative Teaching with Technology** |
| 1. Course uses a variety of tools to appropriately facilitate different types of interaction (learner/learner, learner/instructor, learner/content) and support learning activities.
2. Innovative teaching methods are applied to enhance learning, and interactively engage learners.
3. Course optimizes the use of technology to effectively engage learners in the learning process.
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| **Best Practices Criteria: Online Organization & Design** |
| 1. Course is well-organized and easy to navigate. Materials are presented in a consistent and logical structure and layout. Learners can clearly understand all components and structure of the course.
2. Course materials are written in clear and simple language (short sentences, simple grammatical structures).
3. Aesthetic design presents and communicates course materials clearly.
4. All web pages are visually and functionally consistent throughout the course.
5. Accessibility issues are addressed throughout the course (i.e. alt text for images).
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| **Best Practices Criteria: Assessment & Evaluation of Learning** |
| 1. Course includes information and/or activities to assess learner readiness for course content and mode of delivery.
2. The course grading and assignment policy is clearly stated, specific criteria are provided for the evaluation of learners’ work and participation (i.e. rubrics) and clear instructions on how to submit assignment are provided.
3. Learning objectives, instructional and assessment activities are closely aligned.
4. A variety of strategies are used to measure content knowledge, attitudes and skills on an ongoing basis throughout the course.
5. Regular feedback about learner performance is provided in a timely manner throughout the course.
6. Course includes self-assessments with appropriate feedback and/or opportunities for peer feedback.
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| **Best Practices Criteria: Learner Feedback** |
| 1. Course includes standard surveys (i.e. online questionnaires) for learners to provide feedback on course content, structure and presentation, as well as ease of technology used.
2. Instructor requests and uses learner feedback a couple times during the semester to help adjust instruction and assessment of learning for the rest of the semester as needed.
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