

# ***Implementing Principles of Good Practice in Distance Learning***

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## **Principle 1: Encourage student-faculty contact and interaction**

**Frequent student-faculty contact is the most important factor in student motivation, intellectual commitment and personal development.**

### **Methods of Implementation**

- Offer an alternative form of contact - phone calls, fax, face-to-face.
- Inform students of your expected email and voicemail response time (e.g. within 24 hrs, twice a week, etc.)
- Outline the protocol for email, voicemail, or other modes of communication.
- Establish virtual office hours: times when you are available for online chats, phone calls, or email
- Acknowledge initial receipt of students' email with an automatic email reply
- Differentiate types of inquiries and your response time (receipt of message, personal question, content question, assignment feedback)
- Inform students that infrastructure problems (server, etc.) are beyond the control of the instructor and impact response time.
- Regularly send general messages to the whole class
- Contact students before the start of the semester - let them know where to find the class when class starts, advise them to get course materials before start of class, let them know what to expect during first week of class.
- Hold an orientation session at the beginning of the semester
- Get to know your students as individuals; let your students know who you are as an individual
- Refer to students by name
- Limit class size to allow more instructor interaction per student. (Increases in class size should be accompanied by the addition of TAs or other moderators.)
- Follow-up on students who are not participating
- Provide frequent and copious feedback. Offer frequent short assignments/quizzes that allow for frequent feedback.
- Establish replies and responses as important values of online discussions, through tone, modeling, and grade weighting
- Encourage student questions, input, feedback; clearly state that all points of view are welcome and respected
- Become involved in class discussions

### **My methods**

### **My syllabus**

**Time management/implementation tips**

**My time each week**

**Student time each week**

**% my course work**

**% student course work**

## **Principle 2: Encourage student cooperation**

**Cooperative learning that is characterized by interaction, personal responsibility, collaborative skills, and group processing enhances learning.**

### **Methods of Implementation**

- Design activities that promote cooperation
- Provide an organization of the course and content that encourages cooperation
- Use techniques for fostering student cooperation: peer reviews, chats, bulletin boards, discussion forums, group projects, study groups, team learning
- Encourage links between students: 1) exchange of student phone numbers and emails, 2) interview and introduce one another
- Ask students to complete a personality questionnaire for the formation of compatible and effective learning/study work groups

### **My methods**

### **My syllabus**

### **Time management/implementation tips**

<b>My time each week</b>	<b>Student time each week</b>	<b>% my course work</b>	<b>% student course work</b>

### **Principle 3: Encourage active learning**

**To maximize learning, students must interact with the material they are learning, write about it, relate it to past experiences, and incorporate what they are learning into their world view.**

#### **Methods of Implementation**

- Ask students to state what they expect to learn in the class
- Ask students to provide and critique URLs that enhance learning
- Pose discussion questions that foster critical thinking and problem solving
- Use open-ended questions to encourage extended and wide-ranging dialog
- Use quizzes/questions that require students to review the content (self-check or automatically graded online)
- Ask students to teach their classmates
- Ask students to develop/create: learning products, knowledge artifacts, concept maps
- Encourage opinions as well as facts
- Follow-up reading assignments with discussions, simulations, or applications to case studies/scenarios
- Select real-world, relevant, and practical assignments that allow students to apply and practice the concepts learned
- Ask students to critique other students' work.
- Ask student to reflect on their learning - What have you learned (in your own words)? Why is this new knowledge important?

#### **My methods**

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#### **Time management/implementation tips**

**My time each week**

**Student time each week**

**% my course work**

**% student course work**

## **Principle 4: Give prompt feedback**

**The faculty role is key as it gives the students help in assessing their knowledge and competence.**

### **Methods of Implementation**

- Respond with frequent email: with answers to questions, comments about lesson/unit content, giving directions and information
- Return tests, papers, assignments, etc within one week
- Hold virtual office hours for students to discuss their graded work
- Post grades regularly
- Acknowledge all student questions
- Use quizzes/questions that require students to review the content (self-check or automatically graded online)
- Differentiate types of inquiries and your response time (receipt of message, personal question, content question, assignment feedback)

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### **Time management/implementation tips**

**My time each week**

**Student time each week**

**% my course work**

**% student course work**

## **Principle 5: Emphasize Time on Task**

**Learning takes place when time is used effectively and actively.**

### **Methods of Implementation**

- Provide an orientation session/course overview which indicates total time students should expect to expend each week,
- the importance of time on task, and time management skills
- Provide learning objectives for each module/lesson/chapter
- Indicate suggested time-on-task for each task
- Assign something for students to respond to for lesson or class
- Use quizzes/questions that require students to review the content (self-check or automatically graded online)
- Assign student partner interactions with deadlines
- Post notes from each reading assignment and ask each student to respond
- Use open-ended question to encourage extended and wide-ranging dialog
- Require online discussions
- Build in a reward system of points for all student work
- Make assignments enjoyable for students to encourage increased time-on-task
- Make students aware of time that would have been spent sitting in a face-to-face class and traveling to class for comparison to time expended on online class.

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**My time each week**

**Student time each week**

**% my course work**

**% student course work**

## **Principle 6: Communicate High Expectations**

**The self-fulfilling prophecy is a powerful factor. A teacher who holds high expectations for his/her students will have students who perform well.**

### **Methods of Implementation**

- Include course goals, performance objectives, grading and evaluation criteria, grading rubrics, and examples of good student work in the Syllabus
- Clearly state your expectations regarding: quality, quantity, depth, breadth, and frequency of discussion participation and interaction; relative emphasis on facts, concepts, critical thinking and analysis, writing, format, and quantitative reasoning; deadlines; etiquette; internet usage; frequency of check-ins
- Post outstanding, average, and poor student work at a course Web site or conference area
- Set high standards for yourself
- Model high standards and quality through example
- Convey your enthusiasm and passion for the subject (use emoticons)

### **My methods**

### **My syllabus**

### **Time management/implementation tips**

**My time each week**

**Student time each week**

**% my course work**

**% student course work**

## **Principle 7: Respect Diverse Talents and Ways of Learning**

**Helping a student to recognize his own learning style can improve a student's learning. Recognizing the learning styles of others can increase a student's repertoire of learning strategies.**

### **Methods of Implementation**

- Recognize, respect, and reward creativity
- Design more than one method of learning for students
- Design more than one method of assessment and demonstration of student achievement
- Allow students to choose from different possible modes of project presentation, established up front in a learning contract between instructor and student
- Understand and allow for different pacing
- Encourage student to use the Web and other resources and media to master course content
- Ask students to complete a learning style assessment questionnaire
- Design course materials to encourage analysis, synthesis, application, and evaluation
- Recognize that distance education and online classes are not the preferred or best learning environment for some students
- Be sensitive to possible cultural differences
- Understand and appreciate the distance learner's lifestyle, capabilities, and available resources

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### **Time management/implementation tips**

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## Principle 8: Let Students Know What to Expect

By letting students know what they can expect from you and in the course many potential problems can be averted ahead of time. Often, these problems are the result of misconceptions that students bring to the online course.

### Methods of Implementation

- Inform students of your expected email and voicemail response time (e.g. within 24 hrs, twice a week, etc.)
- Use a calendar to let students know when you won't be available
- Hold an orientation session at the beginning of the semester
- Discuss the respective roles of instructor and student in the class - independent, active, student-centered learning with the instructor as mentor/facilitator
- Ask students to complete a self-assessment for distance learning skills and characteristics.
- Indicate the amount of time students should expect to expend each week (90-120 hours total, 6-8 hours/week for a 3 credit 15 week class; and compare to total time expended per week on travel to, attendance in, and work for face-to-face class)
- Include course goals, performance objectives, grading and evaluation criteria, grading rubrics, and examples of good student work in the Syllabus
- Clearly state your expectations regarding: quality, quantity, depth, breadth, and frequency of discussion participation and interaction; relative emphasis on facts, concepts, critical thinking and analysis, writing, format, and quantitative reasoning; deadlines; etiquette; internet usage; frequency of check-ins
- Indicate availability of knowledge, resources, technology, and support
- Dispel misconceptions about online classes by stating that classes are: rigorous college-level courses, have real due dates and deadlines, interactive not independent.

### My methods

### My syllabus

### Time management/implementation tips

My time each week	Student time each week	% my course work	% student course work
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## **Principle 9: Make Effective Use of the Technology**

**One technology does not fit all. Use a technology that fits the needs of your students, your college, your discipline.**

### **Methods of Implementation**

- Do not choose a technology simply because it is new or flashy
- Use technology and resources that are appropriate for your discipline
- Use technology and resources that are appropriate for the task
- Use consistent design throughout the course
- Obtain training in the best and most effective use of each technology employed
- Interact with colleagues frequently regarding practices in online teaching and the use of technology in teaching
- Be flexible in the use of technology, using a mix of technology as appropriate
- Encourage the establishment of a help desk (7 days, 24 hrs) at your school to support all technology
- Provide students with examples of good/reputable and bad/questionable internet sites
- Provide students with examples of effective and ineffective use and design of various media (power point, etc.)
- Use online tutorials regarding research and writing skills
- Use online classroom functions (chat, bulletin board, assignment folders, email, postal mail) appropriate for the task
- Incorporate introductory activities as an additional objective reinforce student mastery of basic classroom functions and technologies (email, read messages, write messages, internet searches)

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