

Grossmont College

Tools & Techniques for Online Teaching

Grossmont College Vision Statement:

Changing Lives through Education

Grossmont College Mission Statement:

Grossmont College is committed to providing an exceptional learning environment that enables diverse individuals to pursue their hopes, dreams, and full potential and to developing enlightened leaders and thoughtful citizens for the global community.

Our mission is fulfilled by providing the people of East San Diego County with:

- Transfer degrees and certificates programs
- Career technical education and workforce development
- Basic skills
- Student support services that promote student access and achievement
- Community education

Grossmont College Distance Education Mission Statement

Support faculty and staff in developing the skills and knowledge necessary to build a rich and engaging online learning environment.

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Definitions

1. Online Course

- Instead of attending lectures on campus, online students attend "virtual" classrooms via the Internet. The virtual classroom can be managed using a LMS (Learning Management System) in an Asynchronous (intermittent) environment and supplemented with a Synchronous (live) mode component.
- With the Asynchronous mode of instruction, instructors may use a LMS, such as Blackboard. Blackboard allows the instructor to post assignments, syllabi, course outlines, web links, podcasts and other pertinent content. In addition, Blackboard allows the use of several communication tools such as discussion boards, chat rooms and email.
- With the Synchronous mode of instruction, instructors may use web conferencing tools to deliver a live lecture or hold office hours for students in real time. CCC Confer and Elluminate are web conferencing tools that allow the instructor to communicate with students in real time using VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol). The programs offer visual tools including application sharing, file transfer, whiteboard and the web cam feature. In addition, the instructor can record the live class for others to watch at a later time.

2. Hybrid Course

- A blended (hybrid) course is taught partly in the classroom and partly online. Blended courses allow the student to benefit from both methods of teaching: online and face-to-face. Delivery methods and communication tools used in online classes apply to hybrid classes.
- Students are required to attend a certain number of on-campus class meetings. The remaining class hours are held online. The online portion of the class allows students to attend "virtual" classrooms via the Internet. The instructor will provide details of the required online class work.

3. Web-enhanced Course

- Instructors who teach traditional face-to-face classes may utilize Blackboard or other online resources to supplement their traditional classes. These are NOT hybrid classes and will be listed in the Schedule of Classes as traditional on-campus courses.
- Individual instructors will inform students in class whether materials will be made available within their Blackboard container and whether use of other online tools, such as discussion boards or online testing, are required.
- It is recommended that instructors who use Blackboard to supplement their courses follow these best practices as well.

State of California Definitions [\(as found on the CCCCO website on this link\)](#)

“Although hybrid courses are coded as non-distance education because they likely don’t meet the 51% reporting standard provided by section 55210, which is for MIS reporting purposes only, hybrid courses with less than 51% of instruction offered through DE are still considered distance education for curricular purposes and need to meet the DE requirements and quality standards. Section 55204 clearly indicates that regular, effective contact applies to all distance education instruction (not just courses that provide 51% or more of instruction through DE).”

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Principles of Effective Online Teaching

The purpose of this document is to provide a list of tools and techniques to be considered when teaching online. The document is intended for those faculty members who are currently teaching online or hybrid courses, those who are considering teaching online or hybrid classes, and those who would like to enhance their face-to-face courses with online resources. The planning and development of an online teaching strategy centers around the need to create a learning community among students. It is important to understand that pedagogical principles drive the use of technology rather than the other way around. Teaching an online course requires an understanding of appropriate online teaching strategies and a number of computer/Internet skills not necessarily related to the original teaching assignment.

Frustrated students and a less than desirable teaching experience come without expressed guidance on what is expected of an online instructor. Students in these courses depend on the instructor to follow an established course schedule and to deliver the course within the scheduled time frame. Students depend on the instructor as their primary link to the course. The many advantages of “anytime, anyplace” education can present a challenge for learners and instructors in time management and operation. It is with this in mind that the best practices established in this document will help overcome the challenges of online teaching and learning.

Online Faculty Qualifications and Training

When selecting faculty to teach an online or hybrid class, deans, chairs and coordinators will look for a faculty member's demonstrated knowledge of technology and online classroom management systems.

Online Teaching Pedagogy

- Designing an effective syllabus.
- Designing learning environments that support a variety of learning styles.
- Designing learning environments that conform to federal and state accessibility requirements for people with disabilities (California Distance Education Accessibility Guidelines).
- Creating course content pages so that they support web user reading techniques.
- Using technologies to provide content in multiple media formats to support the formation of more robust mental models.
- Designing course materials that are easy to use.
- Creating a supportive online course community.
- Observing copyright and fair use policies and guidelines.

In addition, the following technical and administrative training should occur via professional development courses offered each semester:

Technical Training

- Navigating the LMS, Blackboard. Blackboard is the District standard and as such, the college can only offer training and support on that platform.
- Utilizing a web conferencing tool, such as CCC Confer, Elluminate or Skype.
- Becoming familiar with all available technologies offered by the college
- Developing a faculty website with essential elements and providing its location to students

Administrative Training

- Adding / Dropping a Student in an Online or Hybrid Class
- Giving a Student an Incomplete in an Online or Hybrid Class

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Guidelines for Course Delivery and Development

Guidelines should be determined for minimum standards used for course development, design and delivery. Courses should be designed to require students to engage themselves in analysis and effective learning. Learning tasks should be presented in terms of problem solving.

Development:

- For accreditation requirements, instructors must utilize a student authentication system, such as Blackboard or another system that provides a secure login and password.
- Organize the course in a logical format well in advance of the course. Consider breaking your course into weekly modules that help students stay on track in the course.
- Clearly delineate course requirements including a timeline for completion of course material and meeting of course objectives. Discourage lateness and encourage promptness by explaining consequences.
- Consider offering a proctored exam or on-campus exam as a part of the course assessment.
- Schedule any online or on-campus orientations and examinations prior to the beginning of the course and communicate to students at least one week in advance of the course. It is important to note that any required on-campus exams and orientations, as well as proctored exams must be noted in the course schedule.
- Supply course goals, expectations, structure and related policies at the beginning of the course.
- Create a welcome / orientation message. An example is provided in the appendix.
- Delineate instructional policy early in the course.
- Define academic integrity and cheating and clearly define what is considered dishonest and unacceptable.
- Prepare a document of Do's and Don'ts for the course so that students are aware of your expectations.
- Fully use the available technologies to enhance student learning by creating podcasts, e-lectures, short videos or other multi-media.
- Clearly express grading criteria to guide student work. Consider using rubrics.
- Review instructional materials periodically to ensure they meet program standards.
- Design instructional materials according to established accessibility guidelines (for examples see DSPS Web site at <http://www.grossmont.edu/accessibility/>).

Delivery:

- Use structured activities to provide an effective framework for online learning.
- Actively facilitate student interaction by providing both asynchronous and synchronous opportunities with you and their peers. This can be done through the use of the discussion board, chat, social media, and web conferencing tools.

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- Offer weekly “virtual office hours” at various times to accommodate student schedules. These can be brief sessions that are recorded for those who miss the sessions.
- Provide timely, comprehensive and continuous feedback on student assignments and questions. It is recommended that faculty respond within 48 hours to questions and pre-determine when assignment feedback will be received.
- Instruct students in proper methods of effective research, including the assessment of the validity of the resource, plagiarism and copyright issues. Consider using the online library tutorial: <http://www.grossmont.edu/library/libraryinstruction/default.asp>
- Provide opportunities for students to question so as to ensure accuracy of understanding. Consider creating a discussion board thread entitled “Questions on Assignments” or “Questions for the Instructor”. Encourage students to answer each other’s questions as well.
- Emphasize the importance of good study skills throughout the course by providing them with links to information on “how to be a good online student”. This includes being a proactive learner by regularly logging in to the course site, submitting assignments on time, and participating in course discussions. Define how often you would like the students to login to the course (example: a minimum of 4 times a week). Follow-up with students who are not actively participating.
- Manage the “virtual” classroom on a regular basis to ensure that students are completing required assignments and achieving student learning outcomes. You can use tracking features in Blackboard to see how and how often students are accessing the course.

Faculty/Student Contact and Communication

Since communication is the heart and soul of an effective online course, we have provided this section focused on regular and effective contact. Also see Grossmont College’s Regular and Effective Contact Policy, which is mandated by Title 5.

Providing continuous feedback to students has a strong correlation to lower withdrawal rates. Online instructors set the tone for student performance through teacher student interaction and communication.

We recommend the following variety of communication techniques to provide students with continuous support and feedback:

- Discussions using discussion boards, weekly announcements, chats, blogs, wikis, social media, and other Blackboard tools.
- Personalized communication such as email in Blackboard or email directly to student.
- Forward responses to frequently asked questions to all students’ questions to avoid duplication or post them on the discussion board.
- Model appropriate online communication for students. See Netiquette (Internet Etiquette) rules in Resources section.
- Respond to student comments and questions in a timely manner within the time frame set at the beginning of the course.
- Provide general feedback to the entire class on specific assignments or discussions, while at the same time providing individual encouragement and comments.
- Utilize a web conferencing tool, such as CCC Confer, Elluminate or Skype.

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Students in online classes should be provided with the same opportunities as students enrolled in face-to-face classes. The synchronous learning environment offers online students the same access to the instructor that face-to-face students have. With the aid of a web conferencing program, online students who attend a live lecture can stop the lecture at any time by “raising” their hand. Within seconds, the student receives immediate feedback from the instructor either by voice or by chat. While class is in progress, students can also communicate with each other by using the chat feature and answer each other’s questions about the lecture.

Visual tools available through a web conferencing program allow the instructor to share content with each student. By using an application sharing feature, the instructor or student can share any document, program, and website with the class. Other visual tools include the whiteboard, web cam, and file transfer tool. The whiteboard can be used in conjunction with a writing tablet to simulate the writing done on a whiteboard found in a physical classroom. The web cam allows the instructor to communicate with the class via video transmission. The file transfer tool facilitates the distribution of documents. Instructors can “hand out” documents as they would in a face-to-face class.

The use of a web conferencing program also facilitates note taking for the student. Since the student can print or save all whiteboard content, there is more time to focus on the concepts rather than worrying about writing everything down. Since the lecture can be recorded, students who were unable to attend the live lecture can view the archived lecture. Here students can pause, rewind or advance the lecture as needed.

Student Support

- Encourage students to attend a Blackboard orientation session when offered.
- Direct students to http://www.grossmont.edu/help_students/bb.asp
- Provide a quiz for students who are considering taking an online course before they even register. Encourage them to take it the week prior to the start of the class if they have already registered. Here is a link to a good quiz: https://www.waol.org/prospective_students/isonlineforme.aspx

Resources

- Blackboard/Online Services & Design Support: Chris Rodgers at chris.rodgers@gcccd.edu or 644-7385
- Accessibility Support: Will Pines at will.pines@gcccd.edu or 644-7852
- Training Needs: Nadra Farina-Hess at nadra.farina-hess@gcccd.edu or 644-7283
- General Questions on Distance Ed: Kerry Kilber at kerry.kilber@gcccd.edu or 644-7390
- Grossmont College Help Desk at g-helpdesk@gcccd.edu or 644-7742
- District IS Help Desk at is-ops@gcccd.edu or 644-7547
- Library Resources: <http://www.grossmont.edu/library>
- Library Tutorial: <http://www.grossmont.edu/library/libraryinstruction/default.asp>
- Faculty Blackboard Assistance: <http://intranet.gcccd.edu/faculty-support-for-online-courses/>
- Academic Integrity: [Strategies to Promote Academic Integrity in Online Education](#)
- DSPS: <http://www.grossmont.edu/dsps/>
- Tutoring: <http://www.grossmont.edu/tutoring/>
- Accessibility: <http://www.grossmont.edu/accessibility>
- Netiquette Rules: <http://www.brighthub.com/education/online-learning/articles/26946.aspx>

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Appendices – Samples (to be created)

- Orientation / Welcome Message
- Course FAQs
- Do's and Don'ts
- Student Technical Competency Quiz
- Student Technical Requirements for Class
- Discussion Board Guidelines
- Assignment Submission Directions
- Resubmissions Policy
- Grade Book Explanation
- Netiquette Rules
- Expectations for Student/Faculty Interaction (response time)
- Expectations for Student/Student Interaction
- Expectations for Group Interaction
- Academic Integrity (Turnitin.com or SafeAssign)