

# **Best Practices for Distance Education Pedagogical Readiness for Faculty**

## **Rationale**

As an essential part of our commitment to student success in all areas of learning, distance education courses at SLOCCCD should provide high quality, innovative instruction that maintains the highest standards and best practices in the teaching and learning environment delivered electronically.

SLOCCCD is committed to ensuring that faculty who wish to teach online be proficient in basic online pedagogical skills (course design, student interaction and student assessment) in order to assure that online course quality translates into student success.

With online course quality and student success in mind, the following standards for online pedagogical readiness for Distance Education courses at Cuesta College are recommended:

## **Best Practices Preparation**

Prior to teaching distance education courses at Cuesta College, it is recommended that faculty:

Complete college level coursework (such as @One or Cuesta College training) in online teaching and learning that includes course design, student interaction and student assessment, and familiarity with the College's course management system and policies and procedures on Distance Education. It is also helpful to have completed at least one online course as a student so that an instructor can experience this mode of delivery from the student's point of view.

**or**

Be able to demonstrate through previous course designs or teaching assignments:

- Course design that demonstrates pedagogical fundamentals and universal design principles
- Evidence of effective faculty-to-student and student-to-student contact
- Assessments designed to support student learning outcomes
- Familiarity with Cuesta College's course management system
- Knowledge of Cuesta College's policies and procedures on Distance Education

## **Pedagogical Best Practices for Distance Education**

As a Best Practice, SLOCCCD recommends that instructors who wish to teach distance education courses should be aware of the following online, pedagogical best practices:

## **1. Pedagogical Fundamentals**

- Recognize opportunities and challenges of an online learning environment.
- Comprehend distinctive differences between face-to-face and online pedagogy and delivery.
- Understand learner-centered pedagogy where concepts of interactivity, instructor-led facilitation and feedback are core elements.
- Recognize unique needs of the online learner.
- Transition from instructor / content expert to facilitator / resource person.
- Convert face-to-face course content into active learning strategies.

## **2. Course Interaction**

- Communicate and interact asynchronously and synchronously with students.
- Structure, organize and cultivate learning communities and group activities.
- Practice regular effective instructor – student contact.
- Acknowledge the importance of and provide prompt feedback to students, that helps them understand what is needed to improve their performance.

## **3. Curriculum Technology Integration**

- Identify the most appropriate technologies for specific subject area and learning outcomes.
- Understand how selected technologies support content presentation, instruction, demonstration, collaboration, active learning, and assessment.
- Recognize how appropriate technologies can be utilized to enhance online instruction and learning.

## **4. Student Assessment**

- Use online asynchronous assessment techniques
- Provide multiple opportunities for authentic assessment and demonstration of student learning outcomes.
- Employ multiple assessment strategies to maintain active student engagement
- Integrate informal dialog to receive regular constructive student feedback.
- Understand the unique challenges affecting academic Integrity in an online learning environment.

## **5. Accessibility**

Create or modify all course content and self-authored web sites to provide access to students with disabilities using the principles of:

- Universal design
- ADA compliance
- 508 compliance

## **6. Compliance with policy**

Have knowledge of and compliance with appropriate accreditation and District policies related to teaching in an online environment such as:

- Effective student-teacher contact
- Institutional policies (eg Drop policy)
- Authentication
- Welcome Letter and Syllabus recommendations
- Academic Honesty
- Technology Use Policy
- Course Outline of Record compliance
- Student support options