

Meeting Course Competencies Online

To meet expectations for online work, “academic student engagement” is the requirement outlined by the US Department of Education as it relates to class hours versus online instruction. Logging into the system does not constitute student engagement. Students must submit work or take part in an activity to be engaged.

With the change at WITC in regards to offering courses online during this time, the college has developed a list of methods that will assist faculty as they work to meet the course competencies and still engage students, as defined by the Department of Education.

A competency is defined as a major skill a student will learn and demonstrate in a course. A competency must be measurable and observable. What a student should be able to do upon completion of the course. In online courses, students can meet the competencies and student engagement expectations through a number of methods that are aligned with the course competencies.

- Discussion board posts where students respond to faculty post and perhaps one another
- Content videos, which can include lecture videos, demonstration videos (how-to videos), YouTube tutorials, etc.
- Review of lecture notes/lessons posted on Blackboard
- Required online study groups
- Collaborative student assignments conducted via video or other chat options
- One-on-one sessions with students through video or other chat options
- Exams, tests, quizzes
- Other assignments that require students to engage with the course via Blackboard

The passage below was pulled from the US Department of Education Q&A site.

<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/highered/reg/hearulemaking/2009/credit.html>

“In the case of distance education and correspondence education, academic engagement would include, but not be limited to, submitting an academic assignment; taking an exam, an interactive tutorial, or computer-assisted instruction; attending a study group that was assigned by the institution; contributing to an academic online discussion; and initiating contact with a faculty member to ask a question about the academic subject studied in the course. Merely logging into the electronic classroom does not constitute academic engagement.”

As you work toward building or enhancing your courses online, it is recommended that faculty review the course competencies to ensure that assignments are in alignment with the competencies.

Best Practices for Online Teaching

Instructor Presence

Establish teaching presence early and often:

- * Post announcements, appear on video and participate in discussions.
- * Show your personality, passion, and expertise.

Real World Applications

Motivate students by making a real-world connection:

- * Show students how they will apply what they are learning.

Teach for Online Students

Orient students to the online course:

- * Break learning into smaller chunks. Establish a pattern of activity and due dates.
- * Describe expectations for online participation, communication, and netiquette.
- * Provide technical support information.

Clear Expectations

Help students dive straight into the content by providing them with:

- * Detailed syllabus.
- * Due dates and schedule.
- * Clear assignment directions.

Learning Objectives

Alignment matters. Be sure that:

- * Course content aligns with objectives and assessments.
- * Extra content not directly supporting the learning objectives is removed or made optional.

Prompt Feedback

Provide feedback to improve student outcomes:

- * Reinforce important materials, concepts, and skills.
- * Provide timely feedback students can apply during the course.

Engage Students

The quality of interaction between students is a sign of a successful class:

- * Create educational experiences for students that are challenging, enriching, and that extend their academic abilities.
- * Provide students with opportunities to interact with peers, such as through discussion and group work.

Source: Cole, J. (2018, September 10). Best practices for teaching online. Retrieved from:
<https://teachonline.asu.edu/2018/09/best-practices-for-teaching-online/>