

Online Course Quality Rubric: A Tool Box

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April 2020

Recommended citation: Xu, D., Li, Q., & Zhou, X. (2020). Online Course Quality Rubric: A Tool Box. Online Learning Research Center, University of California, Irvine.

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Acknowledgment: The research reported here was supported by the National Science Foundation through Grant 1750386 and Grant 1535300 to University of California, Irvine. The authors are particularly grateful to Dana Saito-Stehberger and Tamara Tate for their detailed feedback and edits on this rubric. We also benefited substantially from the support by Maricela Banuelos, Christian Fischer, Xunfei Li, Yujia Liu, Peter McPartlan, Zhiling Meng, Gabe Avakian Orona, Sabrina Mahendra Solanki, Xiaowen Xu, and other faculty and seminar participants at the School of Education at UCI during the development of this rubric. We would also like to thank Michelle Pacansky-Brock, Megan Wanlin Linos, and Mark Warschauer for their valuable comments and suggestions. Any mistakes are our own.

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Overall Goal

This online course quality rubric was developed to provide a systematic and descriptive benchmark for researchers and practitioners who are striving to develop a culture of high-quality college-level online courses. This rubric differentiates itself from others as it identifies the unique challenges associated with learning in a virtual environment and provides concrete details of how to optimize the design features and instructional practices to ease the challenges. Practitioners and researchers increasingly acknowledge two critical challenges to successful online teaching and learning: the need for stronger self-directed learning skills and greater difficulties in enabling effective interpersonal interactions. These challenges call for the importance of better **scaffolding** the self-directed learning skills necessary for online success as well as providing clear guidance to navigate the learning process, promoting **student agency** to engage students actively throughout their learning, and improving **presence & interactivity** intentionally and visibly. Recognizing the critical role of these three concepts in addressing the unique challenges of online learning, this rubric intends to explain how a particular course component (e.g., learning objective) can be designed to address these concepts. Accordingly, the rubric offers a set of unique features:

- **Explicit connection to online learning theory:** This rubric explicitly links key course components with online learning theory. Specifically, the rubric identifies three concepts that theories and emerging empirical evidence suggest are critical to addressing the unique challenges of online learning; the rubric also consists of six key course components that are typically included in an online course, allowing for a three by six matrix. As a result, each rubric element is defined as an intersection between a concept and a course component, thus explicitly describing how a specific course component could be designed to optimize learning guided by a concept.
- **Holistic approach:** Instead of focusing on the presence or absence of surface-level characteristics, this rubric provides an overall description of the quality expectations and concrete examples to help the course instructor to think through a complex set of quality characteristics within each area in a more deeply-reflective fashion than is required by a yes/no checklist. Similarly, rather than checking off each specific practice, the instructor considers whether a course component seems to adhere to the conception of quality.
- **Flexibility in assessing a whole course or a specific concept area/course component:** This rubric, in the format of a three by six matrix, is a flexible tool that can be used to assist the general course design, the design of a specific course component, or the design features with regard to a specific online learning concept. Similarly, instructors can focus on a particular area that they wish to improve without overwhelming, prescriptive requirements.

Structure of the Rubric

- **Six key course components:** The rubric consists of six main components of course design and implementation that are commonly incorporated in an online course.
 - (1) *Website organization and presentation:* The organization and presentation of course content, instructional materials, and learning activities, and guidance provided to students to help them navigate the course website and manage course requirements;
 - (2) *Learning objectives:* The design and communication of the expected goals of the course or specific units within a course in terms of knowledge and demonstrable skills that will be acquired by a student;
 - (3) *Instructional materials:* Materials (e.g., slides, textbooks, and video lectures) that deliver course content and the guidance on how to use them;
 - (4) *Learning activities:* The design and implementation of various learning-related activities and assignments, such as self-assessment, presentation, discussion forum posts, discussion, projects, etc. (*collectively referred to as “Activities”*), which help reinforce and review what was taught in class, get students ready for the next class, keep track of progress, and apply knowledge in authentic and relevant contexts;
 - (5) *Logistics and course management:* The management of communication of policies, course expectations, and course details, such as assignment deadlines and late work policies;
 - (6) *Targeted support for online learning:* The additional support provided to students to help them better understand and overcome the challenges associated with online learning and learn more effectively in a virtual environment (e.g., training on time management skills).

- **Three online learning concepts:** Drawing from existing literature on the effectiveness of online teaching and learning, this rubric defines three concepts in response to the unique challenges associated with online learning.
 - (1) *Scaffolding self-directed learning skills and guiding the learning process:* Course components are designed and implemented to provide clear guidance on how to fulfil the course requirements, as well as to facilitate successful online learning by incorporating resources for developing self-directed learning skills. This concept is rooted in psychological and cognitive theories that acknowledge a crucial challenge to successful learning in an online environment: online learning is a highly learner autonomous process that requires stronger self-direction and self-discipline to succeed (Guglielmino & Guglielmino, 2003; Song & Hill, 2007; Zimmerman, 1989). As a result, clear and well-designed course structure and navigation, as well as explicit guidance on overcoming the challenges associated with online learning is crucial to online learning success (Azevedo, Cromley, & Seibert, 2004; Grandzol, 2006; Moore, 2013; Smissen & Sims, 2002).
 - (2) *Student agency:* Students are provided with choices of learning materials and activities, and opportunities to reflect on their own learning and various aspects of the course. This concept is rooted in psychological theories that motivation and interests are fostered when individuals are offered voices and choices during the learning process (Deci & Ryan, 2010; Lindgren & McDaniel, 2012). As a highly learner autonomous environment, online courses have the potential to enhance student agency by allowing

personalized learning paths and greater discretion from the students during the learning process (Lindgren & McDaniel, 2012; Martin, 2004). In the meantime, however, the physical separation between the instructor and students in a virtual environment imposes greater challenges for instructors to facilitate students' decision making process and adjust the course instruction based on students' voices (Bennett & Folley, 2019). These challenges highlight the importance for online instructors to encourage and facilitate student self-reflection, to provide clear explanation and guidance about various options of instructional materials and activities to help students make informed decisions about their learning paths, and to intentionally collect ongoing feedback from students and incorporate it into the course (Lee, Pate, & Cozart, 2015).

- (3) *Presence & interactivity*: A course is designed and delivered in ways that facilitate interpersonal interactions and strengthen students' psychological connection to the course by enhancing the "social presence" of both the instructor and students. Computer-mediated communication is often criticized for being impersonal and cold as nonverbal and relational cues—common in face-to-face communication—are generally missing, which may lead to feelings of isolation and low levels of engagement (Huguet, Dumas, Montel, & Genestoux, 2001; Moore, 1989; Nissenbaum & Walker, 1998; Trinkle, 1999). Thus, practices that facilitate interpersonal interaction and foster social presence are essential for online learning (Pacansky-Brock, Smedshammer, & Vincent-Layton, in press; Richardson, Koehler, Besser, Caskurlu, Lim, & Mueller, 2015).

How to Use the Rubric

Elements in this rubric are the products of intersections between online learning concepts and course components through a three by six matrix.

- The three concepts are presented in the first column and the six course components are presented in the first row.
- Specific essential elements in each cell in the matrix are defined by the intersection of the course component in a specific column and the concept in a specific row. For instance, the element in the first cell (i.e., course material organization and presentation) is defined by the intersection between the course component of "Website organization and presentation" and the concept of "Scaffolding self-directed learning skills and guiding the learning process".
- For each essential element, scoring guidance is provided using a 3-point scale ranging from 1 (beginning) to 3 (proficient). Detailed explanations and concrete examples for each level can be found in each section below the table.

Online Course Quality Rubric Matrix

	Website Organization and Presentation	Learning Objectives	Instructional Materials	Learning Activities (including activities, assignments, & assessments)	Logistics and Course Management	Targeted Support for Online Learning
Scaffolding Self-Directed Learning Skills and Guiding the Learning Process	<u>1.1 Course material organization and presentation</u>	<u>2.1 Articulation of learning objectives</u>	<u>3.1 Guidance on how to work with instructional materials</u>	<u>4.1 Regular and various learning Activities</u>	<u>5.1 Articulation of course policies, expectations, and course details</u>	<u>6.1 Learner support and opportunities for scaffolding learning skills</u>
	<u>1.2 Guidance on course navigation</u>			<u>4.2 Clear instruction on learning Activities and articulation of expectations</u>	<u>5.2 Clear communication of course schedule, predictable routine</u>	
Student Agency			<u>3.2 Diversified content delivery media</u>	<u>4.3 Flexible performance tasks and student choices</u>		<u>6.2 Facilitation and incorporation of ongoing feedback from students</u>
			<u>3.3 Flexible content and student choice</u>			<u>6.3 Opportunities for self-reflection on learning goals, process, and performance</u>
Presence & Interactivity	<u>1.3 Instructor presence in the structure of the website</u>		<u>3.4 Instructor presence in content delivery</u>	<u>4.4 Instructor presence in learning Activities and quality feedback</u>	<u>5.3 Regular announcements and reminders</u>	<u>6.4 Approachable and responsive instructor</u>
				<u>4.5 Collaborative learning and interaction opportunities</u>		<u>6.5 Progress monitoring and proactive outreach</u>
						<u>6.6 Non-content-related social interaction opportunities</u>

Course Component 1: Website Organization and Presentation

Elements in this section examine the organization and presentation of course content, instructional materials, and learning Activities, and guidance provided to students to help them navigate the course website and manage course requirements.

1.1 Course Material Organization and Presentation

1. Definition and Importance

A well-organized course structure ensures that the content and materials are segmented into appropriate chunks in a meaningful manner and the course structure is presented in an intuitive and clear way. **Two key indicators** are critical in assessing this element. **First**, it is important that course materials are broken down into manageable learning units that are sequenced and spaced apart properly. Such easily digestible learning units will also lead to maximum re-usability of the materials and flexibility in learning. **Second**, an intuitive, clear course website interface allows students to get familiar with the course website quickly and locate course materials and requirements easily.

2. Features

Beginning	Developing	Proficient
<p>Course content and materials are not consistently divided into learning units or modules.</p> <p>The course does not have an easy-to-navigate interface that is self-explanatory. Most of the course materials are not clearly labeled and consistently organized, creating difficulties for students to locate course materials and requirements.</p>	<p>Course content and materials are generally divided into distinct learning units of manageable size.</p> <p>The course interface is generally clear and easy to navigate. Some of the webpages use headings but not always. Course materials are not always clearly labeled and consistently organized, creating some confusion for students to locate course materials and requirements.</p>	<p>Course content and materials are consistently divided into distinct learning units of manageable size throughout the course and are presented in a logical progression.</p> <p>In addition, the course has an easy-to-navigate interface that is intuitively structured and self-explanatory. Webpages use clear headings and subheadings; course materials are clearly labeled and consistently organized, enabling students to locate course materials and requirements easily.</p>

3. Examples

Beginning	Developing	Proficient
<p>In a 16-week course, the course materials are divided into 4 units. These units cover up to 5 chapters and require more than one week to complete.</p> <p>The sidebar on the course homepage uses the default setting of the platform, which includes a few generic tabs such as “Announcements”, “Assignments”, “Grades”, “Modules”, etc.</p> <p>When a student clicks the “Modules” tab, the website displays 4 learning units that are labeled as “folder 1”, “folder 2”, “folder 3”, and “folder 4”. Each learning unit includes a large set of instructional materials and Activities for multiple weeks, and the title of each document provides little information about the content of the document (e.g., “Video 1”, “Video 2”, “Slides”, and “Assignment 1”). The presentation of the documents does not follow any clear order within a folder and varies across the four learning units.</p>	<p>In a 16-week course, the course materials are organized by week. The materials in each week cover the content of 1-2 book chapters consistently.</p> <p>The sidebar on the course homepage is tailored to the course and includes additional tabs to categorize course-related information in a more nuanced way, such as “Course Overview”, “Announcements”, “Course Policies”, “Faculty Information”, “Modules”, “Resources”, etc.</p> <p>When a student clicks the “Modules” tab, the website displays 16 learning units that are labeled by week (e.g., “Week 1”). Each learning unit contains the instructional materials and Activities for that specific week, but the title of each document provides little information about the content of the document (e.g., “Video 1”, “Video 2”, “Slides”, and “Assignment 1”).</p> <p>The materials are organized by the types of the materials (e.g., all videos are grouped together) in some weeks and are organized by topics covered in the materials in other weeks (e.g., the video, slide, and assignment for topic 1 are grouped together).</p>	<p>In a 16-week Algebra course, the course materials are organized by week. The materials in each week covers the content of 1-2 book chapters consistently.</p> <p>Not only is the sidebar on the course homepage tailored to the course, but also the tabs are thoughtfully labeled with clear information about the content covered under each tab, such as “Weekly Materials” (instead of “Modules”).</p> <p>When a student clicks the “Weekly Materials” tab, the website displays 16 learning units that are labeled by week with some additional information on the topics covered in each week (e.g., “Week 1 Recognize, classify, and use real numbers”). Each learning unit contains the instructional materials and Activities for that specific week, and the title of each document provides information on the content of the document (e.g., “Video: the real number system”, “Quiz 1: Apply properties of real numbers to algebraic expressions”).</p> <p>The materials are organized by the types of the materials consistently across all the learning units (e.g., all videos are grouped together, followed by slides and assignments).</p>

1.2 Guidance on Course Navigation

1. Definition and Importance

Since all the instructional materials and activities are hosted on the course website, students might be cognitively overwhelmed at the beginning of the course even with a consistent and clear structure. Clear guidance for course navigation on the website early in the course can reduce students' cognitive load in navigating course materials and in turn enhance the effectiveness of their learning. Specifically, effective navigational documents should include an introduction of the overall structure of the course, how to get started with the course, and where to find various course materials and activities.

2. Features

Beginning	Developing	Proficient
<p>The instructor provides no guidance to students about the structure and organization of the course website.</p> <p>Students are left on their own to navigate the course structure and locate course materials.</p>	<p>The instructor provides a brief guide to the structure and organization of the course website, allowing students to achieve a basic understanding of key components of the course website and the location of course materials.</p>	<p>The instructor provides step-by-step navigational documents and instructions regarding the structure and organization of the course website, helping students achieve a clear understanding of how to get started, where to find various course components, and how to access resources online.</p>

3. Examples

Beginning	Developing	Proficient
<p>No guidance about the course structure is explicitly provided.</p>	<p>On the first day of the course, the instructor sends an announcement of “Course Navigational Guide” to help students understand the structure of the course website and be prepared for the class.</p> <p>In this announcement, the instructor outlines the main course tabs on the sidebar (e.g., “Announcements”, “Course Policies”, “Weekly Materials”, “Faculty Information”, and “Resources”) and briefly introduces what information is included under each tab:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Announcements: You should visit this tab regularly for class updates and general feedback. ● Course Policies: This tab includes general information about late work policy, attendance, academic integrity, etc. ● Weekly Materials: You can find all weekly modules here. Each module has a checklist, weekly goals, videos, articles, and assignments. ● Faculty Information: You can find my contact info here. ● Resources: This tab includes links to campus resources that you may find useful. 	<p>In addition to sending a “Course Navigational Guide” on the first day of the course, as mentioned in the <i>Developing</i> column, the instructor also posts a “Course Tour Video”. In the “Course Tour Video”, the instructor provides a step-by-step demonstration on what the course website interface looks like as she clicks through the tabs on the sidebar and different webpages to walk students through the course website. For example, the instructor clicks the “Weekly Materials” tab and the webpage lists 16 folders. Under the folder “Week 1 Introduction to the Course”, the instructor clicks videos, slides, web links, and assignments one by one to explain to students what teaching materials and assignments are provided for each week and how to work with them.</p>

1.3 Instructor Presence in the Structure of the Website

1. Definition and Importance

A well-designed course website and navigational documents should allow students to get to know the instructor (e.g., instructor's personality, interests, and teaching style), helping students to develop a connection to the instructor. A strong connection to the instructor in turn can enhance the teacher–student relationship, which is central to students' sense of belonging and motivation.

2. Features

Beginning	Developing	Proficient
The course website and introduction of the course instructor follows a generic format with weak instructor presence.	The course website shows a decent level of instructor presence through either customized website design or personalized introduction of the course and the instructor.	The course website shows strong instructor presence through customized website designs that not only are highly tailored to the content of the course but also show the instructor's teaching styles and personality. In addition, the instructor also personalizes course and instructor introductions to show her personality and teaching styles through videos, photos, and personalized narratives.

3. Examples

Beginning	Developing	Proficient
<p>The course website uses the default setting of the platform without tailoring the course website to the course content. Under the tab “Faculty Information”, there is a very brief biography of the course instructor, her contact information, and her curriculum vita.</p>	<p>In an “Introduction to Early Child Education” course, the instructor tailors the interface of the website to the course content by posting images related to the topic of each week. For example, in the week about “Piaget’s Theory of Cognitive Development,” the instructor embeds a picture of Piaget on the homepage.</p> <p>Under the tab “Faculty Information”, in addition to a very brief biography of the course instructor, her contact information, and her curriculum vita, the instructor also posts her headshot to show her image.</p>	<p>In an “Introduction to Early Child Education” course, the instructor not only tailors the interface of the website to the course content but also shows her sense of humor by posting comics and cartoons related to the topic of each week.</p> <p>Since the instructor strongly values social interaction, she changes the default setting of the discussion board to make it more inviting and pleasant. For example, the instructor changes the fonts of the discussion board from “Times New Roman” to “Montserrat”, and sometimes uses colors other than “black”, such as “light blue”, in her posts to make the environment less formal and more friendly.</p> <p>Under the tab “Faculty Information”, instead of a very brief biography of the course instructor, the instructor posts a three-minute video to introduce her hobbies, why she enjoys studying Education, and her teaching philosophy to help the students know the instructor and make it easier for students to feel connected to her.</p>

Course Component 2: Learning Objectives

Elements in this section examine the design and communication of the expected goals of the course or specific units within a course in terms of knowledge and demonstrable skills that will be acquired by a student.

2.1 Articulation of Learning Objectives

1. Definition and Importance

Carefully designed and clearly communicated course objectives are important in all educational settings, but are particularly critical in an online learning environment where students are studying independently with limited interaction with the instructor and peers. Clearly stated and sequenced learning objectives, along with relevant assessments and a transparent grading policy, can help clarify the instructor's expectations and help students make concrete study plans and monitor their progress accordingly. **Three key indicators** could be used to assess this element. **First**, learning objectives for the course overall and for each unit should be straightforward and clearly communicated, allowing students to formulate and measure their learning progress. **Second**, the learning objectives should be sequenced and measurable so that students have a clear understanding of how each objective can be achieved concretely. **Third**, the learning objectives should be aligned with the content, instructional activities, and assessments, providing students with an explicit coherence between course objectives and content delivery.

2. Features

Beginning	Developing	Proficient
Learning objectives for the course or for each learning unit are not outlined clearly on the website.	<p>Learning objectives are outlined clearly on the website for the course overall as well as for each learning unit.</p> <p>However, articulated expectations of students are not always available, creating possible confusion about the alignment between course objectives and instructional activities.</p> <p>Learning objectives are not always measurable, making it unclear how student performance will be assessed.</p>	<p>Learning objectives are outlined clearly on the website for the course overall as well as for each learning unit.</p> <p>In addition, the learning objectives and expectations for the course overall as well as for each learning unit are clearly articulated to generate an explicit rationale for and coherence across instructional activities.</p> <p>Finally, the learning objectives are measurable and sequenced, detailing how student performance will be assessed with articulated performance expectations.</p>

3. Examples

Beginning	Developing	Proficient
<p>The website does not specify course objectives or expectations for performance.</p>	<p>In a “Science and Cooking” course, the instructor clearly states that the overall objective for this course is to “use methods of scientific discovery, as well as disciplinary methods of chemistry, biology, and physics, to better understand the molecular basis of and importance of science in food, nutrition and cooking.”</p> <p>The instructor further articulates the learning objectives for each learning unit. However, some of the learning objectives are vague (e.g., “being given the opportunities to learn the science of flavor and smell” or “understanding microbes in food fermentation”), and the instructor does not explain how these objectives will be achieved and how students will be assessed.</p>	<p>In addition to clearly stating the overall objective for the course, as mentioned in the <i>Developing</i> column, the instructor further articulates the learning objectives for each learning unit. For example, the learning objectives for the unit of “Browning Reactions and Flavors” are: (1) explaining the process of the browning reaction; (2) listing the key factors of the browning reaction; and (3) using the browning reaction to explain the colors and flavors in foodstuffs.</p> <p>The learning objectives for each unit are all student-centered, use action verbs, and point to a clear assessment that can easily check whether students have mastered that skill or not (e.g., the learning objective of “using the browning reaction to explain the colors and flavors in foodstuffs” could be assessed by asking students to make toast at home and explain why it tastes better than bread).</p> <p>Under the learning objective for each unit, the instructor further lists the instructional activities that would be incorporated in each unit. Such instructional activities are coherent with the objectives. For example, to achieve the learning objectives for the unit of “Browning Reactions and Flavors,” the instructor provides a lecture video to explain the process of the chemical reaction of browning and key factors influencing this process. The instructor also explains the influence of the browning reaction during food processing using real life examples, such as caramel made from milk and sugar, and the flavor of roast meat.</p>

Course Component 3: Instructional Materials

Elements in this section examine the materials (e.g., slides, textbooks, and video lectures) that deliver course content and the guidance on how to use them.

3.1 Guidance on How to Work with Instructional Materials

1. Definition and Importance

Since content delivery and instructional activities primarily take place on the course website, students can be easily overwhelmed by instructional materials. In the meantime, the online learning format often imposes greater challenges for students to meaningfully engage with the materials due to the lack of immediate direction and clarification from the instructor. As a result, students will benefit from clear and detailed guidance on the use of instructional materials, which typically incorporates **three key components**: (i) explanations of the content and goals of different types of instructional materials, (ii) suggestions on how to proceed with these materials, and (iii) specific learning strategies students could use to better engage with the instructional materials.

2. Features

Beginning	Developing	Proficient
<p>There is little guidance on how students should use the instructional materials, creating possible confusion about how to best engage with the instructional materials, what order to follow among multiple materials for a unit, and key concepts and skills to be learned.</p>	<p>The instructor provides a brief explanation for the content and goals of various instructional materials for each unit.</p>	<p>The instructor clearly explains the content and goals of various instructional materials for each unit. The instructor explicitly highlights the key concepts and skills to be learned from the instructional materials in each unit.</p> <p>In addition, the instructor specifies steps students are recommended to follow among various weekly materials to facilitate the learning process. The instructor also constantly provides guidance and specific recommendations (e.g., taking notes and highlighting key points) on what students can do to better engage with the instructional materials.</p>

3. Examples

Beginning	Developing	Proficient
<p>The instructor posts a reading list on the syllabus and weekly videos with content, but provides no suggestions on when or how to interact with them.</p>	<p>The instructor suggests in an announcement sent to the students that students start each week by reviewing the readings on the syllabus for that week before watching the week's video and explains that this will give them more information that will help them follow the lecture video.</p>	<p>The instructor has a graphic prominently placed at the top of the syllabus showing the suggested approach to each learning unit. Specifically, the instructor advises that students start with the week's reading, then video, then lecture notes. The instructor suggests in a short video sent to students at the beginning of the course that students space out each step and reminds them of this periodically during video lectures.</p> <p>In addition, the instructor also gives students a number of tips and videos on the course site explaining the best way to interact with different instructional materials, such as how to actively read, how to take notes from a video, and how to self-test themselves on the content using the discussion questions. The instructor highlights one or two of these resources each week either by mentioning them in the video lecture or incorporating them into the course discussion forum.</p> <p>* Please see "Adding Some TEC-VARIETY 100+ Activities for Motivating and Retaining Learners Online" for more examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity 58 (Chapter 9): Video Study Guides, Tutorials, and Microlectures

3.2 Diversified Content Delivery Media

1. Definition and Importance

The online learning environment provides a setting in which multimedia, characterized by the presence of a variety of media, such as text, pictures, sound, animations, and videos in content delivery, could be used to enhance the learning process and experience. Specifically, research from cognitive science suggests that multimedia learning allows individual students to connect verbal and visual representations of content, therefore strengthening retention of information and achieving a deeper understanding of the knowledge. The use of visual presentations, such as images, video, and animations, in addition to texts also helps improve student attention during the learning process. Additionally, students with different learning habits and technological proficiency may prefer different media in receiving information. As a result, providing students with multiple-choices of media for the same content allows students to study it in ways that they prefer.

2. Features

Beginning	Developing	Proficient
<p>The instructor primarily uses only one medium, most often texts (including slides) to deliver all course content, providing little choice in content delivery media.</p>	<p>The instructor uses a variety of media, such as text, audio, video, and images/graphics, to deliver content.</p> <p>For some of the learning units, students are provided with multiple media to receive the same information, which allows students to choose their preferred way of accessing the information.</p>	<p>The instructor uses a variety of media, such as text, audio, video, and images/graphics, to deliver course content.</p> <p>For most of the learning units, students are provided with multiple media to receive the same information, which allows students to choose their preferred way of accessing the information.</p>

3. Examples

Beginning	Developing	Proficient
<p>The instructor primarily assigns readings from an online textbook. Most content is text-based.</p>	<p>In addition to assigned readings from an online textbook, the instructor also provides weekly PowerPoint slides. In the slides, the instructor provides images and graphics frequently to explain difficult concepts in a visual way.</p> <p>In 5 weeks out of 16 weeks, the instructor also uses videos to explain more complicated concepts that may be challenging to students.</p>	<p>The instructor uses multimedia to cover the same content for each learning unit. Specifically, the instructor provides readings from an online textbook about a set of concepts, a video where the instructor directly explains these concepts, and the slides used in the videos. Students can choose to use their preferred media to learn these concepts.</p> <p>* Please see "Adding Some TEC-VARIETY 100+ Activities for Motivating and Retaining Learners Online" for more examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Activity 57 (Chapter 9): Instructor Online Video Demonstrations ● Activity 72 (Chapter 10): Interactive Multimedia Glossaries ● Activity 75 (Chapter 10): Exploring Animations, Simulations, and Pop-Up Media ● Activity 78 (Chapter 10): Online Subject-Specific Picture Galleries ● Activity 91 (Chapter 13): Cartoon and Animated Movie Productions ● Activity 93 (Chapter 13): Course Video Summaries and Movie Festivals

3.3 Flexible Content and Student Choice

1. Definition and Importance

Learning theories converge to indicate that student agency is better supported when the instructional environments are tailored to the individual needs and interests. Developing a flexible approach to content and instructional materials allows the instructor to bring in useful and varied materials into the instruction and be responsive to the needs and interests of diverse groups of students. In addition, giving students choices among different content options for investigation based on their interests, abilities, and teacher recommendations also allows students to take ownership of their learning and engage in the learning process in ways that are meaningful to them.

2. Features

Beginning	Developing	Proficient
<p>The instructor does not take into account student individual needs and preferences, and provides little choice in instructional materials.</p>	<p>The instructor offers some choices of alternative or supplemental instructional materials and resources to achieve learning goals in some of the learning units.</p> <p>However, choices in terms of instructional materials are not consistently provided, nor is there any clear guidance to help students make informed decisions about their learning paths.</p>	<p>The instructor consistently offers a variety of alternative or supplemental instructional materials and resources to achieve learning goals for most of the learning units, allowing students to personalize their learning paths according to needs and preferences.</p> <p>In addition, the instructor provides detailed explanations about different instructional materials and resources to help students make informed decisions about their learning paths based on individual abilities, interests, and needs.</p>

3. Examples

Beginning	Developing	Proficient
<p>In a research methods course offered to students majoring in education, the instructor designates one textbook.</p> <p>While the instructor sometimes uses supplemental readings to illustrate a method, there is little flexibility in the topical content of the reading; the topics of these supplemental readings are often not directly related to the education field either. For example, in introducing the method of “propensity score matching”, the instructor assigns a journal article that uses the propensity score matching method to assess the impact of receiving smoking cessation counseling on the mortality of smokers admitted to hospitals. The instructor also offers slides that explain the propensity score matching method, where the smoking counseling article is used as a specific example.</p>	<p>In a research methods course offered to students majoring in education, the instructor designates one textbook but also provides a list of other textbooks for reference.</p> <p>The instructor consistently assigns journal articles related to education to illustrate a method but the extent of flexibility in readings varies across learning units. In about half of the learning units, the instructor offers multiple journal articles to illustrate a method and allows students to choose one article to focus on. For example, in introducing the method of “propensity score matching”, the instructor further lists three journal articles that use the propensity score matching method in addressing different education-related issues: one on early childhood education, one on afterschool programs at the K-12 level, and one on postsecondary education. Students can choose to focus on one of the three articles in learning how this method is specifically implemented in education research.</p> <p>The instructor also offers both videos and narrated slides that explain the propensity score matching method in general. She further includes three separate sets of short videos and slides to illustrate how each of the three articles uses the method specifically.</p>	<p>In a research methods course offered to students majoring in education, the instructor designates two textbooks for students to choose from. In the course introduction video, the instructor explains that one textbook provides comprehensive and standard coverage of the various research methods; the other textbook further includes some advanced topics for each research method. The instructor recommends that students primarily rely on the standard textbook but use the more advanced textbook for topics that are of particular interest to them.</p> <p>The instructor assigns journal articles addressing topics in the field of education as supplemental readings to illustrate a method. She consistently offers multiple journal articles to illustrate a method and provides explicit explanations and recommendations to help students make an informed choice of an article to focus on.</p> <p>For example, in introducing the method of “propensity score matching”, the instructor not only assigns three journal articles as supplemental readings, as mentioned in the <i>Developing</i> column, but also points out explicitly the differences between the three articles. In a class announcement, the instructor indicates that “The three journal articles use propensity score matching to address different topics related to education; please feel free to focus on the one that sounds most relevant to your own research interests. In addition, compared to the other two, the article that focuses on the impact of developmental education on student learning outcomes uses a more complicated design—propensity score matching with multiple treatment groups. Therefore, if you are interested in understanding how to apply this method in the presence of multiple treatment groups, I would recommend that you read this article.”</p>

3.4 Instructor Presence in Content Delivery

1. Definition and Importance

Unlike traditional face-to-face courses where students meet and interact with the course instructor during lectures, online learning creates a physical separation between the instructor and students during the instructional process, which often leads to greater challenges for students to develop a personal connection with the instructor. To address these challenges, it is critical for online instructors to strengthen instructor presence in instructional materials and activities to engage with students actively and visibly. The use of multimedia such as audio, video, and other interactive technologies (e.g., synchronous meetings) allow students to develop a sense of personal connection with the instructor, which in turn would motivate students to reciprocate and dedicate effort to the course materials.

2. Features

Beginning	Developing	Proficient
<p>The instructor primarily relies on texts (such as slides and text-based handouts) to deliver instruction, presenting students an overwhelming amount of information in a disengaging way with no direct support and explanation from the instructor.</p>	<p>The instructor uses texts as the main method to deliver course content, but sometimes uses other media-rich and personalized modes, such as audio, video, and synchronous meetings, to directly explain the course content in some of the learning units.</p>	<p>The instructor consistently infuses a variety of visual, media-rich, and personalized modes, such as graphics, audio, video, synchronous meetings, and narrated slides, throughout lectures to allow for a thorough explanation of concepts in an engaging manner and also to create a strong instructor presence.</p> <p>In addition, the instructor uses a friendly and conversational tone when explaining the course content.</p> <p>When applicable, the instructor provides sample problems and offers step-by-step demonstration of how to format solutions to problems.</p>

3. Examples

Beginning	Developing	Proficient
<p>For each learning unit, the instructor assigns readings from the textbook and provides PowerPoint slides to highlight the key concepts covered in these readings.</p>	<p>In addition to readings from the textbook and PowerPoint slides, the instructor occasionally provides short videos to explain difficult concepts and show herself on camera, and a whiteboard app with a voice-over to go through concepts that are particularly challenging to most of the students in class. The instructor also offers two synchronous review sessions where she uses screen sharing to illustrate relevant content.</p> <p>In addition, the instructor sends out periodic “Q&A” emails summarizing questions students have raised and answering them in a friendly, personable way.</p>	<p>For each learning unit, the instructor explains key concepts covered in that unit and shows herself on camera in addition to assigning readings from the textbook and providing PowerPoint slides. The instructor uses conversational voice (an active voice and shorter sentences) and a warm and friendly tone in the lecture videos, such as using interjections “Yay!” and “Phew”.</p> <p>The course materials also include short examples of worked problems with voice-over by the instructor explaining the steps being taken and why.</p> <p>* Please see “Adding Some TEC-VARIETY 100+ Activities for Motivating and Retaining Learners Online” for more examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity 16 (Chapter 5): Screencasted Supports and Directions

Course Component 4: Learning Activities
(including learning activities, assignments, and assessments)

Elements in this section examine the design and implementation of various learning-related activities and assignments (collectively referred to as “Activities”), such as self-assessment, presentation, discussion forum posts, discussion, projects, etc., which help reinforce and review what was taught in class, get students ready for the next class, keep track of progress, and apply knowledge in authentic and relevant contexts.

4.1 Regular and Various Learning Activities

1. Definition and Importance

Well-designed learning activities and performance tasks ensure that students are intellectually engaged with the course content and allow both instructors and students to monitor student progress towards achieving learning objectives. **Two key indicators**, regularity and the variety of Activities, are critical aspects to consider when instructors design learning Activities to scaffold the learning process. First, the strong time management skills required by online learning may impose challenges to many students; regular and frequent Activities spaced throughout the course can help students space their study time more easily and engage with the course content constantly. Regular and frequent Activities also allow instructors and students to evaluate student learning processes and adjust instruction and learning accordingly. Second, it is important for instructors to offer Activities in a variety of forms that allow students to develop skills ranging from low levels (e.g., remembering basic facts) to high levels (e.g., problem solving in authentic contexts).

2. Features

Beginning	Developing	Proficient
<p>Activities are infrequent and are not sufficient in number to ensure students are consistently engaged with the course.</p> <p>In addition, the Activities are often of low cognitive challenge and do not invite high-level thinking and engagement, leading to generally short and superficial responses from the students.</p>	<p>The instructor creates varied Activities that are designed to promote thinking and understanding.</p> <p>However, the Activities are not consistently advancing high-level thinking.</p> <p>While multiple Activities are given, they may not be at predictable times, or may not be sufficient in number or spaced in a way that ensures students are constantly engaged with the course.</p>	<p>The instructor motivates students to learn through varied engaging Activities that challenge students cognitively and advance high-level thinking.</p> <p>The Activities are sequenced, allowing students to practice, build, and evaluate various levels of skills, which leads to thoughtful responses from students.</p> <p>In addition, the Activities are given frequently, spaced throughout the term, and at predictable times or intervals, which ensures students are constantly engaged with the course.</p>

3. Examples

Beginning	Developing	Proficient
<p>In a 16-week course, the instructor uses only three multiple-choice quizzes and one comprehensive final exam to assess whether students have understood the course materials.</p> <p>The deadlines of the quizzes are not consistent across weeks (e.g., the first, second, and third quizzes are due on Monday, Thursday, and Wednesday, respectively) or are scattered over the course of the class (e.g., in weeks 2, 3, and 7).</p>	<p>The instructor creates multiple Activities throughout the course, and the Activities contain only basic concepts and theories of the course content:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Weekly multiple-choice quizzes: This Activity is to make sure students watch the lectures and practice what they have learned from the lectures every week. All quizzes are due on random days for each week. ● A middle exam (multiple-choice and open-ended questions). ● A final exam (multiple-choice) at the end of the semester. 	<p>The instructor creates multiple Activities throughout the course, and the Activities contain basic concepts and theories, thoughtful discussions, and meaningful application of the knowledge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Weekly multiple-choice quizzes: The instructor assigns multiple-choice quizzes weekly to make sure students watch the lectures and practice what they have learned from the lectures (and get feedback to self-regulate) on a weekly basis. Quizzes are due every Wednesday at the same time and to the same place. ● Self-assessment: In addition to the graded weekly quizzes, the instructor interleaves opportunities for students to review through self-testing with immediate feedback showing correct answers for prior materials, spacing these opportunities out over the term to enhance retention. ● One group presentation: This Activity is to encourage students to collaborate with other group members and present their ideas logically. ● Discussion board activities: Every two weeks, the instructor assigns discussion board activities for the students to analyze real-life examples using the techniques that they have learned in the readings. The discussion board activities are due on Fridays. ● A final exam: The instructor offers a final exam (multiple-choice, similar to the weekly exams) at the end of the semester.

4.2 Clear Instruction on Learning Activities and Articulation of Expectations

1. Definition and Importance

Clear and explicit guidance on learning Activities is essential to scaffold student engagement with learning Activities and bolster student learning gains. Instructors should take into account pedagogical goals of the learning Activities and provide detailed guidance to ensure understanding of the rationale behind various Activities, clarify instructors' expectations and evaluation criteria, and provide concrete suggestions or examples students could draw on to meet these expectations.

2. Features

Beginning	Developing	Proficient
<p>For most of the Activities, the instructor does not explain how Activities align with the learning goals of the course, nor does the instructor provide any clear guidance on how to complete these Activities.</p> <p>In addition, a clear rubric or equivalent grading document is unavailable for most of the Activities, making it difficult for students to understand what they are expected to do and how they will be graded.</p>	<p>The instructor explains how some of the Activities align with the learning goals of the course, but provides limited guidance on how to complete these Activities.</p> <p>A clear rubric or equivalent grading document is available for some but not all of the Activities.</p>	<p>The instructor explains how each Activity aligns with the learning goals of the course and provides detailed guidance on how to complete each Activity, helping students to successfully and meaningfully engage in the Activities.</p> <p>In addition, the instructor provides a rubric or equivalent grading document to explain the expectations and grading criteria for each Activity clearly and transparently. Specific examples and exemplary work are often provided to illustrate how to successfully meet the requirements of the Activities.</p>

3. Examples

Beginning	Developing	Proficient
<p>There are three types of learning Activities in this class (i.e., online quizzes, discussion forum posts, and a final paper), but the instructor provides detailed instruction on the final paper only.</p> <p>The instructor explains how to submit the final paper and provides a grading rubric for the final paper only.</p>	<p>The course includes three types of learning Activities, weekly online quizzes, discussion forum posts, and a final paper.</p> <p>The instructor provides a written explanation of how to access the online quiz system. The instructor also clearly explains what the students should post about in the discussion forum each week and briefly explains how the discussion forum posts align with the learning objectives.</p> <p>The instructor clearly articulates the expectations for the final paper and provides a detailed rubric on how students will be evaluated. No rubric is provided for discussion forum posts, however, leaving it unclear how the posts will be graded.</p>	<p>For each assignment, the instructor provides explicit written explanations of how the assignment aligns with learning objectives and of the skills that students will practice by completing the assignment.</p> <p>Clear instruction is provided on how to access and submit each assignment and assessment. For instance, the instructor provides a video to explain how to access the online quiz system and how to submit the final paper via the learning management system.</p> <p>For all writing assignments (i.e., forum posts and final class paper), the instructor clearly articulates the expectations and provides detailed rubrics on how students will be evaluated. Models of posts and final papers are made available and the instructor highlights some of the best features of each example when providing them.</p>

4.3 Flexible Performance Tasks and Student Choices

1. Definition and Importance

Performance tasks provide students the opportunity to apply knowledge in relevant contexts. Due to different backgrounds, experiences, and interests, students may prefer different avenues to demonstrate learning. Thus, developing a flexible approach to performance tasks creates opportunities to make learning relevant for diverse groups of students and allows them to make a choice of how to meet the course objectives based on their own perspectives and interests. The access to options in demonstrating mastery can also enhance student agency and encourage students to take ownership of their learning.

2. Features

Beginning	Developing	Proficient
<p>The instructor does not take into account student individual needs, differences, or preferences in designing Activities and makes no attempt to provide multiple options for Activities.</p>	<p>The instructor offers multiple options for Activities, allowing students to practice and build skills and demonstrate mastery of course objectives in their preferred way.</p> <p>However, the instructor does not clearly communicate expectations and evaluation criteria for each option to help students make informed decisions.</p>	<p>The instructor offers multiple options for Activities, allowing students to practice and build skills and demonstrate mastery of course objectives in their preferred way.</p> <p>In addition, the instructor communicates expectations and evaluation criteria for each option to help students make informed decisions.</p>

3. Examples

Beginning	Developing	Proficient
<p>Each week, students are given 3 writing prompts to reflect on the weekly readings. Students need to write a 1-page response to each of the 3 prompts.</p>	<p>Each week, the instructor provides 5 writing prompts, with one from each of the five types of reflexive, narrative, descriptive, expository, and argumentative prompts.</p> <p>Students need to respond to 3 out of the 5 prompts based on the topics they are most interested in and the type of skills they would like to practice in that week. Students are encouraged to start with easier prompts (i.e., reflexive, narrative, descriptive prompts) and gradually move to more difficult ones (i.e., expository and argumentative prompts). Students are required to respond to each type of prompt at least once during this course.</p>	<p>In addition to allowing students to choose from the five types of prompts, as stated in the <i>Developing</i> column, students are also given the option to choose their preferred way to respond. They can choose to write a 1-page response or create an infographic as the response. As the term goes along and the instructor begins to know the students, Activities are structured to align with students' interests and needs, for instance, by adding the ability to create a rap song, a podcast, or short video to express the students' understanding of a text. Students are also invited to suggest other forms of responses that would be useful to them (e.g., writing an OpEd piece or blog).</p> <p>How each type of response will be graded is clearly articulated in the instruction.</p> <p>* Please see "Adding Some TEC-VARIETY 100+ Activities for Motivating and Retaining Learners Online" for more examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Activity 43 (Chapter 8): Starter-Wrapper Technique ● Activity 44 (Chapter 8): Shotgun Questioning ● Activity 46 (Chapter 8): Open Exploration Weeks ● Activity 96 (Chapter 13): Content Databases and Learning Portals

4.4 Instructor Presence in Learning Activities and Quality Feedback

1. Definition and Importance

Instructor feedback can be broadly defined as any information and comments provided by the instructor to students on their performance tasks and contributions to class activities in relation to achieving the course objectives and expectations. Prompt, detailed, and personalized feedback from the instructors allows students to assess their understanding of key concepts, reflect on the effectiveness of their learning process, and make improvement on their learning process based on actionable suggestions.

2. Features

Beginning	Developing	Proficient
<p>The instructor does not provide feedback beyond the numeric/letter grades on any of the Activities.</p> <p>Grades are not provided in a timely manner.</p>	<p>The instructor has a presence in some of the Activities through infrequent monitoring.</p> <p>In addition, the instructor provides only brief feedback beyond the numeric/letter grades on most of the Activities. For most of the Activities, the feedback is not provided in a timely manner.</p>	<p>The instructor has a strong and ongoing presence in most of the Activities through active and regular monitoring and participation.</p> <p>In addition, the instructor provides detailed, personalized, and actionable feedback beyond the numeric/letter grades on most of the Activities. For most of the Activities, the feedback is provided in a timely manner.</p>

3. Examples

Beginning	Developing	Proficient
<p>Students receive letter grades on their midterm three weeks after it was given and no additional feedback.</p>	<p>The instructor provides letter grades on weekly multiple-choice tests a week after students complete the test.</p> <p>Students receive short comments like “Nice Work” or “Needs to be proofread” along with letter grades on their midterm three weeks after the midterm was given.</p> <p>For discussion forum posts, the instructor comments on only one or two student posts each week online.</p>	<p>The instructor is regularly seen on the class discussion site, offering tips, feedback, and even personal anecdotes connected to the week’s topic.</p> <p>Before the midterm and final exams, the instructor provides specific suggestions for how to prepare for the exam, providing students with resources to supplement their understanding of difficult concepts and re-teaching where there were widespread misunderstandings.</p> <p>The instructor provides feedback on learning Activities promptly, in advance of the next similar Activity (e.g., on discussion post before the next post is due). The instructor may utilize video or audio to convey feedback. The instructor sends encouraging emails to students as they improve throughout the course.</p> <p>Feedback is clear, personalized, and actionable. Students may be directed to resources such as exemplary models or supplemental learning options and resources (e.g., materials, tutoring available at the Writing Center).</p> <p>The instructor follows up with students to see if the advice was helpful and encourages them to seek out help if they need it.</p> <p>* Please see “Adding Some TEC-VARIETY 100+ Activities for Motivating and Retaining Learners Online” for more examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Activity 16 (Chapter 5): Screencasted Supports and Directions ● Activity 20 (Chapter 5): Learner-Self Interaction and Self-Feedback Forms

4.5 Collaborative Learning and Interaction Opportunities

1. Definition and Importance

Online learning imposes great challenges in achieving meaningful student-student interactions due to the physical separation among students. Well-designed collaborative learning opportunities, where students work in groups to perform learning activities together, are beneficial to online students in at least two ways. First, collaborative activities can expose students to new and diverse perspectives, helping them to think critically and gain a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the content. In addition, engaging collaborative group activities have the potential to offset feelings of loneliness and isolation due to the absence of physically present peers and enhance students' sense of community support. Yet, the effectiveness of collaborative online group activities heavily depends on how well they are planned and facilitated. Successful collaborative activities often require instructors (i) to clarify the expectations and evaluation criteria and (ii) to actively participate in and moderate the collaborative activities to address questions and ensure meaningful interactions among students.

2. Features

Beginning	Developing	Proficient
<p>The instructor does not create collaborative Activities that enable students to learn with/from each other or to build a learning community.</p>	<p>The instructor creates collaborative Activities that enable students to learn with/from each other and to build a learning community, such as problem-centered projects, course-content-related discussion forum participation, or formative peer feedback on assignments.</p> <p>However, the instructor does not provide explicit guidance on how to complete the collaborative Activities nor grading rubrics to detail how participation will be evaluated. The instructor does not actively participate in and facilitate student collaborative Activities.</p> <p>There is uneven participation among students and superficial interactions between participants.</p>	<p>The instructor creates collaborative Activities that enable students to learn with/from each other and to build a learning community, such as problem-centered projects, course-content-related discussion forum participation, or formative peer feedback on assignments.</p> <p>The instructor provides incentives, guidance, and clear rubrics for collaborative Activities to stimulate more meaningful interaction by explicitly communicating expectations, procedures to complete the Activities, etiquette for interactions, and how participation will be evaluated.</p> <p>The instructor actively participates in and navigates student collaborative Activities by monitoring the process, responding to questions, and providing timely advice.</p> <p>The collaborative learning activities successfully involve the majority of the students, generating meaningful and thoughtful interpersonal interactions.</p>

3. Examples

Beginning	Developing	Proficient
<p>The instructor assigns only individual homework without creating any collaborative learning and interaction opportunities.</p>	<p>The instructor encourages collaborative learning by requiring a minimum of two discussion forum postings each week on topics covered in that week, and a minimum of two responses to postings from peers.</p> <p>However, the instructor does not participate in the discussion forum to facilitate student discussion, nor is there any detailed grading rubric to provide a clear sense of the instructor’s expectations of what an initial post or response post should look like. Most of the students complete only the minimum requirements of two posts and two responses, and their responses to peer posts tend to be superficial (e.g., “good job” and “this is a very interesting point”).</p>	<p>The instructor provides multiple opportunities, including discussion forum participation and one graded problem-based group project, to encourage collaborative learning and interactions among students.</p> <p>Not only is participation in these collaborative activities compulsory and graded, but also the instructor provides a detailed grading rubric to clearly convey what constitutes high-quality work. For the discussion forum postings, for example, the instructor explicitly lays out in the syllabus that “Discussion board posts and replies will be closely evaluated for depth of thought and insight into the question. Replies to peers must be thoughtful, and should not simply agree with the author, or state ‘me too’.” The instructor further clarifies that each post will be assessed in terms of focus, specificity, support, thoughtfulness, and use of language, with each counting for 2 points.¹</p> <p>In addition, the instructor participates in the forum actively to facilitate student discussion by asking clarification questions, summarizing major points, making comments on students’ posts, and raising follow-up questions. Most students actively participate in the discussion board posting regularly and thoughtfully.</p> <p>* Please see “Adding Some TEC-VARIETY 100+ Activities for Motivating and Retaining Learners Online” for more examples :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Activity 61 (Chapter 8): Scholar, Scientist, or Innovator Role Play ● Activity 62 (Chapter 8): Interactive Learner Questioning and Discussion ● Activity 63 (Chapter 8): Jigsaw the Online Content ● Activity 66 (Chapter 8): Collaborative Mind Mapping and Idea Visualization ● Activity 69 (Chapter 8): Word Cloud Interactions ● Activity 83 (Chapter 12): Structured Role Debates ● Activity 84 (Chapter 12): Online Study Group Challenges

¹ The example comes from Jaggars, S.S. & Xu, D. (2016). How do online course design features influence student performance? Computers & Education, 95, P.279

Course Component 5: Logistics and Course Management

Elements in this section examine the management of communication of policies, course expectations, and course details, such as assignment deadlines and late work policies.

5.1 Articulation of Course Policies, Expectations, and Course Details

1. Definition and Importance

In the online environment, confusion about course policies and expectations is more likely to occur due to the large swath of information on the course website and fewer opportunities for interpersonal interactions when questions arise (or benefiting from questions of a peer). By articulating course policies and expectations early on and designing interactive activities (such as syllabus quiz) to ensure understanding of critical items, instructors provide important support to students by helping them become familiar with course policies and expectations, and reducing misconceptions and questions related to these critical items later on.

2. Features

Beginning	Developing	Proficient
The instructor does not clearly communicate the course policies, expectations, or course details.	<p>The instructor communicates some but not all of the course policies, expectations, and course details regarding assignments, due dates, grades, appropriate discussion and interaction, email communication, attendance, academic integrity, software and hardware requirements, and technical assistance.</p> <p>The instructor provides clear guidance and links to some institutional services, such as disability access.</p>	<p>The instructor clearly communicates all of the course policies, expectations, and course details regarding assignments, due dates, grades, appropriate discussion and interaction, email communication, attendance, academic integrity, and software and hardware requirements in an accessible location on the course website.</p> <p>The instructor provides clear guidance and links to institutional services and support, such as disability access statements, technical assistance, and on campus/online tutoring services.</p> <p>The instructor provides interactive tasks for students to familiarize themselves with the course policies and syllabus.</p>

3. Examples

Beginning	Developing	Proficient
<p>The course policies and expectations do not provide students with an understanding of their responsibilities and where they can get support for the course.</p>	<p>The instructor provides some but not all of the policies, expectations, and course details that are listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The schedule of synchronous meeting times and instructor office hours are provided when the course begins. ● The specific time of day an assignment is due and the consequences of late or missing assignments are clearly stated. ● Academic integrity is defined and the consequences of violations are clearly stated. ● Required materials, such as the specific version of the textbook and required readings, microphone, and video camera, are stated and students are directed to where they can be obtained. ● Links to academic and technical support are provided. ● There is an accessibility statement that encourages students, if needed, to request accommodations in the first week of class. <p>This content is emailed to students at the beginning of the course and it is stored in a folder with a clear title, such as “Course Documents”. There is a discussion link in this folder for students to post any questions they have about the course and its policies. There is a link to this folder on the main page in the first week of class.</p>	<p>The instructor provides all that is listed in the <i>Developing</i> column and then provides interactive tasks to explore and to digest the information regarding the syllabus and various course policies.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A multiple-choice quiz that focuses students on key points, such as late work policy, how students are expected to prepare for each learning unit, where to locate due dates, and possible ways to communicate with the course instructor. Questions could be written as scenarios that students need to respond to. Or it could be presented as a scavenger hunt where students need to find particular information on the website and in the syllabus. ● A discussion board with the following prompt: “After reading the course syllabus, share one thing that you think is important for your classmate to know about this course.”

5.2 Clear Communication of Course Schedule, Predictable Routine

1. Definition and Importance

As a highly learner autonomous process, online learning requires strong time management skills, which can be challenging for many students. Moreover, students can easily lose track of the various coursework to be completed given the large amount of information presented on the course website. A clear presentation of course schedule with predictable routines provides important support to students by reducing confusion and helping students set up routines and prepare for each upcoming learning Activity.

2. Features

Beginning	Developing	Proficient
<p>Neither the schedule of course topics nor due dates for any of the assignments, projects, exams, and synchronous meeting times are presented on the course website.</p>	<p>The schedule of course topics and due dates for some but not all of the assignments, projects, exams, and synchronous meeting times are clearly presented on the course website.</p> <p>Changes to the Course Schedule are communicated in a single way (e.g., announcement).</p>	<p>The schedule of course topics and due dates for all of the assignments, projects, exams, and synchronous meeting times are clearly presented on the course website, both in the “Course Document” folder as well as on the “Course Calendar”. The instructor creates a survey for students to share when they are available for synchronous meetings throughout the course. Links to important assignments and projects may also be provided in the Course Schedule.</p> <p>Changes to the Course Schedule are communicated in multiple ways (e.g., on site, mentioned in video, announcements, emails), and students are encouraged to communicate with the instructor if they have any questions.</p>

3. Examples

Beginning	Developing	Proficient
<p>The instructor does not provide an overview of the topics that will be discussed in each segment of the course.</p> <p>Assignments, projects, exams, and synchronous meetings are discussed but no due dates and times are mentioned.</p> <p>Any changes in the course are not clearly communicated.</p>	<p>An overview of the topics that will be covered in each segment of the course is given in the course syllabus. Each course module is clearly labeled with the appropriate topic.</p> <p>Due dates are listed either in the syllabus, on the page that the assignment is described, on the “Weekly Overview” page, on the “Course Calendar”, or in an “Approaching Due Dates” section in the sidebar section on the Course Homepage.</p> <p>Changes to the course schedule are announced consistently in one of the following ways: through announcements, emails, video messages, or the “Course Updates” sidebar section on the Course Homepage.</p>	<p>An overview of topics is presented, as described in the <i>Developing</i> column.</p> <p>All due dates are listed in at least TWO places described in the <i>Developing</i> column.</p> <p>To help students stay on track with bigger projects, the instructor breaks down the tasks into sections and gives suggested due dates to aim for.</p> <p>The instructor also provides links to important assignments and projects to make it easier for students to find the assignments/projects.</p> <p>Changes to the Course Schedule are announced in at least two ways mentioned in the <i>Developing</i> column. In addition, the instructor explicitly encourages students to communicate with her if they have any questions.</p>

5.3 Regular Announcements and Reminders

1. Definition and Importance

Announcements and reminders allow instructors to communicate with students about course activities, logistics, and processes. They can be provided in written, audio, and video formats. Regular announcements and reminders are important not only because they help keep students on track but also because they demonstrate that the instructor is present in the course and is moderating the learning process of individual students and the class actively. **Three aspects** should be taken into account in assessing this element: (i) regularity—whether the announcements and reminders are provided on a regular and frequent basis; (ii) coverage—whether the announcements and reminders cover important aspects of the course, such as upcoming deadlines and exams, newly posted documents, general comments and guidance on learning activities, etc.; and (iii) tone—whether the announcements are communicated in a conversational, personalized, and friendly way.

2. Features

Beginning	Developing	Proficient
<p>The instructor rarely sends course announcements and reminders about what students should be working on and about upcoming assignment deadlines and exams.</p>	<p>The instructor sends infrequent course announcements and reminders about what students should be working on and about upcoming assignment deadlines and exams.</p>	<p>The instructor sends course announcements and reminders at least once a week. The instructor reminds students of what they should be working on and of upcoming assignment deadlines and exams, newly posted documents, as well as shares connections with students between the subject matter and the world outside the classroom, such as current events or topics in pop culture. The instructor also provides general feedback on recent Activities in the announcements and incorporates actionable suggestions for improving subsequent performance and learning.</p> <p>The tone of the announcements and reminders is conversational and personable. The instructor may use audio/video to increase presence.</p>

3. Examples

Beginning	Developing	Proficient
<p>The instructor does not reach out to students to virtually tap them on the shoulder to remind them of tasks that they should be working on and of upcoming deadlines and exams.</p>	<p>The instructor sends out messages occasionally about upcoming due dates (e.g., due dates for major assignments/assessments) by posting announcements and reminders to the Course Homepage or sending out emails.</p>	<p>The instructor sends out messages about what students should be working on and up-coming deadlines regularly at approximately the same day and time each week by posting announcements and reminders to the Course Homepage or sending out emails.</p> <p>The instructor uses these weekly messages to reinforce concepts and demonstrate relevance by providing a link to a pertinent news article, an internet meme, or a related comic.</p> <p>The instructor also uses these weekly messages-to give general feedback on recent Activities, such as what the class as a whole did well or what needs to be worked on. Practical suggestions for improvement, such as supportive websites or extra practice, are communicated here as well.</p> <p>The instructor uses a conversational tone in these weekly messages that is simple and easy to read. She also uses questions to engage students, such as “How many of you are still considering all the possibilities for a topic for your research project?” Her conversational voice uses an active (not passive) voice and consists of shorter sentences.</p>

Course Component 6: Targeted Support for Online Learning

Elements in this section examine additional non-content-specific supports to help students with online learning in general.

6.1 Learner Support and Opportunities for Scaffolding Learning Skills

1. Definition and Importance

Online learning offers a great deal of flexibility to students in terms of when and where to learn; yet, associated with the convenience provided by an online platform is a greater level of responsibility that students are required to assume for this self-paced learning, such as to manage time wisely, to keep track of progress on course assignments, to overcome technical difficulties and the feeling of isolation, and to take the initiative to communicate with instructors and peers for questions and group assignments. These skills—generally falling under the category of “self-directed learning”—may represent a strong challenge to many students, particularly those with poorer academic preparation. Thus, it is important for instructors to (i) communicate explicitly the challenges associated with online learning and the learning skills necessary for successful learning in a virtual environment, as well as to (ii) embed the teaching of self-directed learning skills into the course and develop materials, assignments, and other pedagogical processes to cultivate self-directed learning skills.

2. Features

Beginning	Developing	Proficient
<p>The course provides little information about how to navigate online learning. The course may include links to student online readiness assessment tools, but students are not required or encouraged to take the assessments. There is little guidance on how students should interpret the results from the assessments or how to improve their readiness.</p>	<p>The course includes a general course orientation and online readiness assessments at the beginning of the course about online learning. However, the orientation and readiness assessments are provided in a passive way, without strong incentives for students to go through the training. There is also a low level of guidance to help students interpret results from the readiness tests and limited guidance on how to improve online learning skills.</p>	<p>The instructor guides and motivates students to go through a general course orientation and online readiness assessments at the beginning of the course to help students understand the challenges of online learning, an individual’s readiness to learning online, and the skills necessary for successful learning in a virtual environment.</p> <p>The orientation and readiness assessments not only include technological requirements necessary for successful online learning, but also outline the recommended study behaviors and responsibilities expected of students.</p> <p>In addition, the instructor offers guidance and resources to help students interpret the results from their readiness assessments, identify areas that require attention, and improve online learning skills through assigned or recommended activities and tutorials that will give students opportunities for developing those skills. The instructor also embeds some instruction on online learning skills thoughtfully in the content delivery and instructional materials.</p>

3. Examples

Beginning	Developing	Proficient
<p>There may be a link to a course orientation video, but students are not made aware of the various skills required to be successful in an online course.</p>	<p>Course orientation videos and online readiness assessments are provided on the course website. The course orientation describes how the course is organized and generally what skills are necessary to be successful in the course.</p> <p>Topics of online readiness tutorial videos may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Online study skills and time management ● Communication skills for online learning ● Online reading strategies ● Technical aspects of online learning <p>The instructor briefly mentions course orientation and tutorials as supplemental resources at the beginning of the course but students are not required to complete them.</p> <p>* Some helpful online student readiness tutorials and assessments can be viewed at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● https://apps.3cm mediasolutions.org/oei/students.html ● https://tamut.edu/Academics/Online-Education/online-readiness.html 	<p>Course orientation videos and online readiness assessments are provided on the course website.</p> <p>The instructor explains why these resources are important and encourages students to access them, by perhaps assigning points to them. The instructor facilitates a discussion on the qualities of a successful student in an online learning environment, which is based on the assessment that students are required to take. Students are challenged to set individual goals based on the outcomes of their assessment and to create a plan to achieve them using resources provided by the instructor.</p> <p>The instructor embeds tips for time management, study skills, and effective communication throughout the course (for example, a week before the first quiz talking to students about the benefits of self-testing and including an infographic about self-testing in the weekly email) and has students evaluate their progress towards their goals throughout the quarter.</p>

6.2 Facilitation and Incorporation of Ongoing Feedback from Students

1. Definition and Importance

Student feedback helps instructors understand student learning experiences and identify what is working and what requires further improvement. In addition, the opportunities of providing feedback also give students voice in how they learn and engage them in the learning process more actively. **Two key indicators** could be used to assess this element: (i) an ongoing process of feedback solicitation and timely incorporation of the feedback in course delivery, and (ii) thoughtful implementation to increase participation among all students.

2. Features

Beginning	Developing	Proficient
<p>The instructor does not provide opportunities for students to give feedback throughout the course. While students have the opportunity to give feedback through course evaluation at the end of the course, it does not improve the learning experience of the students providing the feedback.</p>	<p>Students are provided with some opportunities to give feedback throughout the course.</p> <p>However, the process is not thoughtfully designed, resulting in low participation and only mildly useful information. The instructor makes as many adjustments as possible with the feedback that is received.</p>	<p>The instructor establishes a process to periodically collect feedback (including anonymous feedback) from students on various components of the course, such as instructional materials, learning activities, course management, and targeted online learning support and resources. The instructor adjusts course design and implementation accordingly based on students' feedback.</p> <p>The instructor uses a variety of strategies to encourage student feedback, such as by explicitly discussing the importance of having a voice, providing incentives for feedback, and offering alternative ways through which students could express their opinions.</p>

3. Examples

Beginning	Developing	Proficient
<p>The instructor does not emphasize the importance of the students' perspectives and feedback on the course and therefore they do not have much of an impact on the course. The course is not tailored to meet the specific needs of the particular group of students.</p>	<p>At random times during the course, the instructor asks the students the general question: "Do you have any suggestions for how this course could be improved?"</p> <p>Students are not asked for specific feedback, such as how much time they are spending on a particular project, if the assignment guidelines are clear to them, if they can access all the course resources, if they feel comfortable in the class, or if they prefer working independently or in groups.</p> <p>If any suggestions can be implemented, the instructor incorporates them into the course.</p>	<p>At the beginning of the course, the instructor informs students that if they have any questions, issues, or suggestions regarding any aspect of the course, they are encouraged to share it at any time throughout the course on the "Questions and Comments for the Instructor" discussion board in the "Course Documents" folder on the Course Homepage. The instructor checks this discussion board regularly. When a student suggests that students would appreciate having until Monday morning to complete discussion post responses, the instructor polls the students and enacts the change, thanking the student who suggested the change in the email announcing the new deadline.</p> <p>Two times throughout the course the instructor assigns students a quick feedback survey with specific questions about the course. The survey has students rate the effectiveness of each topic on a Likert scale, and invites students to leave more detailed comments if they have any. The survey is treated as an assignment and awarded points when completed. Any changes the instructor makes in response are done transparently so that students know that the instructor is responding to student feedback.</p> <p>The instructor addresses the feedback on the discussion board and through the weekly announcement and implements any changes that can be made.</p> <p>* Please see "Adding Some TEC-VARIETY 100+ Activities for Motivating and Retaining Learners Online" for more examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Activity 12 (Chapter 5): Student Polling and Voting ● Activity 13 (Chapter 5): Online Suggestion Box

6.3 Opportunities for Self-Reflection on Learning Goals, Process, and Performance

1. Definition and Importance

Characterized as a highly learner autonomous process, effective online learning requires students to constantly reflect on and evaluate their performance and learning progress, identify areas that need improvement, and adjust goals and study plans accordingly. However, many students are not aware of the importance of self-reflection, or how to develop it. Therefore, opportunities embedded in the course to help students reflect on their performance and learning processes, as well as guidance offered by the instructor about how to use self-reflection to improve learning (including an introduction to technological tools students could use to monitor their own data) can provide a powerful tool to online students.

2. Features

Beginning	Developing	Proficient
<p>The instructor does not provide explicit opportunities for students to evaluate and reflect on their performance and learning process. Students are not guided and encouraged to set individual learning goals and the plans to achieve them.</p>	<p>The instructor provides some opportunities for students to evaluate and reflect on their performance.</p> <p>However, students are not provided with concrete guidance on how to monitor their progress and how to adjust their learning process and goals to improve performance based on self-reflection.</p>	<p>Multiple opportunities for student self-assessments are embedded in the course to help students reflect on not only their performance, but also their efforts and learning process during the course.</p> <p>The instructor provides actionable advice on how to adjust learning goals and plans to improve performance based on self-reflection.</p> <p>In addition, the instructor provides guidance on technological tools students could use to track their own progress, such as through the learning analytics data stemming from the learning management system, and how to adjust learning plans and goals accordingly.</p>

3. Examples

Beginning	Developing	Proficient
<p>The instructor does not empower students to take responsibility for their own progress and learning. Students are not directly encouraged or given the tools to self-evaluate their learning processes and performance. They are not instructed to set individual goals and to have a plan to achieve them.</p>	<p>The instructor provides at least one opportunity (see below for some concrete examples) for students to self-evaluate and reflect on their learning process explicitly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A needs analysis at the beginning of the course that asks students questions based on the content of the course as well as students' interest in the topic, experience they have had with the topic, their perceived ability, their preferred learning styles, what they think will be most difficult in the course, and why they are taking the course, if it is not required; ● Informal formative assessments at the beginning of each module; ● A quick two-question reflective response when reviewing a module's summative assessment. The response consists of two questions: (1) What concepts have I understood well in this module? (2) What concepts do I still need to work on? The learning objectives for the module are listed under each question and students circle the ones that apply. ● After each lesson, the instructor posts an "Exit Question" about a key concept of the lesson. It is distributed to students through the Learning Management System (LMS) survey function. ● A midterm self-evaluation that has a list of desired study habits as well as concepts that have been covered in the course. For each item, the students select one of the following: Needs Lots of Improvement, Needs Improvement, or Satisfied. 	<p>The instructor provides multiple opportunities for students to evaluate their learning process, as mentioned in the <i>Developing</i> column.</p> <p>In addition, the instructor takes the time to guide students through one or more of the following reflective processes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reflection on how much progress has been made to the initial personal goals they had written in the beginning of course, based on the results of the various self-assessments; ● Observation and participation in a discussion board reviewing for an exam; ● Occasionally during the quarter students are asked to review their grades in the LMS gradebook and to answer two short questions: (1) Are you satisfied with your results of your effort so far in this course? (2) What changes, if any, would you like to make in your learning plan? The instructor provides a list of options that students can simply choose from. <p>* Please see "Adding Some TEC-VARIETY 100+ Activities for Motivating and Retaining Learners Online" for more examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Activity 14 (Chapter 5): Minute and Muddiest Point Papers

6.4 Approachable and Responsive Instructor

1. Definition and Importance

Students are more likely to seek help from the instructor actively and develop a personal connection with the instructor when they feel that the instructor is approachable and responsive, which is often achieved when instructors invite student questions through a variety of modalities, respond to student queries quickly, and express encouragement and passion during regular interactions. These strategies help students to feel that the instructor cares about students' learning experiences in the course, which in turn helps students feel connected to the course and strengthens their motivation to learn and succeed.

2. Features

Beginning	Developing	Proficient
<p>The instructor provides contact information to students and office hours “on request”, but does not encourage students to communicate with her or specify when and how students should communicate with the instructor.</p>	<p>The instructor offers multiple ways for students to communicate with her, such as through emails, discussion board postings, or live chat sessions.</p> <p>However, the instructor does not explicitly commit to timely response to student questions.</p>	<p>The instructor explicitly encourages students to communicate with the instructor and provides multiple ways to do so, including both asynchronous (e.g., emails, discussion board postings) and synchronous (e.g., weekly live chat sessions, telephone, and office hours) venues.</p> <p>The instructor explicitly commits to timely response to student questions (typically, within 24 hours).</p> <p>The instructor has an active presence throughout the course and demonstrates commitment to the course and to the students through being accessible, by providing specific feedback, and by making thoughtful comments to students as individuals.</p>

3. Examples

Beginning	Developing	Proficient
<p>The instructor includes her contact information on the course website and syllabus, but does not communicate an open-door policy to students explicitly nor offer routine office hours.</p>	<p>The instructor encourages students to reach out to her in any of the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● By posting a comment that would be helpful and informative to other students as well in the “Questions and Comments for the Instructor” discussion board in the “Course Documents” folder on the Course Homepage; ● Through email or phone; ● During a scheduled office hour; ● In a synchronous class meeting. 	<p>At the beginning of the course, the instructor asks students to upload photos in their profile so the instructor can begin to connect names, faces, and personalities. The instructor uses the “notes” feature of the LMS gradebook to record important information about students and refers to this information to personalize their subsequent interactions.</p> <p>The instructor encourages students to reach out to her in multiple ways listed in the <i>Developing</i> column.</p> <p>The instructor demonstrates her commitment to students and her eagerness to help them succeed by responding to student questions within 24 hours.</p> <p>The instructor responses to student inquiries are clear and direct, providing detailed directions when necessary. Responses are personalized to the individual student.</p>

6.5 Progress Monitoring and Proactive Outreach

1. Definition and Importance

It is crucial that instructors regularly monitor students' progress and reach out to them in order to assure students that the instructor is aware of students' progress and is committed to helping them succeed in the course. This is motivating to students who are fulfilling the expectations of the course and also provides encouragement and support to students who are not. Through technological tools that automatically record student learning analytics data on the platform regarding when and how a student accesses online materials and completes assignments, online learning environments offer unique affordances for gauging the progress of individual students efficiently and identifying at-risk learners in a timely manner, based on individual online learning behaviors that might otherwise go unnoticed in face-to-face lectures with large class sizes. In particular, the early identification of at-risk learning behaviors and learners can enable course instructors to take more proactive steps to determine whether a student is experiencing problems and to reach out to these students to provide actionable academic and emotional support.

2. Features

Beginning	Developing	Proficient
<p>The instructor does not monitor student progress or reach out to students.</p>	<p>The instructor monitors student progress based on multiple sources of information, including student behavioral data stemming from the learning management system to identify academically struggling students.</p> <p>The instructor proactively reaches out to struggling students regarding their performance, but there is limited encouragement and direction for future success.</p>	<p>The instructor frequently monitors student progress based on multiple sources of information, including student behavioral data stemming from the learning management system to identify academically struggling students.</p> <p>The instructor proactively reaches out to each student to assure students of the instructor's awareness of their progress and commitment to help them succeed. The instructor pays particular attention to struggling students to help them stay on track.</p> <p>The instructor provides available resources and actionable advice to students on how to improve their learning.</p>

3. Examples

Beginning	Developing	Proficient
<p>The instructor has not established a routine of regularly monitoring individual student progress by observing student comments in discussion, the completion of assignments, the quality of work turned in, and the grades in the gradebook.</p>	<p>The instructor has established a routine of regularly monitoring individual student progress by observing student comments in discussion, the completion of assignments, the quality of work turned in, and the grades in the gradebook.</p> <p>Students who are not fulfilling the expectations of the course are contacted through email to check in and determine the reasons for the low performance.</p>	<p>The instructor has established a routine of regularly monitoring individual progress, as mentioned in the <i>Developing</i> column.</p> <p>Students who are not fulfilling the expectations of the course are immediately contacted by email or by phone. Students are informed of their current progress, the instructor provides specific suggestions such as accessing online tutoring opportunities or using supplemental videos explaining key topics, and the instructor and each of the students come up with a learning plan that will help the students to be more successful in the course.</p> <p>At midterm, each student receives a short email from the instructor with current grades, a sentence describing student work so far, and an inquiry as to how the student feels they are doing in the course.</p> <p>All students receive pertinent links to available resources and actionable advice on how they can improve their learning.</p>

6.6 Non-Content-Related Social Interaction Opportunities

1. Definition and Importance

Social interaction, along with content-related interactions between instructors and students and between students, is an important component to learning. Increased social interaction can help support the sharing of resources, enhance motivation, and build respectful and supportive learning communities. Opportunities for the instructor and students to introduce themselves and interact with each other on both course-related and personal topics can help course members know each other, boost positive interpersonal relationships, and promote a sense of community. The instructor may also consider providing explicit guidance on the technological tools and appropriate etiquette needed to achieve effective and respectful communications in a virtual learning environment.

2. Features

Beginning	Developing	Proficient
<p>The instructor creates few opportunities for students to get to know the instructor and to connect with other students socially.</p>	<p>The instructor creates opportunities for students to get to know the instructor, as well as opportunities for students to connect with each other socially.</p> <p>However, the instructor provides limited guidance to stimulate respectful and engaging interpersonal interactions.</p>	<p>The instructor creates opportunities for students to get to know her, including proactively reaching out to students at the beginning of the course to welcome the students, introduce herself, and provide helpful information about the course using personalized language.</p> <p>The instructor also creates opportunities for students to introduce themselves and to connect with each other socially throughout the course.</p> <p>In addition, the instructor provides concrete guidance to stimulate respectful and engaging student-instructor and student-student interactions throughout the course.</p>

3. Examples

Beginning	Developing	Proficient
<p>The instructor does not acknowledge explicitly how learning is affected by the social dynamics of the learning community.</p>	<p>The instructor sends emails to students before the course begins, introducing herself, sharing what they will need for the course and when the course will begin.</p> <p>The instructor assigns one or more of the following community-building activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● “Student Lounge” discussion board. This is the designated place students chatter about things unrelated to the course content. Note: It must also be monitored by the instructor. ● “Ice Breakers” throughout the course, such as having students post a picture of a room in their house, a picture of one of their meals, their favorite website, or something they like to do. ● “Movie Theater”. This is a place student watch videos together and comment on them through watch2gethr.com. 	<p>The instructor sends individual emails to students before the course begins, introducing herself, sharing what they will need for the course and when the course will begin.</p> <p>The instructor assigns one or more of the community-building activities that are listed in the <i>Developing</i> column. The instructor encourages students to introduce themselves and communicate with their peers socially. The instructor also models the activities and shares socially about her life as well.</p> <p>The instructor shares elements of respectful online engagement with students, which may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Be mindful of how your comments will be interpreted by your classmates; ● Communicate your interest in learning from your classmates; ● Be aware of usage of all capital letters and exclamation points; ● Be careful with sarcasm and humor; ● Gauge what is appropriate and inappropriate in the classroom setting; ● Cite your sources. <p>* Please see “Adding Some TEC-VARIETY 100+ Activities for Motivating and Retaining Learners Online” for more examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Activity 1 (Chapter 4): Personal Introductions ● Activity 2 (Chapter 4): Video Introductions ● Activity 5 (Chapter 4): Eight Nouns ● Activity 6 (Chapter 4): Two Truths and One Lie ● Activity 8 (Chapter 4): Course Fan Pages ● Activity 10 (Chapter 4): Online Cafés

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