

## Policy for Planning and Conducting Online Education at Plymouth State University

### Quick Start Guide

Instructor = faculty, teaching lecturer, facilitator, etc.  
 LTOE = Learning Technologies and Online Education  
 f2f = Face-to-face  
 (x.xx) = Policy reference number



Department Chairs:	Guide to Policy	First Step:
Will an instructor be teaching an online/blended course for the first time?	All PSU instructors will consult with LTOE before teaching an online course. Chairs will contact LTOE at least three months before the course start date with instructor and course information. (4.5)	LTOE psu-ltoe@plymouth.edu
Are you planning to offer an existing f2f course in an online/blended format?	LTOE will be consulted at least three months before the course start date when a f2f course is converted to an online/blended format. (4.3, 5.5)	
Are you planning to create a <i>brand new</i> online/blended course?	LTOE will be consulted at least three months before the online/blended course start date. (4.3, 5.5)	
Are you planning to offer a new <i>program</i> in an online/blended format?	LTOE will be consulted at least three months in advance of the first course start date when a new online/blended program is proposed. This is to ensure current resources can support the delivery of the new program. (4.3, 5.3, 5.5)	
Will you be observing an online/blended instructor?	Observations of online/blended instructors will follow procedures similar to those in effect for f2f courses. (4.7) See the Online Course Observation Guide (Appendix B).	Departmental Policy
Will you be reviewing an online/blended program?	Online programs will be evaluated on a regular basis following procedures similar to those in effect for f2f programs. (4.9)	
What is an appropriate enrollment for an online/blended course?	The Provost, in consultation with the dean, department chair, the instructor, and director of LTOE, will determine the appropriate enrollment that can be supported in an online/blended course or program. (4.12)	
Instructors: Are you...	Guide to Policy	First Step:
Planning on teaching an online/blended course for the first time?	All PSU instructors will consult with LTOE before teaching an online course. Instructors will contact LTOE at least three months before the course start date to begin the consultation process. (4.5)	LTOE psu-ltoe@plymouth.edu
Moving your f2f course to an online/blended format?	LTOE will be consulted at least three months before the course start date when a f2f course is to be moved to an online/blended format. (5.5)	
Building a <i>brand new</i> PSU course that will be taught in an online/blended format?	LTOE will be consulted at least three months before the online/blended course start date. (5.5)	



## Policy for Planning and Conducting Online Education at Plymouth State University

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### 1. Definitions

Online education - for the purposes of this document, online education will be defined as instruction delivered, at least in part, through electronic means via the Internet.

Face-to-face course – maintains more than 66% of seat time instruction throughout the term (i.e. a “traditional” on-campus course).

Web-enhanced course – face-to-face instruction is supplemented with materials delivered via online education, but maintains more than 66% seat time in face-to-face delivery.

Blended course/Hybrid course – 33% or more of face-to-face instruction is replaced with online education. **For the purposes of this document, all references to “online” courses apply to blended/hybrid courses unless otherwise specified.**

Online course – the instruction (all content, communication and interaction) occurs exclusively via the Internet. **For the purposes of this document, all references to “online” courses apply to blended/hybrid courses unless otherwise specified.**

Online or Blended program - an approved collection of courses or course of study where all of the courses are offered in online or blended formats.

### 2. General Information and Purpose

Plymouth State University (PSU) recognizes the significance of organizing its online education initiatives in order to deliver well-coordinated programs. Coordination of online education initiatives is required to ensure a high level of quality, provide resources and assistance for faculty, provide support services for online students, maximize the use of university resources with a minimum of duplication, and ensures consistent and fair policies and procedures. Organized and well-coordinated programs facilitate marketing and promotional strategies and strengthen the University's image as an innovative and technologically sound institution.

Plymouth State University is committed to ensuring that undergraduate and graduate online programs and courses will be as academically rigorous as their on-campus counterparts, and will result in meaningful and deep learning (active learning reinforced over an extended period of time). The university also recognizes that emerging methods for delivering educational content bring new and different teaching and learning challenges. Therefore, the policies and procedures that impact online education will continuously change,

and these guidelines will continue to be reviewed and revised to reflect current best practices. Additionally, as changes occur that are internally developed or that are required by the University System of New Hampshire, the New Hampshire Post-Secondary Education Commission, or the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), this document will be revised to incorporate those changes.

The undergraduate and graduate online education procedures below are intended to assist with planning, coordination and technological support for participating administrators, faculty and staff. These policies and procedures are built on Plymouth State University's Strategic Plan, the Plymouth State University Mission Statement, "Online Education Policies and Procedures for Undergraduate Education" and NEASC's "Statement of Best Practices for Electronically Offered Degree and Certificate Programs" and shall apply to new online activities as well as to existing courses and programs in which the method of delivery has changed from that approved in the original curriculum proposal.

### **3. Planning for Online Education**

The appropriateness and viability of online programs must be carefully considered in the planning process. Online programs should be aligned with the institution's role and mission, consistent with the institution's long range plans, and supportive of its educational strategies. Online programs should be designed and evaluated according to guidelines similar to those utilized for on-campus programs.

The design and development of online courses and programs should follow priorities established by the University. These priorities should be based on educational requirements, market studies, public demand, community and business needs, and the competitive advantages of PSU. Development of online programs should maximize university research and educational goals, promote the development of resources unavailable at other institutions, and encourage collaboration with other institutions.

### **4. Academic Requirements and Quality Standards**

The following standards represent important guiding principles for developing, conducting and evaluating online instruction activities at PSU.

4.1. Online education conducted at PSU will comply with the "Benchmarks for Success in Internet-based Distance Learning" as presented by The Institute for Higher Education Policy, and in accordance with the New England States Commission on Higher Education "Statement of Best Practices for Electronically Offered Degree and Certificate Programs", in accordance with guidelines published by the New Hampshire Post-Secondary Education Commission, Section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

4.2. The course or program that is being proposed as a degree-related online education activity shall meet at least the same quality standards applicable to on-campus instruction as well as quality standards specifically applicable to online instruction.

4.3. Online and blended courses will be listed as such in the course schedule. Department Chairs (or their designees) will be responsible for ensuring that all online course materials clearly and accurately represent the course, including the nature of the learning experience, faculty responsibilities, the nature of student-faculty and student-student interaction opportunities, techniques, and requirements. In the case of blended courses, information regarding the percentage of the course to be offered online, the number and description of all face-to-face or synchronous meeting times will be provided to students during course registration and will accurately represent the expectations.

4.4. Each online course provides for planned interaction and timely instructor-student feedback.

4.5. Course instructors will be selected and evaluated by the same departmental standards and procedures used to select instructors for face-to-face course delivery. Before teaching an online or blended course for the first time, an instructor must be active in LTOE's Online Instructor Consultation Program. Department Chairs or their designee will ensure LTOE is contacted at least three months before the

course start date to begin the instructor consultation. The Online Instructor Consultation Program includes training in the use of PSU's Learning Management System, the pedagogical training needed to teach in an online environment, and course development guidance and assistance. LTOE will provide Department Chairs with pre- and post-course reviews for each instructor consultation. If instructors have received online instructor credentials from another institution, they may submit a copy of the documentation to the Director of LTOE for review. The Director will assess whether any or all of the consultation process may be waived. A current list of instructors who have participated in the Online Instructor Consultation Program is available in the "Teaching Online/Blended Courses" section on the LTOE web site ([go.plymouth.edu/ltoe](http://go.plymouth.edu/ltoe)).

4.6. All instructors teaching online or blended courses for the first-time will receive assistance for the duration of their first online course from an LTOE instructional designer or an instructor who has been endorsed by LTOE.

4.7. All online/blended course instructors will be observed following departmental policies in place for face-to-face courses. The Department Chair or designee may use the PSU Online Course Observation Guide ([Appendix B](#)). Observers will be granted access to the course provided they notify the instructor and request access to the course from the instructor or LTOE.

4.8. If it is determined that a course should be reviewed due to complaints regarding quality, lack of instructor presence, or high attrition rate, Chair, Dean, or their designee will be granted access to the course provided they notify the instructor and request access to the course from the instructor or LTOE.

4.9. Online course and program evaluation procedures are the responsibility of the college or department administering the program and will include a determination that the program results in learning outcomes appropriate to the rigor and breadth of the PSU's degree or certificate awarded.

4.10. Before PSU uses any course, program, or academic services from another institution, they will be evaluated for their quality, academic rigor, and suitability for the award of college credit and a degree or certificate from PSU. Such reviews will be done by the appropriate faculty approval process.

4.11. All online courses will provide for adequate verification of students' work. This may include the use of authenticity checks, remotely proctored exams and/or technologies, etc.

4.12. The Provost, in consultation with the dean, department chair, the instructor, and director of LTOE, will determine the appropriate enrollment that can be supported in an online program and in individual courses based upon the content and learning activities, the nature of the learners, the technologies used, the support available to faculty, and the economic feasibility of the course.

## **5. Administrative Approval and Coordination of Online Courses and Programs**

5.1. Online/blended courses and programs shall be offered through the academic department that also administers the corresponding face-to-face courses and programs; completely online undergraduate and graduate programs will be administered through the coordinated efforts of the academic department and the Division of Online and Continuing Studies; graduate-level online courses and programs will be administered by the College of Graduate Studies.

5.2. Online courses will be offered with the consensus of the Director of LTOE, the curriculum committee, the responsible academic department chair and academic deans.

5.3. If a new online education program is proposed, proposals are prepared according to current practices for traditional face-to-face program proposals. LTOE will review program proposals to ensure current resources can support the delivery of said program. See [Academic Plan and Program Review August 2012](#)

5.4. LTOE is responsible for reviewing all new online and blended courses, whether they are brand new courses or courses that are converted from a face-to-face format. ([Appendix A](#))

5.5. The following procedures are required for all new online/blended courses (courses that did not previously exist, or courses to be converted from a face-to-face to an online/blended format).

5.5.1 All proposed new online courses must, in addition to established curricular approval, be reviewed by LTOE to ensure resources and technologies can support the delivery of the course.

5.5.2 The director of LTOE will be notified by the Department Chair or designee at least three months before the course start date.

5.5.3 Design or redesign of courses for online delivery will occur collaboratively between the instructor and an LTOE instructional designer.

5.5.4 Designed or redesigned courses will be ready for LTOE review at least two weeks before the course start date.

5.5.5 Information must be provided to students, at the time of course registration, as to the percentage of the course that will be taught online, any synchronous meeting requirements (face-to-face or virtual) and any technologies needed for participation and assessment.

5.6 Expectations regarding compensation will be defined so that a faculty member teaching an online course understands at the outset whether teaching this course will be compensated in load or over load.

5.7 Faculty members are expected as a normal condition of employment at Plymouth State University to develop and keep current the courses they are assigned to teach. PSU retains full rights to common elements of course syllabi including learning objectives, course descriptions, course requirements and course schedules that are submitted, reviewed and approved as specified by the appropriate academic department and/or curriculum committee. Rights to all other course materials belong to the instructors who create them. The exception to this principle is course materials for which a faculty member receives compensation from PSU beyond the academic year salary, such as course reduction, grant award, paid leave (sabbatical or other), or stipend (see [Appendix C](#)). In such cases, a written agreement, initiated by the School or College that specifically spells out the ownership rights of the School or College and the instructor will be made prior to course or course materials development. In the absence of a written agreement, the default is the second and third sentences of this paragraph.

## **6. Student Support**

6.1 PSU students enrolled in blended and online courses will have access to the same level of academic support, library services, advising, course registration, and financial aid assistance, appropriate for online students (i.e., online students will not be required to come to campus in order to obtain these support services).

## **7. Outcomes Assessment**

7.1 All PSU academic courses and programs (face-to-face, blended and online) are expected to produce the same learning outcomes.

## **8. Program Evaluation**

8.1 The institution has processes in place to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of all aspects of its programs (face-to-face, blended and online) on a regular basis, both at the course and program levels. See [Academic Plan and Program Review August 2012](#)

## **9. Learning Management System**

9.1 All online and blended learning courses will use the Learning Management System provided by

the university to ensure compliance with federal regulations regarding verification of student identification and privacy.

9.2 Accessibility to a course will be limited to the assigned instructor(s), registered students, Learning Technologies and Online Education (for the purpose of assisting students or instructors with various issues), Information Technology Services (for the purpose of assisting with system issues), and those individuals who have been given written permission to access a course (see section [4.8](#)).

9.3 The LMS role of Moodle Administrator will be limited to the members of PSU's LTOE and Information Technology Services. System Support Personnel, however, shall not be authorized to enter any courses for any other purpose than those stated above. Individual instructors may authorize a system support person permission to enter his/her course.

Appendix A: Course Development Checklist

Online/Blended Course Development Checklist  
Plymouth State University – LTOE

**Instructor:** [Click here to enter text.](#)

**Course:** [Click here to enter text.](#)

**Term:** [Click here to enter text.](#)

**Instructional Designer:** [Click here to enter text.](#)

**Date:** [Click here to enter text.](#)

<b>Welcome/Orientation</b>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Baseline	Welcome and initial navigation information included in Moodle section of the course
	<input type="radio"/> Effective	Provides welcome and initial navigation information to students prior to the first day of class and includes the information in the Moodle section of the course.
	<input type="radio"/> Exemplary	Uses Moodle to provide students with welcome and initial navigation information at least two weeks prior to the start of the class and includes the information in the Moodle section of the course.
	Comments:	
<b>Syllabus</b>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Baseline	Syllabus is present and contains all required items.*
	<input type="radio"/> Effective	Syllabus is present and contains all required and some recommended items*
	<input type="radio"/> Exemplary	Syllabus is present and contains all required and recommended items*
	Comments:	
<b>Learning Outcomes/Objectives</b>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Baseline	Course objectives are clearly stated.
	<input type="radio"/> Effective	Course and unit level learning objectives are clearly stated
	<input type="radio"/> Exemplary	Course and unit level learning objectives/outcomes are clearly stated and measurable.
	Comments:.	
<b>Introductions</b>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Baseline	Instructor provides brief biography; office hours; and contact information. Students are provided a space to introduce themselves.
	<input type="radio"/> Effective	Instructor provides biographical data; contact information; office hours; and anticipated response times. Students are provided a space and asked to introduce themselves.
	<input type="radio"/> Exemplary	Instructor provides biographical data (personal and professional); contact information; office hours; and anticipated response times as well as an image and audio/video message. Students are provided a space and encouraged to

		introduce themselves and meet their colleagues.
		Comments:
<b>Organization</b>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> <b>Baseline</b>	While all key components of course are present, organizational structure is not immediately apparent..
	<input type="radio"/> <b>Effective</b>	Course is complete, organized and navigable. Aesthetic design presents and communicates course information clearly.
	<input type="radio"/> <b>Exemplary</b>	Course is complete and well-organized and navigation is clear. Learning units are numbered and/or labeled in a way that helps the learner understand their relative location in the course. Each unit contains clear instructions on how and when to complete the work within it. Aesthetic design presents and communicates course information clearly throughout the course.
		Comments:
<b>Assessments &amp; Assignments</b>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> <b>Baseline</b>	Due dates are clearly stated. Grading information about each assessment makes performance expectations clear. Assessments are related to learning objectives.
	<input type="radio"/> <b>Effective</b>	Due dates are clearly stated and easily located. Evaluative criteria for each assignment/assessment are clearly articulated. Assessments and evaluations are conducted on an ongoing basis throughout the course. Assessments are clearly related to learning objectives. Assessments and assignments offer some variation between individual and collaborative work and between objective and authentic tasks.
	<input type="radio"/> <b>Exemplary</b>	Due dates are reiterated in the syllabus; in the unit module; and in the assignment/assessment. Evaluative criteria for each assignment/assessment are clearly articulated. Assessments and evaluations are conducted on an ongoing basis throughout the course. Assessments are explicitly related to learning objectives. Assessments and assignments balance individual and collaborative work. Both objective and authentic assessments are used throughout the course.
		Comments:
<b>Course Materials</b>	<input type="radio"/> <b>Baseline</b>	Course offers access to a limited number of resources. All links in the course are functional. All resources are in compliance with copyright and/or fair use regulations.
	<input type="radio"/> <b>Effective</b>	Course offers access to a variety of resources. All links in the course are functional. All resources are in compliance with copyright and/or fair use regulations.
	<input type="radio"/> <b>Exemplary</b>	Course employs a wide range of required and additional/optional resources in a variety of formats to accommodate all learners. All links in the course are functional. All resources are in compliance with copyright and/or fair use regulations. The instructor provides guidance on how to make the best use of resources.
		Comments:
<b>Support</b>	<input type="radio"/> <b>Baseline</b>	Course contains limited information for online learner support and links to campus resources.

	<input type="radio"/> Effective	Course contains some information for online learner support and links to campus resources.
	<input type="radio"/> Exemplary	A help forum is available to students throughout the course and students are encouraged to post questions and share information there. Course contains extensive information about being an online learner and links to campus resources.
	Comments:	
<b>Student-Student Interaction</b>	<input type="radio"/> Baseline	Course offers limited opportunity for student-student interaction and communication
	<input type="radio"/> Effective	Course offers some opportunities for student-student interaction and communication. Students are provided opportunities to interact with classmates through class or group discussion but may not be provided opportunities to work directly with other students in small group projects or peer-review activities.
	<input type="radio"/> Exemplary	Course offers ample opportunities for student-student interaction and communication. Students are provided opportunities to frequently interact with classmates through different types of learning activities such as class or group discussions, small group projects, peer review activities, etc.
	Comments:	
<b>Student-Instructor Interaction</b>	<input type="radio"/> Baseline	Course offers limited opportunity for student-instructor interaction and communication.
	<input type="radio"/> Effective	Course offers some opportunities for student-instructor interaction and communication. Instructor provides and usually abides by anticipated response times for both student inquiries and grading/feedback
	<input type="radio"/> Exemplary	Course offers ample opportunities for student-instructor interaction and communication. Instructor provides and consistently abides by anticipated response times for both student inquiries and grading/feedback
	Comments:	
<b>Grading &amp; Feedback</b>	<input type="radio"/> Baseline	Grading policies are clearly articulated. Opportunities for students to receive feedback about their own performance are present but limited. Grades are made available to students so they may track their progress throughout the course.
	<input type="radio"/> Effective	Grading policies are clearly articulated. Opportunities for students to receive feedback about their own performance are provided. Grades are posted in Moodle so students may track their progress throughout the course.
	<input type="radio"/> Exemplary	Grading policies are clearly articulated. Regular feedback about student performance is provided in a timely manner throughout the course. Grades are posted in Moodle so students may track their progress throughout the course.
	Comments:	
<b>Technology</b>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Baseline	Course uses limited technology tools to facilitate communication and learning. Students can readily gain access to the

		technologies required in the course. If the technology is not provided in the course, instructions are included on how to access or obtain it
	<input type="radio"/> Effective	Course uses some technology tools to facilitate communication and learning. Students can readily gain access to the technologies required in the course. If the technology is not provided in the course, instructions are included on how to access or obtain it
	<input type="radio"/> Exemplary	Course uses a variety of technology tools to appropriately facilitate communication and learning. Students can readily gain access to the technologies required in the course. If the technology is not provided in the course, instructions are included on how to access or obtain it
	Comments:	
<b>Facilitation &amp; Instruction</b>	<input type="radio"/> Baseline	Instructor is consistent with instructions and encourages two-way communication. Instructor responds regularly to communication posted by users. Replies to student communications in a reasonable time frame.
	<input type="radio"/> Effective	Instructor is both professional and informal, establishing an environment of mutual respect and comfort while avoiding any sense of intimidation. Instructor periodically posts “acknowledgment” messages to participants in addition furthering the discussion with responses to posts and contributions. Replies to student communications in a timely manner.
	<input type="radio"/> Exemplary	Instructor is consistently actively involved in the course. Instructor is both professional and welcoming, establishing an environment of mutual respect and comfort while avoiding any sense of intimidation. Instructor is inclusive and makes connections between participants’ comments and models this type of behavior and attitude for participants. Instructor furthers discussion with daily responses to posts and contributions. Instructor uses announcements to keep class current and connected. Monitors attendance in class in order to follow up with missing students. Responds to student questions within 24 hours. Detects and corrects misconceptions and guides students toward understanding.
	Comments:	

**\*Required Syllabus items:**

- Course number
- Course title
- # of credits
- Course term and year
- *For blended courses:* (Meeting Dates, Times, & Locations)
- Course format (online or blended)
- Instructor name
- Instructor office location
- Instructor office phone number
- Instructor PSU E-mail
- Instructor availability/office hours
- Course catalog description
- Pre-requisites & co-requisites
- General Education designation & description (if appropriate)
- Course learning outcomes/objectives
- Required texts and materials
- Course outline/Schedule
- Directions for accessing any third party programs or obtaining required technologies
- Assignments & Activities (including date of final exam or activity)
- OSHA Standards/Safety regulations (if applicable)
- Attendance policy including link to:  
<http://www.plymouth.edu/undergraduate/files/2010/11/Class-Attendance-Policy.pdf>
- Grading information including link to Fair Grading Policy:  
<http://www.plymouth.edu/undergraduate/files/2010/11/Fair-Grading-Policy.pdf>
- The following ADA statement: ADA Statement: Plymouth State University is committed to providing students with documented disabilities equal access to all university programs and facilities. If you think you have a disability requiring accommodations, you should immediately contact the PASS Office in Lamson Library (535-2270) to determine whether you are eligible for such accommodations. Academic accommodations will only be considered for students who have registered with the PASS Office. If you have a Letter of Accommodation for this course from the PASS Office, please provide the instructor with that information privately so that you and the instructor can review those accommodations.
- Academic integrity policy statement including link:  
<https://www.plymouth.edu/undergraduate/files/2010/11/Academic-Integrity-Policy.pdf>

**Recommended Syllabus items:**

- "Plymouth State University" in title block
- Course reference number (CRN)
- Netiquette expectations
- Expected response/feedback turnaround time
- Expectations of Moodle use/Participation policy
- Professional Standards if applicable
- Weekly/topic objective

- Information on how to access Moodle
- *For blended courses*: the percentage of seat time replaced by online activity
- Assessment rubrics
- Link to Academic Calendar: <https://www.plymouth.edu/office/registrar/academic-calendar/>
- Student expectations
- Faculty expectations
- Statement regarding need for cable or DSL internet access



## A Review Guide for Online Course Observation at Plymouth State University

### Background

In 1987, Arthur Chickering and Zelda Gamson published "Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education," a summary of 50 years of higher education research that addressed good teaching and learning practices. Their findings, and faculty and institutional evaluation instruments based on the findings, have been widely used to guide and improve college teaching.

The Seven Principles provide a useful framework to evaluate the effectiveness of online teaching and learning. Therefore, this *Peer Review Guide* adapts the Seven Principles to facilitate the peer review of online courses in both undergraduate and graduate level online courses. Each principle is described in detail, including evidence of how a principle may be met. Examples of evidence to look for in Moodle and resources for additional information are also included.

Good practice:

#### The Seven Principles

1. Encourages contact between students and faculty;
2. Develops reciprocity and cooperation among students;
3. Encourages active learning;
4. Gives prompt feedback;
5. Emphasizes time on task;
6. Communicates high expectations; and
7. Respects diverse talents and ways of learning.

Chickering, A. & Gamson, Z. (1987). Seven principles for good practice in undergraduate education. *AAHE Bulletin* (39)7.

### Recommended Peer Review Process

The peer reviewer uses the "Peer Review Guide for Online Courses" to work through the online course, observing how well the instructor addresses each of the Seven Principles. The reviewer notes the instructor's strengths and areas for improvement for each Principle in the space provided.

While, ideally, good practice would suggest that all seven principles would be supported in some way in an online course, variations in course format, size, and faculty teaching experience can make reaching that ideal difficult. It is assumed that a peer reviewer will discover room for improvement when examining a course through the lens of the Seven Principles. This Peer Review Guide provides space for the peer reviewer to note teaching and learning strengths, as well as areas for improvement.

NOTE: Reviewers should feel free to ask questions of the instructor any time clarification or information is needed during the review process.

Once you are comfortable with the 7 Principles, you may prefer one of the two condensed checklists at the end of this document. **Please send questions or comments about this guide to Scott Robison, sarobison@plymouth.edu**

This peer review guide has been adapted from Ann H. Taylor, Dutton e-Education Institute, College of Earth and Mineral Sciences, The Pennsylvania State University.

**Principle 1: Good practice encourages contact between students and faculty.**

Frequent and timely student-faculty contact is the most important factor in student motivation and involvement, particularly in a distance education environment. Evidence of faculty concern helps students get through challenging situations and inspires them to persevere. Knowing a few faculty members well enhances students' intellectual commitment and encourages them to think about their own values and future plans.

**Examples of evidence to look for:**

- A "welcome message" is provided at the beginning of the course that encourages student-to-instructor contact for course-related discussions or concerns.
- The instructor encourages and fosters a healthy exchange of ideas and sharing of experiences among course participants.
- The instructor initiates contact with, or respond to, students on a regular basis in order to establish a consistent online presence in the course (and prior notice is given to students in the event that the instructor will be unavailable for more than a few days, such as might be the case during professional travel).
- A prominent announcement area is used to communicate important up-to-date course information to students, such as reminders of impending assignment due dates, curriculum changes, scheduled absences, etc.
- The instructor holds regular office hours, and by appointment, that are mediated by technology (e.g., the telephone, chat areas, Adobe Connect Pro) to accommodate distance students.
- Student inquiries are responded in a timely manner.
- The instructor provides students with interaction space for study groups, "hall way conversations," etc.

**Where to look:**

- Discussion forums
- E-mail messages
- Posted announcements
- Course syllabus
- Chat space

**Resources:**

- "Using online icebreakers to promote student/teacher interaction" - <http://www.southalabama.edu/oll/jobaid/fall03/Icebreakers%20Online/icebreaker/jobaid.htm>
- "Teacher Presence: Using Introductory Videos in Online and Hybrid Courses" <http://www.learningsolutionsmag.com/articles/107/teacher-presence-using-introductory-videos-in-online-and-hybrid-courses/page2>

**Feedback for the Instructor**

**Evidence Found:**

**Strengths:**

**Areas for Improvement:**

**Principle 2: Good practice develops reciprocity and cooperation among students.**

Learning is enhanced when it is more like a team effort than a solo race. Good learning, like good work, is collaborative and social, not competitive and isolated. Working with others often increases involvement in learning. Sharing one's own ideas and responding to others' reactions sharpens thinking and deepens understanding.

**Examples of evidence to look for:**

- Regular opportunities for students to engage in one or more of the following activities:
  - Formal and/or informal discussions of course topics
  - Collaborative course assignments
  - Study groups
- A "meet one another" activity at the beginning of the course so students can begin to make personal connections.
- Encouragement to students to strengthen their online presence in the course by sharing links to their e-portfolio, personal Web site, and/or posting a photo of themselves to the class Web space (e.g., their ANGEL profile).
- Group assignments that follow the basic tenants of cooperative learning (see Resources, below) in order to avoid the common pitfalls of "group work."
- An explanation of the criteria for "good" discussion participation.
- Modeling of good discussion participation practices by the instructor.
- Discussion prompts that help to guide and elicit student participation in class discussion activities.
- Instructor *facilitation* of class discussions by encouraging, probing, questioning, summarizing, etc.
- Student interaction space(s) for study groups, "hall way conversations," etc.

**Where to look:**

- Instructional materials / Assignment directions
- Discussion forums
- E-mail messages
- Course syllabus
- Chat space

**Resources:**

- "An Overview of Cooperative Learning"  
<http://www.co-operation.org/pages/overviewpaper.html>
- "Strategies to Promote Online Discussion" -  
<http://members.shaw.ca/mdde615/howcommunicate.htm>
- "Ice-breakers" -  
[http://www.ion.uillinois.edu/resources/pointersclickers/2002\\_01/index.asp](http://www.ion.uillinois.edu/resources/pointersclickers/2002_01/index.asp)

**Feedback for the Instructor**

**Evidence Found:**

**Strengths:**

**Areas for Improvement:**

**Principle 3: Good practice encourages active learning.**

Active learning methods engage students in the learning process by encouraging them to discover, process, and apply information. Empirical support for the positive impact of active learning on student achievement is extensive.<sup>1</sup>

**Examples of evidence to look for:**

- Student activities that involve one or more of the following<sup>ii</sup>:
  - Active use of writing, speaking, and other forms of self-expression
  - Opportunity for information gathering, synthesis, and analysis in solving problems (including the use of library, electronic/computer and other resources, and quantitative reasoning and interpretation, as applicable)
  - Engagement in collaborative learning activities
  - Application of intercultural and international competence
  - Dialogue pertaining to social behavior, community, and scholarly conduct
  - For General Education courses, three or more of these activities are integrated into courses offered in the knowledge domains (<http://www.psu.edu/ufs/geic/framework.html>):
- Opportunities for students to “customize” their learning by tailoring assignments to their personal and professional interests and needs.
- Examples of student work where they
  - Think, talk, or write about their learning
  - Reflect, relate, organize, apply, synthesize, or evaluate information
  - Perform research, lab or studio work, or physical activities
  - Participate in, design, or develop educational games and simulations.

**Where to look:**

- Course syllabus
- Instructional materials
- Assignment dropboxes
- e-Portfolios
- Discussion forums

**Resources:**

- Active Learning (Illinois State University) - <http://cte.illinois.edu/resources/topics/methods/active.html>
- “How Can Teachers Promote Learning and Thinking?” – <http://www.pgcps.pg.k12.md.us/~elc/theory9.html>
- “Inquiry-based Learning” - <http://www.schreyerinstitution.psu.edu/pdf/IBL.pdf>

**Feedback for the Instructor**

**Evidence Found:**

**Strengths:**

**Areas for Improvement:**

**Principle 4: Good practice gives prompt feedback.**

Instructors help students frequently assess their knowledge and competence and provide them with opportunities to perform, receive meaningful suggestions, and reflect on their learning.

**Examples of evidence to look for:**

- Information about course feedback methods and standards on the course syllabus.
- Option (or requirement) for students to submit drafts of assignments for instructor feedback.
- Meaningful feedback on student assignments that is provided within a publicized, and reasonable, time frame.
- Assignment feedback that is clear, positive, specific, and focused on observable behavior that can be changed.
- Clearly communicated course and individual assignment grading criteria.
- Up-to-date, student-accessible course gradebook.
- An open discussion forum where students can ask questions, and receive instructor feedback, about course content and activities.
- Student surveys that provide the instructor with feedback for course improvement.
- Examples of student work that demonstrate advancement toward learning goals.

**Where to look:**

- Course syllabus
- Instructional materials / Assignment directions
- Assignment dropboxes and e-portfolios
- Course gradebook
- Discussion forums
- Survey instruments

**Resources:**

- Collecting Feedback That Improves Teaching and Learning - <http://www.schreyerinstitution.psu.edu/Tools/MidsemesterFeedback>
- TLT Ideas for Giving Prompt, Better Feedback to Students - [http://www.tltgroup.org/SEVEN4\\_Feedback.htm](http://www.tltgroup.org/SEVEN4_Feedback.htm)
- Providing Feedback <http://www.netc.org/focus/strategies/prov.php>

**Feedback for the Instructor**

**Evidence Found:**

**Strengths:**

**Areas for Improvement:**

**Principle 5: Good education emphasizes time on task.**

The frequency and duration of study, as well as effective time management skills, are critical for students and professionals alike. Students need help in learning to manage and prioritize their study time.

**Examples of evidence to look for:**

- A published course schedule that outlines topics to be covered and assignment due dates so students can plan their workload accordingly.
- Information on the course syllabus that provides an estimate of the amount of time students should spend on the course (e.g., “On average, most students spend eight hours per week working on course assignments. Your workload may be more or less depending on your prior experience with computing and the Web in general, and with this subject in particular.”)
- Time-to-completion information on course assignments (e.g., “This assignment should take you approximately 2 hours to complete.”)
- Course-specific study tips that provide students with strategies for utilizing their time well.
- Assignment feedback that provides students with information on where to focus their studies.
- Assignment due dates and timeframes that take into account the nature of the target audience. For example, a course targeted to working adult professionals might incorporate a weekend into an assignment timeframe.
- Course statistics that demonstrate that time-to-completion and weekly time-on-task estimates are on target.

**Where to look:**

- Course syllabus
- Instructional materials / Assignment directions
- Assignment dropboxes and e-portfolios
- “Report” tab in ANGEL

**Resources:**

- Emphasize Time on Task (Ohio Learning Network) - [http://www.olin.org/LT/7\\_principles/time.php](http://www.olin.org/LT/7_principles/time.php)
- Eight Time Management Tips for Adult Students: <http://www.straighterline.com/online-education-resources/8-time-management-tips-for-adult-college-students/>

**Feedback for the Instructor**

**Evidence Found:**

**Strengths:**

**Areas for Improvement:**

**Principle 6: Good practice communicates high expectations.**

As the saying goes, “if you don’t know where you are going, how will you know when you get there?” Effective instructors have high, but reasonable, expectations for their students. They clearly communicate those expectations and provide support to their students in their efforts to meet those expectations.

**Examples of evidence to look for:**

- Explicit communication of the skills and knowledge every student needs to have in order to be successful in the course.
- Explanation of course learning goals and how assignments are designed to help students achieve those goals.
- Frequent feedback provided to students through written explanations and detailed feedback on assignments.
- Motivation and encouragement that inspires students to move past the easy answers to more complex solutions.
- Routine use of critical and probing questions when communicating with students about course assignments and activities.
- Examples and non-examples of high quality work, along with a discussion of the differences between these.
- Examples of student work that demonstrate advancement toward learning goals.

**Where to look:**

- Course syllabus
- Instructional materials / Assignment directions
- Assignment dropboxes and e-portfolios

**Resources:**

- “Student Learning Goals and Outcomes” - <http://www.schreyerinsitute.psu.edu/Tools/ProgramAssessment/measurableoutcomes>

**Feedback for the Instructor**

**Evidence Found:**

**Strengths:**

**Areas for Improvement:**

**Principle 7: Good practice respects diverse talents and ways of learning.**

People bring different talents and styles of learning to the learning environment. Some bring a wealth of relevant experience to a course, while others may be new to the topic at hand. Likewise, students who are strong in a discussion situation may be less adept at lab or studio work. Students need the opportunity to demonstrate their talents and to “personalize” their learning so that it is relevant to them. It is also important to give students opportunities to learn in ways that may be less comfortable in order to improve their learning skills.

**Examples of evidence to look for:**

- Use of a variety of assessment tools that gauge student progress.
- Alternative assignment options that allow students to demonstrate their progress in a manner that is best conducive to their talents. For example, a podcast might be allowed as learning evidence instead of a written paper.
- Supplemental online materials are provided to students who lack prerequisite knowledge or who would benefit from having content presented in an alternative manner.
- Timely, corrective feedback for online activities.
- A positive online climate where students are encouraged to seek assistance with course content and learning activities if needed.
- A policy for accommodations that is stated on the course syllabus.
- Accommodations are proactively offered for students with disabilities.

**Where to look:**

- Course syllabus
- Instructional materials / Assignment directions
- Assignment dropboxes and e-portfolios
- Discussion forums

**Resources:**

- “Learning effectively by understanding your learning preferences” – <http://www.mindtools.com/mnemlsty.html>
- “Classroom assessment techniques” - <http://www.ntif.com/html/lib/bib/assess.htm>

**Feedback for the Instructor**

**Evidence Found:**

**Strengths:**

**Areas for Improvement:**

## Appendix C: Course Development Agreement

### AGREEMENT for MASTER COURSE DEVELOPMENT

This agreement outlines the responsibilities of \_\_\_\_\_ and Plymouth State University (PSU), a New Hampshire 501 (c) (3) corporation located in Plymouth, N.H. for the terms of this agreement. The signatures below of the duly authorized representatives of both parties indicate the assent of both parties to the terms and conditions of this agreement.

#### **A. Purpose:**

The purpose of this agreement is to set forth the terms and conditions of the academic services to be provided by \_\_\_\_\_ (to be known as the Course Developer--CD) to develop an online/hybrid course for \_\_\_\_\_ to be taught at Plymouth State University.

#### **B. Contract Period**

This Contract shall begin \_\_\_\_\_ and shall end upon the completion of the course as determined by the contracting division/school and the Office of Learning Technologies and Online Education (LTOE), ready for delivery by \_\_\_\_\_ (course start date).

#### **C. Deliverables**

The CD will successfully develop a master course that meets the following guidelines

1. The master course will contain a list of measurable objectives.
2. A variety of assessments will be used, and will match course objectives.
3. The course will be ADA compliant.
4. The course will use a Topic Outline/Module construction.
5. Course content will consist of a variety of media types (audio, video, images, etc.), as opposed to text-only content.
6. Course will make use of various web 2.0 tools (forums/discussion board, wikis, etc) to encourage interaction and collaboration between students.
7. Course will not contain personally identifying instructor information, but rather have place holders for instructor information.
8. Course materials and syllabus will refer to "Week 1" or "Module 1" rather than actual dates (e.g. The first writing assignment is due at the end of second week.).
9. The master course will be built in a "sandbox" in the University's Learning Management System. If the course is then taught by the CD, the master course will be copied from the sandbox to the "live" course shell. At the end of the term, any substantive changes made to the course while taught, must also be changed in the master course by the CD.

#### **D. Academic Consultant Responsibilities**

1. The CD agrees to consult with LTOE as needed during the development process and submit the course to LTOE for final review. Minimally, these consultations include an initial meeting on \_\_\_\_\_ and interim meetings on \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. The course will be ready for final review by \_\_\_\_\_ which is three weeks before the course start date on \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The CD will make any revisions or modifications to the master courses for quality improvement after teaching the course once. LTOE staff will be available to support the CD with this.
3. The online course will follow guidelines established by LTOE for quality online courses.
4. The CD agrees to complete any administrative paperwork required by PSU.

#### **E. PSU Responsibilities**

1. LTOE staff will be available to offer any online instructor training and/or resources needed to complete the contract.
2. LTOE staff will offer support throughout the course development process, and while the course is being offered to students.
3. PSU shall provide payment of \_\$750\_ for the services as detailed in this agreement once LTOE has conducted a final review of the online course and the course is approved by the Chair of the applicable department and the Director of the Division of Online and Continuing Studies (DOCS). PSU shall provide payment of \_\$750\_ once the course has been taught and LTOE has conducted a post-course review.
4. PSU reserves the right to deny any or all payment to the CD if the terms of the agreement are not met to the satisfaction of the Director of DOCS.

#### **F. Intellectual Property**

Both parties agree that the University holds joint ownership of copyright if copyright is sought and further agrees that while the CD retains publication rights, the University retains a perpetual, royalty-free, non-exclusive right to the material. If the CD develops, and goes on to teach the material, both parties retain joint ownership of the most recently taught version of the material.

**Approved by:**

Course Developer: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dean, Division of Online and Continuing Studies: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Office of Learning Technologies and Online Education: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name and Title