WESTERN
Wyoming Community College

ACCREDITATION EVIDENCE

Title: Online Learning Instruction Best Practices Manual

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Classification: Resource

PII: No   **Redacted:** No

Best Practices & Expectations for Online Courses

Course Information

- The syllabus is a contract between instructor and student and should be maintained to reflect current due dates and course policies.

- Syllabi should be current to the year, in the accessible template, available for students to download and updated if there are any changes in grade break-down, schedule/units, or due dates.

- Course and institutional policies with which the learner is expected to comply are available in the course.

- The Supplemental Information should be current.

- The course grading policy is clearly stated.

Course Overview & Introduction

Course Introduction

- A personalized home page welcomes students and initiates instructor presence in the classroom.

- Instructions on how to get started and where to find various course components are located on the course homepage (this could be done by the welcome announcement, video, or text on the home page).

- Course navigation facilitates ease of use.

- Provide students with active and utilized tools in the course navigation pane.

- Use modules as the only source of navigation to the discussions, assignments, quizzes, etc.

- Course and course materials are published.

Modules

- Modules should be utilized for optimal course organization.

- Modules should align with schedule/units as outlined in the syllabus and available for student view.

- Modules should also contain links to all content associated with that unit of instruction.

Content is Current

- There is no evidence to the student that the course content has been reused or repurposed.

- All due dates, availability dates, and dates within the context are accurate.

- The correct reference to the learning management system is used.

- Announcements are made authentically. While they can be reused, the content and availability dates should always be updated.

Assessment & Measurement

- Assessments measure the achievement of the stated learning objectives.

- Assessments outlined in the syllabi should be accurately reflected in modules.

- Assessments outlined in the syllabi should be accurately reflected in the grade book.

- Points should be consistent between syllabi and Canvas.

Grading

- Grading should be consistent.

- Rubrics should be provided for graded assignments.

- Feedback should be given consistently and in a manner that might improve student performance.

Instructional Materials

- The instructional materials contribute to the achievement of the stated learning objectives.

- The instructional materials represent current theory and practice in the discipline.

- A variety of materials are utilized in the course to reach different audiences.

Learning Activities & Learner Interaction

- The learning activities promote the achievement of the stated learning objectives.

- Learning activities provide opportunities for interaction that support active learning.

- All assessments in an online learning environment should have frequent and consistent feedback.

- There should be a consistent and evident presence on either the discussion board and/or announcements.

- The instructor's plan for interacting with learners during the course is clearly stated.

- Submitted assignments should be graded and input into the grade book in a timely fashion.

- Student inquiries should receive a response in an appropriate amount of time, as defined in the syllabi.

Accessibility & Usability

- Course navigation facilitates ease of use.

- The course design facilitates readability.

- The course provides accessible text and images in files, documents, LMS pages, and web pages to meet the needs of diverse learners.

- The course provides alternative means of access to multimedia content in formats that meet the needs of diverse learners.

- Course multimedia facilitate ease of use.

Accessibility Tips

- Heading styles are consistently and accurately used.

- Lists are created using bullet or numbers.

- Images have alternative text.

- Tables include headers.

- Visual elements are not the sole way used to convey meaning.

- Links are descriptive.

- All videos are closed captioned.

- Text documents have audio versions.

- Images have alternative text.

- There is sufficient color contrast.

- Provide various ways students can demonstrate knowledge.

- Be flexible in your teaching style.

- Vary instructional techniques.

- Deliver content using multiple avenues.

- Keep in mind that not all disabilities are visible or reported.

- Students know how they learn best; trust them.

- The goals and methods should be clear for every lesson.