

Video Conferencing Courses

Video curriculum readiness guidelines provide the basis for curriculum development and delivery for courses that use video in its different forms. Interactive video network (IVN) courses are those delivered entirely over the Dakota Digital Network (DDN) and other networks used by the state institutions. Effective IVN courses are those courses that contain characteristics outlined below regarding course and delivery readiness. An IVN can be defined as a two-way multimedia communications system that uses a compression technology to transmit both sound and images (moving and still) among specially designed and equipped classroom sites. Instructors and students at two or more sites can see, hear, and interact with one another through the use of cameras, microphones, and monitors connected to digital telephone lines for transmission (Kirby, 1995). Other form of video delivery other than two-way inactive video include courses that are delivered by satellite, videotape, broadcast television, and video on the Web. Video course readiness means that the course content includes those items important for inclusion in all video contexts. Principles of IVN curriculum readiness follow.

I. Curriculum and Instruction

- A. *Academic standards for all programs or courses offered at a distance are the same as those for other courses or programs delivered at the institution where they originate.*
 - 1. The standards and outcomes or expectations identified in the syllabus should be the same standards and outcomes or expectations identified for the comparable on campus course.
- B. *Student learning outcomes in the video courses are comparable to student learning outcomes in programs and courses offered at the campus where they originate.*
 - 1. Statements of learning objectives are provided. Such statements are clear, complete and measurable.
 - 2. The course provides appropriate opportunities for the student to demonstrate their achievement of learning objectives.
 - 3. Ways in which the student can get additional feedback on their learning are clearly stated.
 - 4. Assessments are appropriate to the subject matter and technology used, are based on stated learning objectives and are designed to clearly indicate achievement of student learning outcomes.
- C. *Each program and course results in learning outcomes appropriate to the rigor and breadth of the degree or certificate awarded.*
 - 1. A course description should be included which clearly describes the course, in a manner understandable to the student.
 - 2. A syllabus is provided that clearly defines standards and outcomes or expectations for the course. This syllabus should be available at the time the course is initially advertised. The course syllabus should be available on-line and updated regularly.
 - 3. Course materials and learning activities should match the course description and identified desired course outcomes.
- D. *Each program and course provides for appropriate real-time and delayed interaction*

between faculty and students and among students.

1. The course design provides appropriate interaction between faculty and students and among students.
 2. The means for interaction are clearly defined for the students.
 3. Strategies are incorporated into the course design to introduce the student to technologies used in the course as appropriate.
 4. Students will be given clear instructions for contacting the teacher or technical support personnel in an emergency or technical failure.
 5. Students are reminded in advance of upcoming assignments, and are alerted to any changes in the syllabus or in course expectations.
- E. *The institution ensures that the video technology used is appropriate to the nature and objectives of the course.*
1. The needed technologies and expected skill levels are clearly communicated to the student as appropriate.
 2. Technology is used to provide learning experiences equivalent to those in a traditional classroom.
 3. The technology used is chosen to support the learning objectives, and maximize the learning methods available via the chosen technology.
- F. *The institution ensures the currency of materials, courses and programs.*
1. The course should be evaluated for currency of materials prior to delivery.
- G. *The institution's distance education policies are clear concerning ownership of materials, faculty compensation, copyright issues, and the utilization of revenue derived from the creation and production of software, telecourses, or other media products.*
1. The course syllabus should contain a link to the academic policies appropriate for that course.

II. Faculty Responsibility and Support

- A. *The institution's faculty assumes responsibility for and exercises oversight over distance education ensuring both the rigor of programs and the quality of instruction.*
1. Course oversight includes responsibility of copyright issues. Therefore, it is advised that faculty obtains written permission for all published materials or any other person's materials used within the video course.
- B. *The institution provides appropriate faculty support services specifically related to distance education.*
1. Curriculum should be developed in collaboration between faculty and a curriculum designer knowledgeable in the video technology being applied.
- C. *The program/institution ensures appropriate training for faculty who teaches using video technology.*
1. Faculty teaching in video contexts needs to be kept current in the demands of using the technology.
- D. *The program/institution provides faculty with adequate equipment, software and communications for interaction with students, institutions and other faculty.*
1. Faculty have ready access to appropriate technology to teach on the interactive video networks.

- E. *The institution's faculty assumes the responsibility to recognize the technological requirements and skills for course and program delivery.*
 - 1. Faculty members are kept informed of new and appropriate technologies and their applications for learning.
 - 2. Technological requirements and skill requirements for students need to be clearly identified and incorporated into the course description and syllabus as appropriate.

III. Roles and Mission

- A. *The program or course is consistent with the institution's role and mission.*
 - 1. Curriculum coordination and management decisions will be based upon an institution's role and mission, interest and ability to develop a program and/or course, the institution's interest and ability to deliver instruction, and demand plus attendant time-table for delivery.
- B. *Review and approval processes ensure the appropriateness of the technology being used to meet program or course objectives.*
 - 1. Curriculum will be reviewed to identify course and program readiness and delivery readiness and will be based upon guidelines and resultant evaluation and assessment.

IV. Library and Learning Resources

- A. *The institution ensures that appropriate learning resources are available to students.*
 - 1. Required reading materials should be made available for each site. Materials will be provided to the student and available for purchase from the institution offering the course or through public vendors.

V. Student and Academic Services

- A. *In response to the Principles of Good Practice governing distance education, the following course readiness items were identified:*
 - 1. A student is expected to do approximately 45 hours of work per semester credit earned for the course. This equates to approximately 135 hours of student effort per 3-semester credit course.
 - 2. Course content should include a variety of appropriate components to address various learning styles and disabilities.
 - 3. The course syllabus should contain all of the elements required by the school or institution and additional components to support the student's video learning activities. Such additional elements may include information like how to resolve technical problems and how to access learning resources.

More specific information for students is identified under **Video Delivery Readiness**.

VI. Evaluation and Assessment

A. *In response to the Principles of Good Practice the following Course Readiness items were identified:*

1. Each course will assess student and faculty satisfaction, including appropriateness of interaction between faculty and students and among students, plus reasonable levels of student services, including advisement, admission, registration and scheduling and information regarding financial aid.
2. Assessment and documentation of student achievement will be a part of each course at the completion of the program or course.
3. Access to evaluation and assessment data must be available for quality assurance and improvement, and be in compliance with the COHE contract.
4. Because of the nature of video course delivery, assessment documents will be comprised of three distinct areas that include (a) content, (b) instruction, and (c) delivery technology.

VII. Academic Honesty

A. *Guidelines ensuring academic honesty for all programs or courses offered at a distance shall be comparable to those guidelines used for other courses or programs delivered at the institution where they originate.*

1. The instructor will determine assignment or examinations that require individual student effort. The instructor may require that exams and other assignments be completed in the presence of a proctor who will verify that the work has been done individually by the student without outside assistance.

VIII. Video Pedagogy Principle of Course Readiness:

A. *A video course should be structured to foster learning and encourage the exchange of ideas, plus use innovative instructional strategies to facilitate learning through video. Therefore the following guidelines apply:*

1. The course will be structured to build a learning community among students.
2. The course provides strategies for evaluating the quality and authenticity of materials.
3. The course provides a variety of learning activities.
4. The course materials and activities are sensitive to diverse points of view.
5. Individual accommodation will be provided when documented need exists.
6. The instructor/design team has expertise in the subject matter.
7. The instructor is well equipped to teach in a video environment.
8. The instructor provides timely feedback to students that helps them understand what is needed to improve their performance.

Video Curriculum Delivery Readiness involves several factors. In this document they are divided into the following six areas: course syllabus, academic honesty and delivery readiness, course assignments, delivery presentation for both IVN courses and for other video courses, and a checklist for students in IVN courses.

I. Video Course Syllabus

Certain characteristics should be included in a video course syllabus. These include:

- A course description that is understandable.
- A clear listing of assignments.
- A clear identification of both video and off-site activities.
- A statement of expectations if students will be involved in off-site discussion groups.
- Course expectations or outcome objectives that are linked to the course description for the course.
- Explanation of how the video system works for students in IVN and satellite courses.
- Information on course materials and textbooks including where to find them and how much they will cost. Include other print materials, journals, computer software, laboratory materials or special tools, and any other items needed for the course.
- The use of meaningful words or phrases.
- Course schedule: Listing of lessons titles, dates, readings/activities, assignments, deadlines for assignments and projects due, and exam dates.
- Late policies including handling of situations where technical difficulties prevent submission of assignments.
- Grading: Description of elements (i.e., interaction, assignments, exams) contributing toward students' grades. Listing of how many points or percentages each component is worth; how, when and where each will occur and how they will be administered or sent to instructor; listing of grading scale, using points or percentages. Password protected on-line gradebook link if appropriate. Tips on how to succeed in course.

The faculty member should indicate on the syllabus if contact information (i.e. e-mail, phone numbers) of class members will be shared with other class members. If so intended, a voluntary consent form needs to be provided and completed for student release of information.

II. Academic Honesty and Delivery Readiness

When proctors are required, distant students are responsible for recommending their proctor, subject to the approval of the instructor or distance education office of the institution. Possible proctors are: college/university testing centers, military base education offices, public librarians, hospital education offices, and high school teachers and/or counselors, educational officers and/or supervisors in the workplace. Verification of the proctor should be on official letterhead.

- Course examinations conducted on-site shall be supervised by a proctor when required by the instructor. If online exams are used, this proctor verifies student identities prior to providing a password for the examination web page to the student.
- Proctors are responsible for controlling the environment where an examination is taken to ensure that the student taking an examination does not have access, either physically or electronically, to prohibited sources of information, including other students.

III. Video Course Assignments

Consistency in making assignments across video courses will assist student understanding.

- Students should be given criteria (rubrics) related to the course outcomes desired.
- Students should be assessed as appropriate to the course content. It is suggested that several different methods of assessment be incorporated throughout the course.
- An instructor should use appropriate communication and feedback strategies and will have published time frames for feedback to students. In the case of satellite and videotaped courses where there is limited or no feedback processes during class time, the instructor should provide means for students to contact the instructor beyond the feedback for class assignments.
- Use the one-minute manager concept. Have your students take a minute after each class to send you a quick email on the past session, were there technical problems, was content and assignments understood.

IV. Delivery Presentation across the Interactive Video Network

To present a consistent image that provides students a learning environment, to maintain quality and appearance across sites, the following presentation guidelines have been established.

- Planning is the key to success in teaching on an IVN.
- Identify the participating sites, the potential number of students at each site and the background/previous classes taken is applicable. You want to make sure that the students are prepared for the content and that you are not overwhelmed with too large a class.
- Set the objectives you want to achieve.
- Review the assignment and unit deadlines on your syllabus.
- Make a calendar; establish dates by which handouts, exams, etc. must be ready to have distributed to the other sites.
- In planning your class lectures keep in mind that you will not be able to present 50 minutes of material in a fifty minute class. The rule of thumb guideline is that you will present 30 minutes of material in a 50 minute class.
- When presenting your material to audiences at other sites be sure to plan for feedback during the presentation of the material. Ask questions of specific students or sites every 10 minutes. Wait before you respond to students at distant sites. There is a few second delay in transmission.
- Try to set an upbeat tempo right at the start.
- Appear cheerful, confident, and enthusiastic even if something unexpected occurs.
- Look directly into the camera so that students at remote sites sense that you are looking directly at them.
- Speak clearly, distinctly, and a little more slowly than you ordinarily speak.
- To stay in camera range, limit your standing or walking to one area of the classroom or areas you know are covered by the camera angles.
- Monitor your pacing. It keeps you from overtiring yourself and keeps the students

attention.

- Balance the interaction among the sites.
- Remember to repeat students' questions or pertinent comments to ensure that other sites hear them.
- Use questions rather than statements to draw out discussion and frame the questions specifically to get the responses you desire
- If possible have a facilitator at all receiving sites. The role of the facilitator includes: setting up the classroom; confirming that the equipment is turned on and working properly; distributing materials to the students and collecting materials to be returned to you; operating the equipment if needed; reporting both the problems the students have and the technical problems; maintaining classroom discipline and shutting down equipment at the end of class.
- If there is no facilitator, select one student at each site to be a group leader to help hand out material, get your attention when communication is not clear, help with breakdowns into small groups, and so on.
- Have a backup plan for when the technology fails.
- Provide ground Rules for Your Students
- Teach the students the technology, how to use the equipment.
- Establish your policies – attendance/make up work, how to address questions, etc.
- Discuss ethical behavior and practices for the class.
- Dress properly for the IVN. Avoid white, red, or dark clothing, or small checkered patterns. Avoid busy or heavily patterned clothing that might contrast sharply with the background. Avoid accessories that make noise, such as large earrings, bracelets, and necklaces. These will tend to be distracting to student viewers. Wear clothing and jewelry that do not interfere with the lapel microphone. Avoid silk shirts and blouses as they can cause popping noises with your microphone. (static electricity causes popping).
- Before you begin make sure everything is working.
- Start the VCR if you are recording the session.
- Speak up and tell your students to do the same.
- Consider using a seating chart at each site.
- Pay attention to what the distant sites are seeing.
- When using the Elmo, write legibly and use thick markers. If using a document use bolded 24 point size or larger and do not show too much text on a document.
- Visual aids – try them out. Make sure they can be read on the monitor. Be careful of background colors and fonts for PowerPoint and Web pages displayed on the monitor.
- If transmission fails, establish your backup communication link immediately; then try to get the IVN system working again.

V. Checklist for Students in IVN Courses

It is important to provide the students with expectations for classroom behavior and contact information in case of technical difficulties.

- Sit in your assigned seat.
- Identify yourself by name and class site when you want to speak or ask a question, then wait for your teacher to recognize you.

- Pause and count to two before you speak.
- Speak up and talk into the microphone.
- Do not talk or make noise in class.
- Clear away any books or papers you don't need from the desktop.
- Any time you cannot hear or see anything for any reason, let your teacher know immediately.

VI. Delivery Presentation for Other Video Courses

To present a consistent image that provides students a learning environment, to maintain quality and appearance across sites, the following presentation guidelines have been established.

- Planning is the key to success in teaching on a video course
- Set the objectives you want to achieve.
- Review the assignment and unit deadlines on your syllabus.
- Make a calendar; establish dates by which handouts, exams, etc. must be ready to have distributed to the other sites.
- Try to set an upbeat tempo right at the start.
- Appear cheerful, confident, and enthusiastic even if something unexpected occurs.
- Look directly into the camera so that students sense that you are looking directly at them.
- Speak clearly, distinctly, and a little more slowly than you ordinarily speak.
- To stay in camera range, limit your standing or walking to one area of the classroom or areas you know are covered by the camera angles.
- Monitor your pacing. It keeps you from overtiring yourself and helps keep the students' attention.
- Have a backup plan for when the technology fails.
- Establish your policies – attendance/make up work, how to address questions, etc. Provide for and explain your means of interaction, be it by email, phone, web discussion, etc.
- Discuss ethical behavior and practices for the class.
- Dress properly for the camera. Avoid white, red, or dark clothing, or small checkered patterns. Avoid busy or heavily patterned clothing that might contrast sharply with the background. Avoid accessories that make noise, such as large earrings, bracelets, and necklaces. These will tend to be distracting to student viewers. Wear clothing and jewelry that do not interfere with the lapel microphone. Avoid silk shirts and blouses as they can cause popping noises with your microphone. (static electricity causes popping).
- Before you begin make sure everything is working.
- Start the VCR if you are recording the session.
- Pay attention to what the students are seeing.
- When using the Elmo, write legibly and use thick markers. If using a document use bolded 24 point size or larger and do not show too much text on a document.
- Visual aids – try them out. Make sure they can be read on the monitor. Be careful of background colors and fonts for PowerPoint and Web pages displayed on the monitor.

Sources for Document

Kirby, P. et. al., 1995. *Interactive Video Network Faculty Guide and Technical Training Manual*. University of Maryland University College.

Lochte, R. H. 1993. *Interactive Television and Instruction A Guide to Technology, Technique, Facilities Design, and Classroom Management*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Educational Technology Publications.

EDNET Faculty Training Manual. <http://www.usoe.k12.ut.us/curr/ednet/manual/main.html>

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Online Course Readiness

Principles of Online Curriculum Readiness: Course and Delivery

The Principles of Good Practice provide the basis for curriculum development and delivery. On-line courses are those which are delivered primarily or entirely over the Internet. Effective on-line courses are those courses which contain characteristics outlined below regarding course and delivery readiness. On-line course readiness means that the course content includes those items important for inclusion in Internet contexts. On-line delivery readiness means that the process for students to participate in the Internet course is clear and complete. Principles of on-line curriculum readiness follow.

I. Curriculum and Instruction

- A. *Academic standards for all programs or courses offered at a distance are the same as those for other courses or programs delivered at the institution where they originate.*
 1. The standards and outcomes or expectations identified in the syllabus should be the same standards and outcomes or expectations identified for the comparable on-campus course.
- B. *Student learning outcomes in the course delivered electronically is comparable to student learning outcomes in programs and courses offered at the campus where they originate.*
 1. Statements of learning objectives are provided for each "lesson". Such statements are clear, complete and measurable.
 2. The course provides appropriate opportunities for the students to demonstrate their achievement of learning objectives.
 3. Ways in which the students can get additional feedback on their learning are clearly stated. In particular, each page should have an email link to the instructor.
 4. Assessments are appropriate to the subject matter and technology used, are based on stated learning objectives and are designed to clearly indicate achievement of student learning outcomes.
- C. *Each program and course results in learning outcomes appropriate to the rigor and breadth of the degree or certificate awarded.*

1. A course description should be included which clearly describes the course, in a manner understandable to the student.
 2. A syllabus is provided that clearly defines standards and outcomes or expectations for the course. This syllabus should be available at the time the course is initially advertised. The course syllabus should be available on-line and updated regularly.
 3. Course materials and learning activities should match the course description and identified desired course outcomes.
- D. *Each program and course provides for appropriate real-time or delayed interaction between faculty and students and among students.*
1. The course design provides appropriate interaction between faculty and students and among students.
 2. The means for interaction are clearly defined for the students.
 3. Strategies are incorporated into the course design to introduce the student to technologies used in the course.
 4. Students will be given clear instructions for contacting the teacher or technical support personnel in an emergency or technical failure.
 5. Students are reminded in advance of upcoming assignments, and are alerted to any changes in the syllabus or in course expectations.
- E. *The institution ensures that the technology used is appropriate to the nature and objectives of the course.*
1. The needed technologies and expected skill levels are clearly communicated to the student.
 2. Technology is used to provide learning experiences equivalent to those in a traditional classroom.
 3. The technology used is chosen to support the learning objectives, and maximize the learning methods available via the chosen technology.
- F. *The institution ensures the currency of materials, courses and programs.*
1. The course should be evaluated for currency of materials prior to delivery.
- G. *The institution's distance education policies are clear concerning ownership of materials, faculty compensation, copyright issues, and the utilization of revenue derived from the creation and production of software, telecourses, or other media products.*
1. The course syllabus should contain a link to the academic policies appropriate for that course.

II. Faculty Responsibility and Support

- A. *The institution's faculty assume responsibility for and exercises oversight over distance education ensuring both the rigor of programs and the quality of instruction.*
1. Course oversight includes responsibility of copyright issues. Therefore, it is advised that faculty obtain written permission for all published materials or any other person's materials used within the on-line course.
- B. *The institution provides appropriate faculty support services specifically related to distance education.*
1. Curriculum should be developed in collaboration between faculty and a curriculum designer knowledgeable in the technology being applied.

- C. *The program/institution ensures appropriate training for faculty who teaches using technology.*
 - 1. Faculty teaching in distance educational contexts need to be kept current in the demands of using technology.
- D. *The program/institution provides faculty with adequate equipment, software and communications for interaction with students, institutions and other faculty.*
 - 1. Faculty have ready access to appropriate technology to practice new on-line learning techniques.
- E. *The institution's faculty assume the responsibility to recognize the technological requirements and skills for course and program delivery.*
 - 1. Faculty are kept informed of new and appropriate technologies and their applications for learning.
 - 2. Technological requirements and skill requirements for students need to be clearly identified and incorporated into the course description and syllabus.

III. Roles and Mission

- A. *The program or course is consistent with the institution's role and mission.*
 - 1. Curriculum coordination and management decisions will be based upon an institution's role and mission, interest and ability to develop a program and/or course, the institution's interest and ability to deliver instruction, and demand plus attendant time-table for delivery.
- B. *Review and approval processes ensure the appropriateness of the technology being used to meet program or course objectives.*
 - 1. Curriculum will be reviewed to identify course and program readiness and delivery readiness and will be based upon guidelines and resultant evaluation and assessment.

IV. Library and Learning Resources

- A. *The institution ensures that appropriate learning resources are available to students.*
 - 1. Required reading materials should be obtainable on-line. Materials will be provided to the student and available for purchase on-line from the institution offering the course or through public vendors.

V. Student and Academic Services

- A. *In response to the Principles of Good Practice governing distance education, the following course readiness items were identified:*
 - 1. A student is expected to do approximately 45 hours of work per semester credit earned for the course. This equates to approximately 135 hours of student effort per 3-semester credit course.
 - 2. Course content should include a variety of appropriate multimedia components to address various learning styles and disabilities.

3. The course syllabus should contain all of the elements required by the school or institution and additional components to support the student's on-line learning activities. Such additional elements may include information such as how to resolve technical problems and how to access learning resources.

More specific information for students is identified under **On-Line Delivery Readiness**.

VI. Evaluation and Assessment

A. *In response to the Principles of Good Practice the following Course Readiness items were identified:*

1. Each course will assess student and faculty satisfaction, including appropriateness of interaction between faculty and students and among students, plus reasonable levels of student services, including advisement, admission, registration and scheduling and information regarding financial aid.
2. Assessment and documentation of student achievement will be a part of each course at the completion of the program or course.
3. Access to evaluation and assessment data must be available for quality assurance and improvement, and be in compliance with the COHE contract.
4. Because of the nature of on-line education, assessment documents will be comprised of three distinct areas which include (a) content, (b) instruction, and (c) delivery technology.

VII. Academic Honesty

A. *Guidelines ensuring academic honesty for all programs or courses offered at a distance shall be comparable to those guidelines used for other courses or programs delivered at the institution where they originate.*

1. The instructor will determine assignment or examinations that require individual student effort. The instructor may require that exams and other assignments be completed in the presence of a proctor who will verify that the work has been done individually by the student without outside assistance.

VIII. On-line Pedagogy Principle of Course Readiness:

An on-line course should be structured to foster learning and encourage the exchange of ideas, plus use innovative instructional strategies to facilitate on-line learning. Therefore the following guidelines apply:

1. The course will be structured to build a learning community among students.
2. The course provides strategies for evaluating the quality and authenticity of materials.
3. The course provides a variety of learning activities.
4. The course materials and activities are sensitive to diverse points of view.
5. Individual accommodation will be provided when documented need exists.
6. The instructor/design team has expertise in the subject matter.
7. The instructor is well equipped to teach in an on-line environment.

8. The instructor provides timely feedback to students which helps them understand what is needed to improve their performance.

ON-LINE DELIVERY READINESS

On-line Curriculum Delivery Readiness involves several factors. In this document they are divided into the following nine areas: delivery presentation, course protocol, course assignments, course syllabus, links, navigation, page design, specific course pages, plus color and graphics.

I. Delivery Presentation across the Electronic University Consortium

To present a consistent image, enable students to learn a common on-line system, and maintain quality and appearance across courses, the following issues involving layout and presentation have been established.

- For general education courses, universities will use common web course authorized software. For program specific courses, universities will have the flexibility of using web course authorized software more suited to individual program areas.
- Courses will be developed using a team approach between the faculty and instructional designer to maximize technology with course content and maximize student learning.
- On-line courses will be designed to be BOBBI disabilities compliant.
- All Electronic University Consortium courses will have a common portal page.
- There will be a common student tutorial and instructional processes will be in compliance with the tutorial materials.
- There will be recommended web page format and guidelines available as a link.

II. Academic Honesty and Delivery Readiness

When proctors are required, distant students are responsible for recommending their proctor, subject to the approval of the instructor or distance education office of the institution. Possible proctors are: college/university testing centers, military base education offices, public librarians, hospital education offices, and high school teachers and/or counselors, educational officers and/or supervisors in the workplace. Verification of the proctor should be on official letterhead.

- Course examinations conducted on-line shall be supervised by a proctor when required by the instructor. This proctor verifies student identities prior to providing a password for the examination web page to the student.
- Proctors are responsible for controlling the environment where an examination is taken to ensure that the student taking an examination does not have access, either physically or electronically, to prohibited sources of information, including other students.
- Following a student on-line examination, the cache of the computer where the student worked the examination should be cleared in order to clear the record of the student's responses.

- It is the instructor's responsibility to post an announcement when assignments are added to the syllabus. It is the student's responsibility to periodically check the on-line syllabus for additional assignments, quizzes and exams.

III. On-line Course Protocol (or Faculty tips)

Because of the nature of on-line education, the following protocol is recommended:

- Each on-line course should include elements that allow student to student interaction as well as student to faculty interaction.
- All classes should include orientation and get-acquainted activities.
- Activities should be scheduled so that students are allowed and encouraged to practice new techniques.
- The level and frequency of student contributions should be specified.
- Reasonable guidelines for every activity should be provided.
- An additional resource list should be included for those who want to explore further.
- At the beginning of each class, faculty may wish to coordinate the class roster and distribution lists and require a student response to test messages and verify participation.
- Faculty will want to notify students of academic policies relative to class.
- In roll-call area of the course screen, request students to post a notice if they will not be participating for a specific period of time.
- Create a plan "B" backup process for communicating all assignments.
- Verify hotlinks and view all documents regularly.
- When communicating with students, use private e-mail for private issues; use public chats or discussion boards for all public issues or common concerns such as technical problems, errors by several students.
- Develop and communicate methods for electronic posting and verifying grades. Encourage students to check periodically.
- Create a discussion group for distance education faculty.
- Inform students of contact person(s) and how to reach contact for various concerns and issues.
- Keep the information in your pages relevant and up-to-date.
- If people are invited to send in comments about your site, be sure to respond to them in a timely manner.

IV. On-line Course Assignments

Consistency in making assignments across courses will assist student understanding.

- Students should be given criteria (rubrics) related to the course outcomes desired.
- Students should be assessed as appropriate to the course content. It is suggested that several different methods of assessment be incorporated throughout the course.
- Instructors should have a frequent presence on-line, including scheduled on-line office hours.
- An instructor should use appropriate communication and feedback strategies and will have published time frames for feedback to students.

- Instructors should work with students to learn how to use appropriate on-line voices, and "Netiquete" for both instructors and students.
- Lessons should be presented in Menu form. A menu includes a list of lesson titles with links. Each individual lesson should include information on goals and objectives, tips on how to succeed in individual lessons, listing of all readings and materials required to complete lesson, the content of the lessons, a review of lesson material content through study questions or self-test, references, and exam information where appropriate in course. The professor(s) e-mail link(s) should also be included on each lesson page.
- Assignments, assessment, relative importance of and weights of various assignments are clear to students.

V. On-line Course Syllabus

Certain characteristics should be included in an on-line course syllabus. These include:

- A course description that is understandable.
- A clear listing of assignments.
- A clear identification of both online and offline activities.
- A statement of expectations if students will be involved in online discussion groups.
- Course expectations or outcome objectives that are linked to the course description for the course.
- Internet and WWW information, with links to various sites with general internet and WWW information.
- Information on course materials and textbooks including where to find them and how much they will cost.
- The use of meaningful words or phrases.
- Include On-line Course Requirements of information regarding computer hardware and software needed to complete course.
- Information on hardware which should include requirements for:

RAM

Hard disk (minimum amount of available storage capacity necessary)

Modem (minimum speed)

Internet Service Provider (type of services and access that must be made available as part of package)

Operating system requirements

Browser-type required

Level of technical competency expected

- Information on specific software or helper applications which should include:

Level of technical competency expected

Specific software name(s) and versions for both Mac and Windows platforms

Specific helper application(s) required

Specific browser plug-in required and how to download them.

- Course materials: Information on text books required, other print materials, journals, computer software, laboratory materials or special tools, any other items needed for the course.
- Course schedule: Listing of lessons titles, dates, readings/activities, assignments, deadlines for assignments and projects due, and exam dates.
- Late policies including handling of situations where technical difficulties prevent submission of assignments.
- Grading: Description of elements (i.e., interaction, assignments, exams) contributing toward students' grades. Listing of how many points or percentages each component is worth; how, when and where each will occur and how they will be administered or sent to instructor; listing of grading scale, using points or percentages. Password protected on-line gradebook link if appropriate. Tips on how to succeed in course.
- The faculty member should indicate on the syllabus if contact information (i.e. e-mail, phone numbers) of class members will be shared with other class members. If so intended, a voluntary consent form needs to be provided and completed for student release of information.

VI. Links

Links in on-line courses help student understanding and save student time.

- Include Internet and WWW information through links to various sites with general internet and WWW information.
- Use one basic link color, with links changing color only after they are accessed. Don't change text link colors.
- Provide "Next Page" and "Previous Page" buttons on each page where appropriate.
- Link each page back to the course's main page.
- Make link text descriptive and concise.
- Test each link in your site frequently. A link that worked O.K. last month will not necessarily work this month.

VII. Navigation

Clear navigational direction is essential in on-line education.

- Keep navigation buttons consistent in both location and design.
- Use navigation links to all course components regularly.
- Include text labels if graphic navigation buttons are used.
- Include a title header on all pages.
- Include document and chapter headings on lengthy documents.
- Clearly delineate the clickable areas in an image map. Clickable regions should have clearly distinguishable outlines.
- Provide alternate text links for locations in an image map.
- Insert navigation buttons in various places, as well as the top and bottom of the page in lengthy documents.

- Keep all links or buttons "open to the general public" together when designing pages that have password protected areas. Enrolled students will learn where to go to find their most frequently used links.
- Take advantage of the hype-linking capabilities of the web for instructional purposes by using links to layer information, to link to previous material and to link to outside WWW sites.
- Include text-based navigational links at the bottom of each page.

VIII. Page Design

Consistent page design assists student understanding and response capabilities.

- Design web pages so that they can be viewed properly on 14-15 inch display screens.
- Maintain consistent titling design on each page.
- Organize content using limited heading styles and sub titles; then use chosen styles consistently.
- Use simple designs to make pages easily modifiable.
- Use consistent heading on all pages, keeping minimal in size to eliminate long download times.
- Do not mix graphics and text haphazardly.
- Keep backgrounds simple. Tiled and textured backgrounds can significantly increase download time.
- Use white or non-distracting background colors. If you must use an image for your background, keep it small to minimize the time it will take for the page to download. Type must always contrast sharply with any background color.
- Set text blocks for standard screen reading distance at a minimum of 12 points.
- Place creation and revision dates on all pages.
- Use a spellchecker in addition to carefully reviewing each page for any mistakes that the spell-checker may not have caught.

IX. Specific Course Pages Needed

The following specific pages are needed for each course. If information is accurate, a link to an existing page is possible.

- **Course home link:** It is the page that would include links to all the components of the course.
- **Course information:** Information on course, prerequisites, and listing of goals and objectives.
- **Instructor information:** Name(s) of instructor(s), 1–2 paragraph detailing professional interests, links to personal home pages.
- **Enrollment Information:** Information on registration, enrollment deadlines, dates to add/drop plus costs, procedures and requirements (also GRE, TOEFL, links to testing services if applicable, etc.), necessary phone numbers, addresses, etc. Also information on requesting transcripts, schedule of tuition and fees, how to pay, etc.

- **An on-line tutorial:** This provides a realistic simulation of what occurs in the course. Include a "Navigating the Web" lesson(s) that cover how to make net searches, how to download helper applications, send e-mail, fill out forms, FTP files, use hypertext links, use frames, look up newsgroups and sign on and off of discussion lists. These exercises should be content specific to course. If a course requires the use of any specialized software, an orientation and exercise should be included for it as well. (The tutorial might be a separate site or linked to a specific lesson.)

X. Color and Graphics

Consistency in use of color and graphics also aids student understanding and response time.

- Test all of your graphics and colors early and often on a computer other than the one you created your site on.
- Be aware that the same images and colors can look lighter, darker or appear to be a totally different hue on different platforms and monitors, and with different browsers. Images designed on a Mac may look much darker on Windows displays. Images designed on a Windows machine may look flat and washed out on Mac displays.
- Don't use a "blink" feature; it distracts from the message of the content.
- Use dark text on a light background for easy readability.
- Include descriptive comments with all multimedia components.