



Seven Principles of Good Practice for Online Courses

Global Campus best practices are organized around the Seven Principles of Good Practice for Online, developed by [Arthur W. Chickering and Stephen C. Ehrmann](#) which provide rationales for the practices we suggest.

There are three very basic keys to a successful online course—engage the students with the content, engage the students with each other, and engage the students with the instructor. Note the central term—engage. For more detailed recommendations, see below.

Principle 1: Encourage contact between students and faculty.

- Current instructor information and preferred method of contact is clearly stated in the syllabus.
- There is an instructor interaction section in the syllabus section indicating frequency (and method) the instructor will interact with students.
- Faculty members provide at least two options for student-to-faculty interaction--threaded discussions, email, telephone, instant messaging or chat rooms, etc.
- Instructor Presence—communication and course design provide a sense of who the instructor is and why the course is designed in the way it is. Examples of instructor presence include, but are not limited to: including a picture, providing biographical information, developing lessons that incorporate the instructor's voice and/or image, etc.
- Course activities and course structure are designed to promote frequent (at least weekly) interaction between instructor and students.
- Course space and structure of content make it apparent to students where they need to look for information, and allows the instructor to post resources and notes during the delivery of the course—i.e., current events.
- Announcements from Instructor discussion forum is set up.
- Instructors maintain at least 1 synchronous office hour/week.

Principle 2: Develop reciprocity and cooperation among students.

- The course includes information about online collaboration that promotes a safe, inclusive and vibrant learning community.
- The course includes at least one community building activity (student introduction, content related discussion forum, group activities, etc.).
- Course space and structure make it apparent to students where they need to navigate to post resources and notes during the delivery of the course—i.e., current events, supporting documentation, contradictory documentation, relevant examples, etc.
- Course activities foster team/peer collaboration.

Principle 3: Encourage active learning.

- Provide opportunities for students to discuss course material and interact with each other.
- Structure the course to enable critical analysis and reflection.
- Encourage students to set challenging goals for their own learning.
- Allow students to practice and apply concepts and skills in realistic and relevant ways.
- Give students opportunities to record their observations and to do self-assessments.
- Provide avenues for students to ask for and receive assistance in understanding course materials.
- Provide interaction with content through media type, exploration, online resources, field trips, etc.
- Course is structured to require students to access the course space weekly.



Principle 4: Give students prompt feedback.

- Course assignments and activities are structured so that students receive feedback and/or grades from faculty members at least every four weeks.
- All self-study assignments and resources allow students to easily match their responses with the correct responses—answer key, automated feedback for quizzes, faculty review. (Sometimes this happens on a 3rd party web site, so it's not always possible to assess.) (score=0,1,2,NA)
- Use peer-to-peer activities to support additional feedback to students.

Principle 5: Emphasize time on task.

- Deadlines and milestones are clearly communicated in a single location, within the course space.
- The course space includes direction regarding appropriate time on task for different activities.
- The course space includes information regarding total study time/week required for the course.

Principle 6: Communicate high expectations.

- An overview of all course assignments is included in the course work section of the syllabus.
- The course overview, goals, and objectives are located on the home page and syllabus, and clearly state what the participants will know or be able to do at the end of the course.
- The course goals and objectives are measurable and written so that students can demonstrate mastery of them.
- There is a stated alignment between course activities and the course goals and objectives. Course activities identify the specific goals and outcomes they are designed to meet.
- Each lesson includes:
 - The purpose of the lesson or unit.
 - Why the developer thinks this lesson is important.
 - How the lesson or unit fits in with the rest of the course.
 - All educational activities conducted in the lesson or unit.
 - All course goals and outcomes delivered in the lesson or unit
 - How the course goals and outcomes in the lesson or unit will be delivered
 - How the course goals and outcomes in the lesson will be assessed. (This will sometimes require listening to the instructor audios.)
- Each required assignment, including discussions, includes a rubric students can review before and after completing the assignment with the instructor's feedback.
- The syllabus includes the academic integrity policy and assignments/assessments are designed to promote academic integrity. Proctored exams, authentic assignments, and the use of plagiarism software are options instructors may consider incorporating to promote academic integrity.

Principle 7: Respect students' diverse talents and ways of learning.

- The course space includes resources for students with disabilities.
 - The course space includes text files of audio presentations for hearing impaired students.
 - The course space Includes text files of visual presentations for site impaired students.
 - All images contain alt tags.
- Each course requires students to complete at least three different types of graded assessments (including, but not limited to, threaded discussions, exams, online group work, and written essays. Partial score OK).
- Course goals and outcomes are delivered through at least two types of resources—text, audio, video, graphics, interactive animation.
- Navigation is consistent from page to page.
- Navigation is consistent with the GC template.



Additional Tips: Organize, structure, clarity

- Information about how to access other student support services such as technical support, library support, tutorial information, and the academic calendar are easily located in the course space.
- If there is an external resource listed, all necessary instructional resources and/or directions for access of external resources and use for each assignment are provided in the course space.
- Prior to the start of the course, students will have access to course prerequisites, textbooks titles, course goals and objectives, course work description, tech requirements, media, and/or special requirements online. (Available through More Information before the start of the semester.)