A BEST PRACTICE CHECKLIST FOR JESUIT EDUCATION AND ONLINE LEARNING

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COMPONENTS OF ONLINE BEST PRACTICES

- Assessment
- Community
- Content and Learning Activities
- Course Organization
- Presence
- Student Learning Outcomes
- Supporting Students
- Universal Usability (Accessibility)

JESUIT VALUES

- **Reflection** invites us to pause and consider the world around us and our place within it.
- **Discernment** invites us to be open to God's spirit as we consider our feelings and rational thought in order to make decisions and take action that will contribute good to our lives and the world around us.
- **Solidarity and Kinship** invites us to walk alongside and learn from our companions, both local and afar, as we journey through life.
- **Service Rooted In Justice And Love** invites us to invest our lives into the well-being of our neighbors, particularly those who suffer injustice.
- **Cura Personalis** invites us to care for others recognizing the uniqueness and wholeness of each person.
- **Magis** invites us to ask, "Where is the more universal good?" when making decisions; it relates to the Jesuit motto, For the Greater Glory of God.

PRINCIPLES OF IGNATIAN PEDAGOGY*

- Embraces the unique qualities in each student
- Facilitates students' understanding of information in a personally relevant and personally appropriate manner
- Employs a systematic, sequential and purposeful teaching plan
- Encourages students to decide what is truly good for themselves and society through a process of discernment
- Is challenging and rigorous
- Is interdisciplinary
- Makes use of novel teaching methods and technologies as they arise
- Relies on professors to serve as model "women and men for others" both in and out of the classroom
- Encourages attentiveness, reverence and devotion to reveal truth and wisdom
- Utilizes clear and specific evaluation methods
- Encourages student responsibility and independence
- Emphasizes *eloquentia perfecta*–speaking and writing excellence
- Views teaching as a vocation and as a service to others
- Values the five educational principles comprising the Ignatian pedagogical paradigm: context, experience, reflection, action, evaluation

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The following best practices for online learning represent research-based components of high quality online learning and a commitment to Ignatian pedagogy and Jesuit values.

Each best practice includes examples of Jesuit values and Ignatian pedagogical principles being engaged as well as a checklist for activating those characteristics in an online learning environment.

BEST PRACTICES FOR PRESENCE

Solidarity and Kinship | Online instructors engage with students in a meaningful way, using a variety of strategies and communication tools that enable students to easily connect with their instructor and receive regular and personalized feedback.

Views teaching as a vocation and as a service to others | Ongoing presence and accessibility to students throughout the course allows students to see that the instructor values building a connection with students.

- ☐ Course site contains a page, typically named "Start Here," that provides a course description, course outcomes, faculty contact information, syllabus, and instructions for navigating the course.
- ☐ Welcome announcement is present on the course "home page" and contains clear directions on how to get started.
- ☐ Course site contains a personal introduction from the instructor.
- ☐ Course site includes a faculty photo or other graphical representation.
- ☐ Instructor is accessible through multiple means of communication and virtual "office hours".
- ☐ Instructor plans for and communicates a reasonable response time and turnaround time for feedback.

BEST PRACTICES FOR COMMUNITY

Solidarity and Kinship | Online courses are designed to build community among students, intentionally supporting students in creating relationships that enable them to learn from and with each other, to share ideas and thoughts, and to grow as a learning community throughout the course.

Cura Personalis | Interaction among students is guided and supported by the instructor throughout the course, engaging students in respectful dialogue that encourages the sharing of ideas and viewpoints.

- ☐ Embraces the unique qualities in each student–The building of community encourages and supports students in sharing who they are and their own ideas about the course content.
- ☐ Course contains an icebreaker activity that encourages community building.
- ☐ Every course unit contains at least one activity that requires interaction among students.
- ☐ Community building activities (excluding synchronous meetings) are required and factor into the students grade as participation. Participation expectations are clearly communicated.

BEST PRACTICES FOR SUPPORTING STUDENTS

Service Rooted in Justice and Love | Online courses are designed to be accessible for all students, enabling each student to easily and successfully find, use, and engage with all of the course learning activities.

- ☐ Students are provided with the opportunity to provide early and ongoing feedback on the course.
- ☐ Course activities contain clear instructions and due dates.
- ☐ Course content and activities meet universal design and accessibility standards.

BEST PRACTICES FOR STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (SLOS)

Employs a systematic, sequential and purposeful teaching plan | Online courses have a clear connection, that students can see, between course learning outcomes, module learning outcomes, learning activities and assessments.

- ☐ Is challenging and rigorous – Student learning outcomes are challenging but achievable, and are at the appropriate level for the course and the content.
- ☐ Learning outcomes are measurable.
- ☐ Learning outcomes represent student learning and are separate from activities and assessments.
- ☐ Multiple learning outcomes, activities, and assessments promote higher-order thinking.
- ☐ Learning outcomes are clearly stated at the course level and unit level (e.g., modules, weeks).

BEST PRACTICES FOR UNIVERSAL USABILITY

Service Rooted in Justice and Love | Online courses are designed to be accessible for all students, allowing each student to easily and successfully find, use, and engage with all of the course learning activities.

- ☐ Course is intuitive and easy to navigate.
- ☐ Text meets universal design standards regarding underlining, case, face, and color of text.
- ☐ Video files are compressed if possible and, when embedded, exist on their own pages so as not to slow page load.
- ☐ Visual elements are not distracting and serve a purpose.
- ☐ Images are optimized for web delivery.

BEST PRACTICES FOR COURSE ORGANIZATION

Employs a systematic, sequential and purposeful teaching plan | The organization of online courses is designed to facilitate students' ability to easily navigate the course.

- ☐ Course content is chunked into manageable units.
- ☐ Unit content is chunked into well-organized and appropriately sequenced components.
- ☐ Organization and navigation are consistent in the overall course and units.

BEST PRACTICES FOR CONTENT ORGANIZATION

Employs a systematic, sequential and purposeful teaching plan | The organization of online courses is designed to facilitate students' ability to easily navigate the course.

Encourages student responsibility and independence | The course organization allows students to successfully access the content and complete course assessments.

- ☐ Course utilizes a standard template for fully online or blended courses.
- ☐ Course site contains a page, typically named "Start Here," that provides a course description, course outcomes, faculty contact information, syllabus, and instructions for navigating the course.
- ☐ Learning outcomes are appropriately located in the course site.
- ☐ Course site contains links to access technology help and library resources.
- ☐ Links to required resources, software, applications and instructions are provided where they are needed within each unit.
- ☐ Text is brief, chunked, and interspersed with meaningful graphics and headings.

BEST PRACTICES FOR CONTENT AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Makes use of novel teaching methods and technologies as they arise | Online courses use technology in a way that supports students' learning and engagement with the content and course learning activities.

Is challenging and rigorous | The learning activities are challenging but achievable within the time frame and level of the course.

Encourages student responsibility and independence | Clear directions and expectations for learning activities allow students to work independently at a time that best fits their schedule.

Relies on professors to serve as model "women and men for others" both in and out of the classroom | Instructor compliance with copyright and fair use serves as a model for students on the ethical use of other's work.

Values the five educational principles comprising the Ignatian pedagogical paradigm: context, experience, reflection, action, evaluation | The learning activities incorporate a variety of opportunities for students to engage with the content.
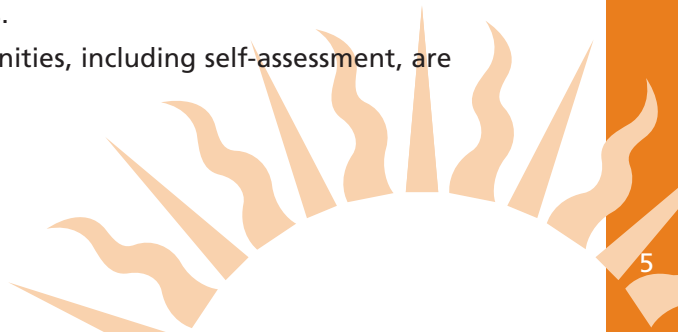
- ☐ Activities and assessments are adequate and reasonable for the course duration.
- ☐ Learning activities, content delivery methods, planned assessments align with course and unit outcomes.
- ☐ Every unit contains at least one activity that promotes active learning.
- ☐ Clear assessment expectations and guidelines are provided for all learning activities.
- ☐ Course content is compliant with copyright, fair use, and creative commons guidelines.
- ☐ A variety of modes and media types is used for presenting content.
- ☐ Audio and video files are engaging (i.e., meet length recommendations, provide opportunities for interaction, are visually appealing.)

BEST PRACTICES FOR ASSESSMENT

Employs a systematic, sequential and purposeful teaching plan | Alignment of the course assessments with the student learning outcomes and learning activities is a reflection of the instructor's purposeful teaching plan.

Utilizes clear and specific evaluation methods | Online courses evaluate students' achievement of the course learning outcomes, through assessments that are clearly described and defined.

- ☐ Activities and assessments are adequate and reasonable for the course duration.
- ☐ Assessments are designed to prevent academic dishonesty.
- ☐ Learning activities, content delivery methods, planned assessments align with course and unit outcomes.
- ☐ Every student learning outcome for the course and each unit is assessed.
- ☐ Clear assessment expectations and guidelines are provided for all learning activities.
- ☐ Assessment opportunities, including self-assessment, are provided frequently.

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