

QUALITY PRINCIPLES IN DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAMES

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Abstract: In this paper a group of principles for faculty staff developing distance learning programs is presented. There are reviewed aspects regarding: the design of distance learning program, course design, collaborative distance learning, participation activity, assessment of students, course evaluation, and delivery methods.

DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAM DESIGN: Interaction and collaboration among distance learning faculty can improve the entire program by promoting a common set of curricular goals, encouraging faculty development.

COURSE DESIGN: Individual courses will be carefully planned to meet the needs of students within unique learning contexts and environments [2]. Careful analysis of the target student population lays the groundwork for building an effective distance learning course. Teacher has to consider previous experience in technology, technological skill and access, coursework, learning preferences, and possible special needs.

COLLABORATIVE DISTANCE LEARNING: The key concept in distance learning is to facilitate collaborative learning. Teachers have to follow some basic principles: Use short comments that invite response; Be clear about expectations of the students; Guide the conversation; Do not overload; Monitor and prompt for participation; Set up small groups and assign tasks to them; Make sure that participants understand and abide by good netiquette by not insulting each other or getting far off the course topic; Write comments every week or two, or assign individuals or groups of students to take on this task of summarizing and focusing the discussion; Organize the interaction; Establish clear norms for participants and procedures for grading online work that give credit for good participation; Assign individuals or small groups to play the role of teacher and of moderator for portions of the course; Adopt a flexible approach towards curriculum integration on global network.

PARTICIPATION ACTIVITY: Participation expectations can be set in terms of frequency of sign-on, numbers and length of student contributions and deadlines.

THE ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS: Assessment of students consists in observation, measurement and analysis of student achievement of demonstrable learning outcomes as stated in intended course goals, objectives, or competencies.

COURSE EVALUATION: Distance learning courses will be periodically reviewed and evaluated to ensure quality, consistency with the curriculum, currency, and advancement of the student learning outcomes.

DELIVERY METHODS: Considerations for selecting the media for delivering courses are the costs of the technology, time required to prepare materials, potential learning curve for students, and the human resources required.

REFERENCES

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