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Announcements Tool

Instructor conveys pertinent information on a regular and sustained basis.

Why: Instructors need to be purposeful about being present in the course so students know someone is leading their educational journey. Three areas instructors can focus on to bring a sense of presence into the online classroom are personality, social connection, and instructional knowledge. Use photos and videos to create a connection with your online audience. Check out the Creating a Sense of Instructor Presence article for more information.

Tip #1
Create weekly calendars for your course.
- Post those in the Announcement feed prior to the start of the semester.
- Put release conditions on each Announcement item so that they automatically post at the beginning of the week. Check out this D2L article on release conditions for more information.

Tip #2
Create two announcements per week, on two different days, focusing on different aspects of the course.
- One announcement on due dates and assignment tips for the week.
- One announcement on either content or current innovations in the discipline linked to a newspaper or research article.

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<tr>
<th>BEST: Highly Proficient</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequently (2-3 times per week) communicates with students about course changes, reminders of due assignments, and relevant additional resources through text, graphics, and / or video announcements.</td>
<td>Sometimes (1-2 times per week) communicates with students about course changes, reminders of due assignments, and relevant additional resources through text, graphics, and / or video announcements.</td>
<td>Inconsistently (0-1 times per week) communicates with students about course changes, reminders of due assignments, and relevant additional resources through text, graphics, and / or video announcements.</td>
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Accessibility Issues

Instructor utilizes appropriate fonts, colors, and alternate text for images and tables, hyperlinks for URLs, and captions for videos.

Why: Creating accessible web content allows people with a wide range of abilities to access your content. Use the four guidelines (perceivable, operable, understandable, and robust) to help you create accessible announcements. Check out WCAG 2.0 and Making News Announcements More Accessible articles for more help.

Tip #1
Use the accessibility checker for announcements and discussion posts.

Tip #2
Find engaging, relevant, properly captioned videos related to the course and post them to the announcements at the beginning of each week.
- The videos can be an extension of the content you have covered in the course that week.
- The videos can also be motivational in nature.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Embraces efforts to make all announcement content accessible.</td>
<td>Makes some effort regarding accessibility of course content.</td>
<td>Rarely puts forth effort to make announcement content accessible.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Student Introduction Responses

Instructor provides a welcoming message to each individual student.

Why: Creating a sense of community from the start develops a sense of connection between the instructor and each student. Personalize each reply instead of stating the same information in each response. Offering up some personal information also helps students feel welcome and assures them that a real person is teaching the course. Check out the 3 Tips to Connect With Your Online Students article for more information.

Tip #1
Comment on one or two items in each student’s post and state a similarity or difference between something the student shared and your own life. For example:

- “I noticed you’re from the Midwest, and so am I! When did you move to the area?”
- “You mentioned your favorite author is Jean-Paul Sartre. Mine is Albert Camus. Have you read any of Camus’ work?”

Tip #2
Create an association between various students’ hobbies so that you can help to create affinity groups based on common interests. For example:

- “You stated that you are a diehard Rockies fan. Did you see the posts by Amir and Sara who also indicated that they like baseball?”
- “You said that you love to go snowboarding on the weekends. Chandra, Kim, and Jaime also mentioned that they enjoy winter sports.”

Tip #3
Create a linkage between each student’s post and upcoming course content. For example:

- “You noted that you were very interested in learning about the Civil War. We will be covering that topic in the Module 3 exploration.”
- “You really seem to enjoy modern art. That topic is the focus of the Module 4 discussion.”

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Posts a unique and personalized response to each individual student introduction.</td>
<td>Posts a unique and personalized response to more than 85% of the individual student introductions.</td>
<td>Posts a unique and personalized response to less than 85% of the individual student introductions.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Instructor Logs Into Course

Instructor logs into the course at regular intervals during the week.

Why: Logging into the course is the primary way in which to engage with learners. While logged in, there are opportunities for instructor-student and student-instructor interactions. These might be asynchronously via grading feedback and discussions or synchronously through web chats or WebEx office hours. Provide students with clear expectations about their online presence. Suggest a regular schedule and structure for students to participate online. Finally, make yourself visibly present in the class through various announcements, regular discussion posts, and timely grading. Check out the How Important is Instructor Presence in an Online Course? article for more information.

Tip #1
Establish a schedule for logging into your course to grade assignments, participate in discussions, and address questions, concerns, and ideas from students.

Tip #2
Participate in the course every weekday to respond to discussion posts, answer questions, and monitor the overall health of the class.

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<tr>
<td>Logs into the course 5 or more days per week in order to monitor and engage students in the course content.</td>
<td>Logs into the course 5 days per week in order to monitor and engage students in the course content.</td>
<td>Logs into the course fewer than 5 days per week in order to monitor and engage students in the course content.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Instructor Presence

Instructor interacts on a regular and sustained schedule, including remarks that are relevant to the teachable moment.

**Why:** Online discussions build community, allow time for in-depth reflection, and facilitate learning. Provide students with clear expectations about participation in online discussions. Make yourself visible in the discussions via regular posts throughout the week. Check out the [Mastering Online Discussion Board Facilitation](#) article for more information.

**Tip #1**
Establish a plan for communicating with students and create a list of the communication tasks you need to address for each module of the course.

**Tip #2**
Participate in the course every weekday to respond to discussion posts.

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<tr>
<td>Is available at regular intervals during the week. Regularly posts 4-5 days each week. Responds to all student questions in open forums within 24 hours. Helps keep the course participants on task.</td>
<td>Is available periodically throughout the week. Regularly posts 3 days each week. Responds to most student questions in open forums within 24 hours. Sometimes attempts to keep the course participants on task.</td>
<td>Is available sporadically during the week. Regularly posts fewer than 3 times per week or all on a single day. Responds to some student questions in open forums within 24 hours. Rarely tries to keep the course participants on task.</td>
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Grading Timeliness

Instructor grades assignments in a timely manner.

**Why:** Research suggests that feedback is most effective when it is given immediately. Students who are given immediate feedback showed a significant increase in performance and are better able to comprehend the material they just read. Prompt feedback contributes to students feeling a sense of community, and as a result, they are more likely to stay engaged in the course. Check out the [Providing Meaningful Feedback](#) article for more information.

**Tip #1**
Set aside a consistent, specific time of day to send and respond to students’ e-mails.

**Tip #2**
Use the below guidelines for returning graded assignments. Depending on the length of the assignment, commit 1-2 hours per day for evaluating work.

- Take the number of assignments you need to grade and divide that number by 7, 5, or 3 days. This can help you divide and conquer the grading load.

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<tr>
<td>Consistently complies with CCCO grading policy. <strong>Returns all graded assignments</strong> within 7 days of the due date of the assignment in a 15-week course, within 5 days in a 10-week course, and within 3 days in a 6-week course.</td>
<td>Usually complies with CCCO grading policy. <strong>Returns 85% or more of graded assignments</strong> within 7 days of the due date of the assignment in a 15-week course, within 5 days in a 10-week course, and within 3 days in a 6-week course.</td>
<td>Rarely complies with CCCO grading policy. <strong>Returns less than 85% of graded assignments</strong> within 7 days of the due date of the assignment in a 15-week course, within 5 days in a 10-week course, and within 3 days in a 6-week course.</td>
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Ready Checks

Instructor completes ready checks prior to the beginning of the term.

**Why:** Making sure that the class is ready to go before the first day is an important step in establishing your credibility as an instructor. An accurate course schedule and content free of errors demonstrates the high quality of CCCOnline courses. This helps students navigate the course with ease and reduces the need for troubleshooting after the fact.

**Tip #1**
Familiarize yourself with all of the items on the [Course Readiness Checklist](#).

**Tip #2**
For help with specific tools associated with the checklist items, visit the [D2L Tech Tools](#) page in the CCCOnline Knowledgebase.

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<tr>
<td>Accurately completes ready checks and records it in the CCCOnline Portal.</td>
<td>Completes ready checks but does not record it in CCCOnline Portal.</td>
<td>Does not complete ready checks or erroneously records ready checks as complete in the CCCOnline Portal.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Non-Participation Report

Instructor completes non-participation report.

Why: Proactive people cause things to happen instead of waiting to respond. Completing this administrative task helps to narrow your focus to the students that want to succeed. Check out the 20 Tips to Facilitate Online Class Participation article for more information.

Tip #1
Add a reminder on your calendar or in your phone about the date and time of the deadline to submit the non-participation report.

Tip #2
Refer to the Instructor Guidebook to acquaint yourself with the expectations for required work.

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<tr>
<td>Accurately completes non-participation report in the CCCOnline Portal.</td>
<td>Completes non-participation report in the CCCOnline Portal with one or more errors.</td>
<td>Does not complete non-participation report in the CCCOnline Portal.</td>
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Professional Development

Instructor participates in training to enhance online teaching abilities.

**Why:** Professional development helps all staff stay as educated and up-to-date as possible in their particular field. Technology, ideas, and tools consistently evolve and it is important for instructors to keep abreast of these changes. Professional development provides instructors with opportunities to explore and learn about innovative ideas and then apply them to benefit their students. Instructors can also share what they learn with colleagues. Check out [The Importance of Professional Development](#) article for more information.

**Tip #1**

Register and attend at least one webinar per semester.

**Tip #2**

Visit the Quality Matters website and check out the course overview for [Applying the Quality Matters Rubric](#) (APPQMR). If interested, discuss with your Program Chair regarding enrollment.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completes three or more hours of PD webinars and/or attends an academic conference as part of professional development activities during the calendar year.</td>
<td>Completes one or two hours of PD webinars as part of professional development activities during the calendar year.</td>
<td>Completes no professional development activities during the calendar year.</td>
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Communication Skills

Instructor communicates respectfully and effectively.

**Why:** An instructor can add to his or her knowledge beyond limits with effective communication skills. Check out the [General Conferencing Strategies](#) article for more information.

**Tip #1**
Be as explicit and detailed as possible in your communication.

**Tip #2**
Be sensitive to different communication styles and varied cultural backgrounds. For example, students may have different language skills. Since humor is often culturally specific, not everyone in the class may perceive it the same.

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<tr>
<td>Shows respect to students in his / her communications with them.</td>
<td>Sometimes shows respect to students in his / her communications with them. Is enthusiastic when interacting with students. Creates a learning environment that is safe and inviting and serves a good model of expected behavior for all course communication.</td>
<td>Does not respect students in his / her communications with them. Is not enthusiastic when interacting with students. Creates a learning environment that is cold and distant and does not serve as a model of expected behavior for all course communication.</td>
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# Engagement/Re-Engagement

Instructor provides an opportunity for group construction of knowledge via active involvement in the online classroom and discussion forums to encourage student participation.

**Why:** Responding to students both individually and in groups builds community and lets each student know that you are present and interested in their learning experience. This also provides an opportunity for you to demonstrate the appropriate way to format and engage in the discussion area. Check out the [Mastering Online Discussions](#) and [The Practice of Participation in an Online Course](#) articles for more information.

**Tip #1**
Respond to several students with one post.
- Address one post to several students and include their names in the subject line.

**Tip #2**
Try a scaffolding technique, such as asking a lower level question to begin building the concept and encourage students to construct a base for their knowledge structure.
- “What did the book have to say about X?”
- “How would you define this term?”

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<tr>
<td>Is actively involved in monitoring student progress. Provides meaningful examples that help students understand course content and plays an active role in online discussions and encourages students to participate in them. Facilitates learning activities that help students construct explanations / solutions and provides guidance on the ways in which students can link new information to their existing knowledge. Posts regularly re-engage individual students as well as the entire class through the use of additional questions at the same or higher level.</td>
<td>Is often involved in monitoring student progress. Provides some examples that help students understand course content and plays semi-active role in online discussions and encourages students to participate in them. Identifies learning activities that help students construct explanations / solutions and provides input on the ways in which students can link new information to their existing knowledge. Posts regularly re-engage groups of students through additional questions at the same or higher level.</td>
<td>Is sometimes involved in monitoring student progress. Rarely provides useful examples that help students understand course content and plays a limited role in online discussions and encourages students to participate in them. Directs learning activities that help students construct explanations / solutions and rarely makes suggestions on the ways in which students can link new information to their existing knowledge. Limited or no re-engagement occurs. Student involvement is often ignored.</td>
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Instructor Guidance

Instructor guides students to higher thinking / learning.

**Why:** High levels of interpersonal interaction are correlated with better student performance in online courses. Critical thinking helps learners think through concepts in order to construct knowledge and make decisions. It also helps them understand the relevance of ideas presented in the course. It challenges students to view multiple perspectives, analyze similarities and differences in other people’s thinking, and evaluate their relevance. Check out the [Effective Online Instructor Presence article](#) for more information.

**Tip #1**
Ask questions that encourage [Critical Thinking](#).

**Tip #2**
Post engaging and unique announcements at least one time per week.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facilitates the learning process and does not direct the students' learning process. Identifies areas of potential conflict within the course.</td>
<td>Fosters and guides the learning process and does not direct the students' learning process. Occasionally points out areas of potential conflict within the course.</td>
<td>Directs students rather than facilitates the learning process. Rarely identifies areas of potential conflict within the course.</td>
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</table>
Acknowledgement and Encouragement

Instructor motivates and challenges students to share their understanding of content.

Why: Appropriate instructor-student interaction is positively associated with student performance and satisfaction. Students want to feel that the instructor cares. The role of the instructor is to motivate, encourage, guide, and challenge learners. The instructor is a connection to the college, so it is important for students to get to know their instructor on some level. Students look for engagement in the announcements, assignment feedback, and discussion boards. Check out the Assessing the Relationships and Interactions in the Web-based Online Learning Environment article for more information.

Tip #1
Ask your students for feedback about ways that you can make the class more interactive.

Tip #2
Summarize key issues occasionally as you go and refocus student attention if the discussion seems to be getting off track.

Tip #3
A good summary post provides students with a set of 2 or 3 takeaways that synthesize what you thought were the key issues raised in the discussion.

Tip #4
Structure your comments as questions or suggestions, rather than criticisms.

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<tr>
<td>Shows caring and concern that students are learning the course content. <strong>Encourages</strong> students to share their knowledge and expertise with the learning community. Posts <strong>regularly acknowledge</strong> students’ understanding of content.</td>
<td>Shows caring and concern that students are learning the course content. <strong>Sometimes encourages</strong> students to share their knowledge and experiences with the learning community. Posts <strong>sometimes acknowledge</strong> students’ understanding of content.</td>
<td>Is indifferent that students are learning the course content. <strong>Does not encourage</strong> students to share their experiences and information with the learning community. Little or no <strong>acknowledgement</strong> is made of students' understanding of content.</td>
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Substantive Grading

Instructor provides comprehensive feedback regarding student work.

Why: Combining correctional and instructional feedback provides the student with comprehensive feedback that is likely to result in understanding what the mistake is and how to fix it. Research indicates that instructional feedback about the ways in which to improve assignment quality is more effective than feedback that only provides praise, encouragement, or criticism. Check out The Power of Feedback article for more information.

Tip #1
Be as specific as possible.
- If a student did not write an appropriate topic sentence, direct him to a lesson in the module or another appropriate resource that explains the way in which to construct one.
- Did a math student forget to make the denominators equivalent? Tell the student and then redirect her to the lesson that teaches that skill.

Tip #2
Use the feed up, feed back, and feed forward approach. Make sure that your feedback helps students understand the following questions:
- What are the goals?
- What progress is being made toward the goal?
- What activities need to be undertaken to make better progress?

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<tr>
<td>Provides prompt, clear, detailed, and helpful feedback on assignments and exams, and discussions that enhances the learning experience. Instructive feedback challenges and inspires students while providing specific suggestions to improve the quality of their work and thinking.</td>
<td>Provides summary and generalized feedback on assignments, exams, and discussions that sometimes promotes the learning experience. Instructive feedback provides students with both general and specific suggestions to improve the quality of their work and thinking.</td>
<td>Provides untimely, general, brief, or unhelpful feedback on assignments, exams, and discussions contribute little to the learning experience. Feedback is generic and does not provide students with actionable suggestions for improvement.</td>
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Online Management and Technology

Instructor uses technology effectively to manage online workload.

**Why:** Developing weekly routines that leverage technology can help you manage your online course workload. Effectively using the tools within the LMS can help maintain a clear focus on student achievement in the classroom. Check out the [5 Time Management Tips for Managing An Online Classroom](#) article for more information.

**Tip #1**
Complete the Teaching with D2L training prior to the beginning of your first semester and refer back to the course content as needed.

**Tip #2**
Refer to the [CCCOnline Knowledgebase](#) to brush up on LMS-related technical skills as necessary. Specifically, check out this KB article on [Grading Discussions Using a Rubric](#).

**Tip #3**
Create a plan to manage the grading workload by setting aside dedicated days and times of the week for grading. Depending on the flow and rhythm of course due dates, schedule extra time to grade certain assignments.

**Tip #4**
Maintain a flexible schedule with outside commitments so you have time to address any course-related issues as they occur.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uses <strong>appropriate strategies</strong> to manage the online workload. Is <strong>confident in and proficient</strong> with the technologies and learning management system (LMS).</td>
<td>Manages the online workload <strong>somewhat efficiently</strong>. Is <strong>mostly confident</strong> in and proficient with the technologies and learning management system (LMS).</td>
<td>Manages the online workload <strong>inefficiently</strong>. Is <strong>not comfortable</strong> with the technologies and learning management system (LMS).</td>
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**Additional Information/Expertise**

Instructor connects relevant professional experience and disciplinary knowledge while showing initiative and willingness to share with students.

**Why:** The role of the instructor is more pronounced in the online classroom. Sharing new skills and expertise you accumulate can energize your students as they learn from a working professional. Applying your professional experience in the classroom provides the necessary context to help students understand real-world scenarios that they are likely to encounter in the workplace. Students look to the instructor as the guide, facilitator, and teacher. Instructors should concentrate on responding to student questions regarding the course content, addressing difficult subject matter, and discussing relevant topics. Check out the [10 Principles of Effective Online Teaching](#) and [The Importance of Professional Development](#) articles for more information.

**Tip #1**
Post [instructor-created](#) or publisher-created videos that extend beyond what is provided in the prescribed course content.

**Tip #2**
Use interactive technologies like live audio and video chat:
- [Screencast-o-matic](#)
- [YuJa](#)
- [WebEx](#)
- [Camtasia](#)
- [Adobe Connect](#)

**Tip #3**
Reply to a discussion post topic with a relevant journal article and ask for your students’ feedback.

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<tr>
<td><strong>Is helpful</strong> in providing <a href="#">additional resources</a> and in guiding the class toward understanding course topics in a way that helps students <a href="#">go deeper</a> into the content to clarify their thinking. Meaningfully <a href="#">synthesizes</a> connections among life and professional experiences outside of the formal classroom to <a href="#">deepen understanding</a> of the subject matter and to broaden students’ points of view.</td>
<td><strong>Sometimes</strong> provides <a href="#">cursory resources</a> to help guide the class toward a <a href="#">better understanding</a> of course topics in a way that helps students to clarify their thinking. Effectively <a href="#">selects and develops</a> contextual examples of life and professional experiences to <a href="#">illuminate</a> concepts, theories, and frameworks in the field of study.</td>
<td><strong>Rarely</strong> provides <a href="#">supplemental resources</a> and in guiding the class toward a <a href="#">basic understanding</a> of course topics in a way that helps students to clarify their thinking. Occasionally <a href="#">compares</a> life experiences and academic knowledge to infer differences, as well as similarities, and <a href="#">acknowledges perspectives</a> other than his / her own.</td>
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Administrative Skills

Instructor solves problems in a proactive manner and completes routine responsibilities with limited oversight.

**Why:** Proactive people cause things to happen instead of waiting to respond. They seize opportunities and begin change rather than responding to the apparent needs of a situation. Changes agents predict, plan, participate, and perform. Check out the How to be Proactive at Work and Problem Solving and Initiative articles for more information.

**Tip #1**
Create a list of items you feel need improving in the course, or with general work responsibilities, and consistently refer to this list for actions you have taken.

**Tip #2**
Work toward understanding the ways in which things function within your courses, as well as with general work tasks, and then establish regular routines for completing them. Look for opportunities to innovate.

**Tip #3**
Refer to the Instructor Guidebook during the semester to acquaint yourself with the expectations for required work.

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<tr>
<td>Not only develops a logical, consistent plan to solve a problem, but recognizes consequences of a solution and can articulate reason for choosing it Work is thorough and comprehensive. Proactively helps other team members complete tasks to a similar level of excellence.</td>
<td>Having selected from among alternatives, develops a logical, consistent plan to solve a problem. Completes all assigned tasks by established deadlines. Work is primarily well done. Occasional errors in work sometimes require remediation.</td>
<td>Considers and rejects less acceptable approaches to solve a problem. Minimally completes most assigned tasks by established deadlines with numerous errors. Work often requires remediation.</td>
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