Standards for Teaching Online Courses

Goal 1: Establish instructor presence and build learning communities by encouraging student-to-faculty and student-to-student interaction and communication.

WebCT Tools:	Best Practices/Recommendations
Single page	Paint a picture in words, including your hobbies, likes, dislikes---whatever will give students a sense of who you are; you might want to include a photograph.
Tegrity or audio file	Let students hear your voice; you can also include a photo or use Tegrity camera to provide video as you introduce yourself.
Email	Post your policies on how students are to email you and/or their peers. Encourage interaction. Respond to student email at least twice daily Monday through Friday and as much as possible on the weekends. Never let 72 hours go by without responding to email from students. This area is comparable to the one-on-one you might have with a student after class.
Discussions	Use the discussion board for announcements, reminders, and/or additional notes about a topic or assignment. Post your policies on how you wish students to respond to discussion topics or to ask questions. Provide incentives for their participation and encourage them to ask questions as well as to respond to topics. This area is comparable to in-class dialogue.
	Build learning communities and allow students to communicate with one another. Examples: • Assign study groups on the discussion board. • Post a "peer help" discussion topic. • Include peer review assignments. • Include group assignments.

Goal 2: Clearly communicate goals and expectations of course and strive for flexibility.

WebCT Tools:	Best Practices/Recommendations
Syllabus	Post Syllabus/Schedule. Avoid on-campus requirements if possible, but if you must have an on-campus lab, exam, or presentation, try to give a few options for it. You might allow students to come at any of three times, so that there are still classmates, but the schedule is more flexible (i.e. have a day option, an evening option, and maybe a Saturday option). Remember to reserve rooms to meet with students on campus.
Calendar	Use the course calendar to post important due dates, topics to be covered, assigned readings, etc. Let students know of any changes you make as the semester progresses by emailing them or posting an announcement.

Goal 3: Design course content presentation to encourage active learning, to be comparable to traditional coverage, and to be student-friendly

WebCT Tools:	Best Practices/Recommendations
Homepage/Navigation/Icons	Use appropriate graphics and Web page colors. Font size should be easy to read. Course site flows in a logical manner and is easy to navigate. Try to balance clicking and scrolling. Students will get frustrated if they have to click through several pages or scroll too much. Items used often, such as email or the course calendar, may be placed on the course homepage. It is also helpful to include a video tour of the course on the homepage.
Content Modules	• Present course content in manageable segments. • Organize your course lessons and assignments according to topic or chapter, and try to balance the amount of content per unit, per week so that students are not overwhelmed with work some weeks and have little to do other weeks.

Organizer Pages	Think like a student seeing your course for the first time. Organize intuitively and make sure major areas are easy to find.
Single Pages	Notes might be kept to a one-page length with more focused topics or subtopics.
URLs	Link to quality sources on the Internet rather than reinventing the wheel. However, be sure to check links regularly to ensure they are still working.
Notes	Include minimal text notes. Assign course readings instead of reproducing what is in the textbook. You might add notes on something not included in the text, outline or summarize chapters, or clarify complex information.
Video/Audio of Lectures/Presentations	Include videos (using Tegrity or other streaming media) to lecture on course content. The best videos are focused on one or two points, lasting only five to ten minutes each. Try to include at least one video per chapter or unit, but not too many so as not to overwhelm the student. The best courses have one or two short videos per week. Math and other similar classes will need to include demonstrations of how to work the problems. You may do screen recordings using any application and audio (your voice).
Image Database, Multimedia	Use a variety of technologies/multimedia in your courses that appeal to different learning styles: • Tegrity Lectures/Demos • PowerPoint Presentations (with or without audio) • Screen recordings with audio (using Tegrity or other streaming media) • Online Discussion • Course Notes and Study Questions • Example Assignments • Links to Web Sites • Online Quizzes • Self Tests • CD Rom • Documents produced using SmartBoard or Elmocam

Goal 4: Encourage coverage of course competencies through completion of work assignments, group activities, presentations, skills inventory, quizzes, tests, and evaluations.

WebCT Tools:	Best Practices/Recommendations
Assignments	Use the assignments tool to organize and grade assignments. You can include instructions and even attach examples or further explanation for each assignment.
Quizzes/Tests	Use weekly or monthly online quizzes to motivate students to read and to check comprehension.
Participation/Extra Points	Replicate anything you would do in the classroom online in some way. You might include peer reviews, videos, small assignments worth only a few points, reading quizzes, etc.
My Grade (for students)	Release columns for assignments and quizzes so students can monitor their progress using the My Grades tool.

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