Learning Outcomes

1. Learning outcomes for an online course are identical to those of the on-site version.
2. Learning outcomes are measurable and specific.
3. Course material is sufficient and directly related to learning outcomes.
4. Resources and activities support learning outcomes.
5. Assessment determines the degree to which learners have achieved the required learning outcomes.

Ease of Communication

1. The writing style is clear, concise, and direct.
2. Sentences and paragraphs are brief and to the point.
3. Familiar or common words are used when possible.
4. Jargon, clichés, and colloquial and idiomatic expressions are avoided.
5. The meaning of special terms, abbreviations, and acronyms is easy to access.
6. Labeling in all presentation materials is accurate, readable, and clear.
7. The wording used to define learning outcomes is clear and definite.
8. Instructions and requirements are stated simply, clearly, and logically.
9. A supportive second-person conversational tone is used throughout the course.
10. The course material has been edited for language and grammar.
11. The pacing of spoken language is natural sounding yet slow enough to be understood by a variety of learners.
12. The sound quality of audio and video is good enough to be clearly understood.
13. Avoid combining spoken and written narrative in presentations.
14. Videos should be no longer than 10 minutes in length.

Pedagogical and Organizational Design

1. A syllabus including contact information, a course outline, requirements, and guidelines is accessible from the start of the course and throughout.
2. Introductions and summaries are provided at the beginning and end of units.
3. Blocks of information are broken up or "chunked" into incremental learning sections, segments, or steps as is appropriate to the subject matter.
4. Pedagogical steps build progressively, one upon the other, as is appropriate to the subject matter.

Visual Design

1. Page layout is uncluttered and open and includes a significant amount of white space.
2. There is sufficient space between lines, paragraphs, and to the right and left of the text so that it stands out and is easy to read.
3. The text is left-justified, and right margins are ragged.
4. Headings and subheadings are used consistently to logically organize content.
5. A universal sans serif Web typeface (e.g., Verdana) assures access across platforms and enhances screen readability.
6. Type size should be large enough to be easily readable by all students.
7. **Bold** and *italic* typefaces are used sparingly only to emphasize important items.
8. Underlining is used only for links.
9. Words in ALL CAPS are avoided.
10. **Color is used with purpose.**
11. There is a good contrast between text and background.
12. Visual elements (e.g., icons, shading, and color) are used consistently to distinguish between different types of course elements (e.g., lessons, assignments, audio, and video).
13. Use bullets or numbers to set apart items that can be listed.
14. Numbers are used to identify sequential steps to task or process. They are used for ranking and setting priorities.
15. Bullets are used to highlight a series of items that are not prioritized or sequential.
16. Details in images, graphs, charts, and diagrams are designed and organized so that they are easy to read and understand.
17. Content is designed simply and clearly to avoid information overload (e.g., avoid narrating while the written text is visible, using distracting images for decoration, presenting too much information at once, etc.).

Engaged Learning

1. Course content is designed to encourage interactions between learners.
2. Presentations, activities, and assessments address a variety of learning abilities and preferences.
3. Presentations include examples, models, case studies, illustrations, etc. for clarification.
4. Materials are authentic or relate to real-life applications.
5. The manner of presenting new knowledge and skills is varied, including text, lists, organizational activities, reflective quizzes, readings, images, graphs, charts, etc.
6. Courses include a variety of relevant multimedia to support learning (e.g., audio, video, recommended podcasts, illustrations, photographs, charts, and graphs).
7. Presentations include media and are varied.
8. Activities are frequent and varied. Students may respond to questions, select options, provide information, or interact with others.
9. Activities engage students in higher-level thinking skills, including critical and creative thinking, analysis, and problem-solving.
10. Activities lead to active interactions that involve course content and personal communication.
11. Topics and materials are up to date and relevant.
12. Reflection and reflective activities come up throughout the course.
13. Bibliographies and reference lists include a variety of resources, including Web links, books, journals, video, and downloadable text and audio files as is appropriate.

Learning Interactions and Community

1. There are sufficient opportunities for learners to work collaboratively.
2. Online spaces (e.g., discussion boards, social networks) are in place for students to participate in and meet outside the class.
3. Learners take responsibility for their learning and, at times, the learning of others.
4. The teacher is a participant in the learning process.
5. Learners are encouraged to interact with others (fellow classmates, course guests, etc.) and benefit from their experience and expertise.
6. Class participation activities (e.g., discussion boards, wikis, social networks) are used to build community.
7. Procedures for group activities are specified so that students are aware of their role and responsibility in collaborative activities.
8. Collaborative activities are designed to facilitate a safe learning environment.
9. Students work in a variety of independent and collaborative configurations that reflect real-world situations.

Assessment

1. The relationship between learning outcomes and assessments is evident.
2. The course includes ongoing and frequent assessment.
3. Students are given clear expectations and criteria for assignments. Examples are included for clarification when needed.
4. Criteria/rubrics clearly inform learners as to how they are assessed on specific assignments, such as online class participation.
5. Grading criteria are outlined in the course syllabus and within the assignment or assessment itself.
6. Criteria and procedures for peer review and evaluation are clear.

Feedback

1. Teacher, peer-to-peer, quest, and automated feedback clarifies, amplifies, and extends the topic.
2. Teacher feedback is provided in a timely fashion.
3. Students can work through a practice exercise until they reach a correct or acceptable result.
4. Students know when and how they will receive feedback from instructors.
5. Self-correcting and/or self-assessment activities are used throughout the course to enable learners to vary the pace of their learning as is appropriate to the subject matter.

Evaluation and Grading

1. All graded activities are listed upfront in the syllabus.
2. The manner of submission for graded assignments is clear.
3. Due dates for submissions are clear.
4. The relationship between graded elements and the final grade are clear.
5. Consequences of missed deadlines and insufficient class participation are clearly stated and fair.
6. Class participation/discussion should account for 10-30 percent of the final grade.
7. Students can easily track their progress.
8. The consequences of plagiarism, cheating, and failure to properly cite copyrighted material are emphasized.
9. Graded elements are clearly distinguished from those that are ungraded.
10. Graded assignments are varied (e.g., special projects, reflective assignments, research papers, case studies, presentations, group work, etc.).

Ease of Access

1. Correct, working links are provided to course materials and resources.
2. Resource material is accessible to all students in commonly used formats.
3. The format of media should be specified.
4. Audio and video material appearing within a lesson should be brief.
5. Course material is portable (e.g., text can be downloaded or printed out, the material is well designed for handheld devices).
6. Contact information for advisors and technical help is provided in the syllabus.
7. Cross-referencing and links to items in other parts of the course are provided.