

## GUIDLEINES OF ONLINE LEARNING DEVELOPMENT

by Diane Stelacio

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### Abstract

Expanding the classroom boundaries using online learning impacts more than the tools used to deliver the content. The participants' roles, community development techniques and resources also changes to adapt to the new environment. This document examines the transformation and recommends guidelines to develop a learning community enhancing the educational experience for all participants.

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## Introduction

Distance learning occurs when the learner and instructor are not meeting face-to-face to transfer content. Distance learning has occurred for many years using surface mail, audio and video tapes and text to transfer the content. The delivery format tends to focus on learner to content interaction with limited access to the facilitator or other learners. Characteristics of distance learning Abdal-Haqq (2002) states are:

- Traditional distance learning – the “talking heads” and one-way communication of the satellite distance learning programs of the eighties.
- Correspondence course – the one-on-one “teacher sends the information, student responds” model.
- Chat rooms – The synchronous nature of chat rooms makes them especially ineffective for students in different time zones.
- E-Groups or e-mail-based programs – Such one-on-one designs prohibit the building of an effective community of learners and are essentially teacher-centered (p. 17).

The learning is independently performed and a learning community does not form. Some learners are successful in this environment while others experience feelings of isolation and frustration.

Technology advancements have changed the tools available and interaction possible to include for distance learning moving the class online. To remove isolation and support the learner, the course design should include four types of interaction. Lynch (2002) identifies four levels of interactions as “interaction with the content, interaction with the instructor, interaction with classmates and interaction with self” (p. 88). Online learning uses the technologies to include learner to content, learner to learner, learner to self and learner to facilitator interaction

while participating in a course. A learning community forms online, bringing the participants together to research, discuss, and process content enhancing learning for all participants.

Abdal-Haqq (2002) observes effective characteristics of online teaching are:

- A community of learners – Students are in a class with other students working through the curriculum asynchronously on an established schedule.
- Student-centered curriculum – A discovery approach is used, with students finding the answers to essential questions in a project-oriented model.
- Teachers as moderators – The instructor is the “guide on the side” as opposed to the “sage on the stage.” Student-to-student interaction is fostered and encouraged.
- Asynchronous interaction – Using a threaded discussion model, students are able to interact and complete their assignments during a fixed time period but at a flexible “anytime, anywhere” pace (p. 19).

The one most important element in the electronic community is bringing the group together. The group must understand their roles, sense it is a safe, secure environment with clear guidelines to operate within or they may withdraw. The combination of developing a safe environment and clear participation guidelines assist to “bring” the group together focusing on the intended course content.

#### Developing the Electronic Learning Community

According to Dictionary.com (2005) the definition of a community is “a group of people having common interests” (para. 2). Expanding on that definition an electronic learning community would be defined as a group of people having common interests brought together using electronic resources to discuss the common interests. The electronic resources can include a broad range of ever changing technology: phones, message boards and learning managements

systems are a few used. The medium is expanding rapidly to include instant messaging, video conferencing and other new technologies designed to “bring” people together while geographically they may never meet.

Face-to-face classroom instruction has been experienced by current instructional staff, community members and students. Participants have grown comfortable and know what to expect in a familiar setting and how to interact in the learning community. They can relate to what they know and have experienced and are unsure of evolving online learning opportunities. Ko and Rossen (2004) observe that “teaching online is relatively new, many people don’t know what it is, or how it’s done, or even what some of the terms used to describe mean” (p. 2). The tools, participatory roles and resources are still a mystery resulting in misinterpretation of online learning by perspective students, staff and community members. Participating in an online class is thought of as being easier and not as effective as a familiar face-to-face class (Ko and Rossen, 2004). Moore (2001) remarks that “many fear that online education is simply about “fact-shoveling” and “training,” and not about education, interactivity, and true engagement” (p.3.3). Understanding the new roles and delivery strategies will aid the participants to transition to the environment.

The Guidelines of Online Learning Development Facilitator Strategies document will be a resource for instructors assisting to understand the changes and expectations (see Appendix A). Many concerns are similar for all participants while some are unique to different roles of the participants. The Guidelines of Online Learning Development Learner Strategies document will be used as a resource for parents and learners to enhance their awareness of the expectations (see Appendix B). Facilitators will participate in face-to-face training, followed up with an online experience learning to navigate the environment.

### *Participants Roles*

The roles of the participants transition in an online learning community providing a voice to all members. The delivery format in a traditional face-to-face class is teacher centered where the teacher brings the content and the students are expected to absorb. The instructor controls both the environment and the content. Online teaching methodologies apply a student centered approach which shifts responsibility and control to the learner (Weiss, Speck and Knowlton, 2000). Queiroz (2003) states “that online teachers have to cope with the roles of becoming the managers and facilitators of the learning process. For a course to be successful, it is necessary that there is an inter-relation among these areas” (para. 9). The instructor facilitates learning rather than dictating and the learners are required to become active participants in their learning experience rather than passive observers.

The development of electronic learning communities requires a student centered approach which shifts responsibility and control to the learner. A student centered delivery is described by Weiss, Speck and Knowlton (2000) as one where

the professor is not the sole voice of intellectual authority, the only one who has been endowed with knowledge worthy of dissemination. The student also dispenses information by assuming the role of an active participant in the day-to-day rigors of developing an understanding the course materials. This does not imply that the professor is not a valuable participant in a student-centered classroom; rather, the professor’s role is recast (p. 7).

The instructor or facilitator should not bring all the resources to the course, instead encouraging each learner to become active participants researching to locate relevant resources and bringing

their past experiences together. The facilitator role and interaction transitions to that of a guide on the side.

Palloff and Pratt (2001) also recommend transferring more control to the learner in several of the “tips for a successful online course” including:

- Encourage students to bring real-life examples into the online classroom. The more relevant the material is to their lives, the more likely they are to integrate it.
- Don't lecture!
- Act like a *learning facilitator* rather than a professor (p. 36).

The role of the facilitator transitions to that of a coach. The facilitator is always monitoring course activity to respond when needed but observes and guides from the side lines instead of playing the game. All learners are now required to become active participants researching and interacting.

#### *Facilitator.*

Palloff and Pratt (1999) comment that “in order to be successful, classes, seminar, and meetings conducted in an online environment must create an equal playing field” (p. 19). The participatory role of the instructor and student change when a course transitions to online requiring modifications to the course and instructional strategies. The instructors' role changes to that of a facilitator supporting the learner, the learner takes on a more active role in their learning changing the outcomes (Palloff and Pratt, 1999). Understanding the new roles and delivery strategies will aid both the students and instructor to transition to the environment.

The goal of the facilitator is to guide the students learning by developing a safe environment to explore and learn in, present high order thinking questions requiring learner

research and self reflection. Guidelines for the facilitator to promote electronic learning community development and enhance learning for the participants are:

1. Develop a syllabus that serves as a skeleton structure for the course to operate identifying required resources, weekly assignments, discussion topics and technical requirements.
2. Provide grading rubrics and clear expectations of participation.
3. Be present in the course room a minimum of once every forty-eight hours and respond to learners questions, provide feedback and additional thoughts to ponder.
4. Assist the learners to become comfortable in the “classroom” navigating the environment and interact with other learners by introducing ice breakers.
5. Identify absent students and attempt student contact using email or phone. Notify the site coordinator of absences or inconsistent interaction.
6. Promote critical thinking by introducing questions developed at a higher level of Bloom’s taxonomy.

#### *Learners.*

In the online environment the roles change to a student-centered classroom where the learners’ experiences and knowledge are also incorporated as part of the learning experience.

The participants are unfamiliar with the roles, time investment and requirements to participate. It is thought of as being easier and not as effective. Ko and Rossen (2004) suggest “some students enroll in an online course expecting it to be much easier than a regular course” (p. 69).

Understanding the expectations and examining the role changes together as a community assists to build the community and develop realistic expectations of the learning experience.

The learners roles transition to active participants requiring them take a higher level of responsibility for their knowledge acquisition. Lectures and note taking instructional strategies used in the traditional face-to-face classroom demonstrate the instructor giving and the student receiving described in the teacher-centered classroom. Technologically oriented lessons transfer control of the learning to the student providing self-directed learning. Campbell (1999) points out “the opportunity for students to make such choices is at the heart of giving them control over their own learning and intellectual development” (p. 224).

Instructors’ roles change that of a facilitator and the learners take an active part in locating resources, introducing questions and interacting with all learners. Guidelines for the learners to enhance their educational experiences and promote electronic learning community development are:

1. Understand the goals of the course by reviewing the syllabus, timelines, technical requirements and grading rubrics. Ask the facilitator for clarification if there are any areas you are unsure of, it is likely other participants share the same concern.
2. Complete assignments within the designated timelines.
3. Don’t plagiarize! Always use the writing standards (MLA or APA) identified by the facilitator to identify resources used and develop responses using your own words.
4. Observe Netiquette rules for interacting using electronic mediums. Avoid shouting and stay on topic in each discussion area. Review basic rules of Netiquette at <http://www.learnthenet.com/english/html/09netiq.htm>.
5. Respect all participants in the course.
6. Use assigned on-site class time appropriately focusing on course assignments and supplement as required completing assignments as homework.

7. Report inconsistencies in the course room to the online facilitator and site coordinator.

### *Defining Participation*

#### *Facilitator.*

Monitoring and promoting the interaction of the online learning community requires frequent facilitator interaction. Palloff and Pratt (1999) compare face-to-face delivery to online learning and suggest the time investment to prepare, monitor progress, provide feedback and grade assignments is up to three times more than invested for face-to-face delivery (see Appendix C).

Serving as the facilitator there is a fine line between being absent and interacting too much engaging instead as the provider of all knowledge. Ko and Rossen (2004) suggest “as an instructor, you need to step back a bit from the spotlight in order to allow the students to take a more active part” (p. 13). What is not observed is equally as important to note and follow up as the type of responses and students actively participating.

Facilitator participation guidelines are:

1. Be available to respond to learners questions. Communicate to the learners how they can contact the facilitator including when and where office hours will occur. Instead of onsite office hours the sessions will now occur using some form of synchronous communication. (Ex: Phone, instant messenger)
2. Enter the course room to open discussion, read, comment and input grades at least once every forty-eight hours.

3. Participation does not need to occur onsite, the interaction is recorded by the learning management system and can occur from any computer connected to the Internet.
4. Contact the online learning site coordinator if unable to meet the participation requirements. Technology support, substitutes or class cancellation may result.

*Learners.*

Adapting to the online environment results in different types of participation than has been previously experienced during face-to-face classroom session. Rubrics are provided by the facilitator defining levels of interaction required for the specific course. Ko and Rossen (2004) noted that “online courses depend heavily on the participation of students” (p. 13). Participation is observed in the interaction on the discussion board and submission of assignments. Student absences occur when the minimum participation does not occur.

Learner participation guidelines are:

1. Read all required text and research to introduce additional sources as needed to support responses.
2. Enter the course room at least three times each week while class is in session to post responses, read learner and/or facilitator feedback and pick up announcements.
3. Contact the facilitator and site coordinator by email in advance of planned absences. (Ex. winter break, independent vacation). Your school calendar may differ from the online learning provider.
4. Review the grading rubrics and complete all assignments according to the timeline provided.

5. If you are unclear about the expectations, ask. The facilitator can clarify before you are behind.

### *Technical Requirements*

#### *Hardware and access.*

Computers meeting or exceeding the minimum requirements to access the online classes are available onsite at the following locations: media center, ETTC lab (room 343), Office Services Technology (room 131), Computer Technology (room 138) and all exploratory classrooms. When the rooms are open there is always a staff member present to assist in basic navigation of the course room and file management. If additional assistance is needed, contact the online learning site coordinator located in the ETTC lab (room 343) in person or by email. Lab hours of operation and phone contact sheets will be distributed to all participants during the introductory meeting.

When using a computer offsite to access the course room the minimum hardware requirements are:

Windows 2000, XP or newer

Pentium III or faster

256MB RAM

28.8 kbps modem or faster

Word processing software package

Additional software may be required to meet specific course requirements.

#### *Participants Skills.*

You do not need to be a computer expert to be a participant in an online course. Basic file management in a word processing package, using Email communication and attachments and

Internet surfing techniques are enough to get started. The basic skills will strengthen as you build and navigate the course room.

Ko and Rossen (2004) define basic computer skills as knowing how to do the following:

1. Set up folders and directories on a hard drive.
2. Use word processing software properly (for instance, cut, copy, and paste; minimize and maximize windows; save files).
3. Handle email communications, including attachments.
4. Use a browser to access the World Wide Web (p. 16).

Possessing the skills included on the list provides a solid foundation to nurture which will strengthen through experience. Prior to starting if you lack some of the basic skills there are free resources on the Internet that can be used to build. A link to get started with cut, copy and paste is <http://www.compukiss.com/sandyclassroom/tutorials/article787.htm> additionally included in this link are additional lessons and resources. To help you find additional resources access Tips and Tricks for Surfing the Internet located at <http://www.capemaytech.net/ettc/links/onlinelearning/tipshomepage.htm>. Using the techniques reviewed in this lesson will help you locate additional resources while continuing to build your skills.

Ko and Rossen (2004) remind us that “Techies” don’t necessarily make the best online instructors” (p. 16). Techies may get caught up in the advanced technology thinking they need the latest and greatest and move well beyond their target audience. Many online learners are also inexperienced or do not have the equipment to receive the advanced technology lessons blocking their access to the content. Incorporating all the latest technology available during design may block the content from potential users or make navigating the course room difficult.

### *Accessibility Issues*

Accessibility to the course room is a key issue blocking some from joining the community and accessing the course content. The target market is reduced in size because they can not join; it makes sense to want to include accessibility during design. Legally the American Disabilities Act was passed to ensure equal opportunities to individuals having disabilities. More recently section 508 has been passed establishing technology requirements.

The U.S. Department of Justice (2004) states “section 508 establishes requirements for electronic and information technology developed, maintained, procured, or used by the Federal government. Section 508 requires Federal electronic and information technology to be accessible to people with disabilities, including employees and members of the public (para. 37).

Section 508 spiders out to include non-governmental sites receiving federal money – education. A number of federal grants intended to procure technologies for education specifically refer to the need to meet the section 508 requirements.

Currently official accessibility standards have not been developed, only guidelines established by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C). The W3C (1999) “Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0 explain how to make Web content accessible to people with disabilities. Conformance to these Guidelines will help make the Web more accessible to users with disabilities and will benefit all users” (para. 1). While the individual guidelines are overwhelming and a lot to digest when starting out, a basic principal that is incorporated in all suggestions is to provide choices during design.

Historically choices have been used increasing access to physical buildings, walk up the ramp or the steps to reach the door. The same concepts carry over to course design increasing

accessibility during development. Including W3C (2005) quick tips and universal design techniques during design will enhance participation by providing access. Add closed captioning for a video or include a link to text providing similar information conveyed by the video. When using color to convey a message also use text that can be understood by those that are color blind. Incorporating Universal Design Techniques during design will increase accessibility while meeting the legal requirements and decreasing user frustration.

The problem is individuals designing web pages and posting the courses are not aware of the obstacles preventing the intended audience from accessing the content. Slatin and Rush (2003) remark that “accessibility barriers are not created because Web developers want to keep people away from online information. Rather, they most often occur as a result of ignorance” (p. 17). Poor design is resulting in the information available on the World Wide Web not being equally accessible to all individuals having a computer with Internet access. Gaining an understanding and including universal design technique during site development will increase accessibility for all users expanding the audience that receives the intended message.

### Conclusion

Transitioning a course to be delivered online does not mandate independent learning must occur. Weiss, Speck and Knowlton (2000) have noted “the assumption is that professors can simply type their lectures into a file, e-mail them to students, and then allow students to regurgitate the information on a test” (p. 8). Different instructional strategies must be adopted to utilize the resources and enhance the educational experience for all participants. Developing a learning community is an important focus of online learning to bring the group together. Utilizing technology the participants can come together to form an electronic learning community.

Defining the term assists in focusing on the medium used and connecting to areas where electronic communities are forming and interacting. Bridging new concepts to past experiences assist to develop strategies for future implementation.

Incorporating ice breakers during the first week is a strategy for building community promoting interaction between the learners, facilitator and the technology. Palloff and Pratt (1999) suggest “it is the relationships and interactions among people through which knowledge is primarily generated” (p. 15). Focusing on promoting interaction at the beginning of the course may increase the depth of the content explored.

The electronic community does not occur only through the facilitator actions. The roles of all the participants change. Palloff and Pratt (1999) comment “although the instructor is responsible for facilitating the process, participants also have a responsibility to make community happen (p. 31). All participants need to understand their roles assisting in the transition to the new environment.

The Guidelines for Online Development will be used as an initial introduction and ongoing reference for the participants. Investing the time to develop, and discuss with participants prior to engaging in online learning will assist all participants to understand the new environment and expectations of being a member of an electronic learning community.

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## Appendix A

### **Guidelines for Online Learning Development**

#### **Facilitator Strategies**

##### **Introduction**

Face-to-face classroom instruction has been experienced by current instructional staff, community members and students. Participants have grown comfortable and know what to expect in a familiar setting and how to interact in the learning community. They can relate to what they know and have experienced and are unsure of evolving online learning opportunities. Ko and Rossen (2004) observe that “teaching online is relatively new, many people don’t know what it is, or how it’s done, or even what some of the terms used to describe mean” (p. 2). The tools, participatory roles and resources are still a mystery resulting in misinterpretation of online learning by perspective students, staff and community members.

Participating in an online class is thought of as being easier and not as effective as a familiar face-to-face class (Ko and Rossen, 2004). Moore (2001) remarks that “many fear that online education is simply about “fact-shoveling” and “training,” and not about education, interactivity, and true engagement” (p.3.3). Understanding the new roles and delivery strategies will aid the participants to transition to the environment.

Developing a learning community and facilitating learning online requires modifying to adapt to the new environment. Rubric presenting clear expectations and developing a course syllabus in weekly units will assist learners to know what must be completed. The one most important element in the electronic community is bringing the group together. The group must understand their roles, sense it is a safe, secure environment with clear guidelines to operate within or they may withdraw. The combination of developing a safe environment and clear participation guidelines assist to “bring” the group together focusing on the intended course content.

##### **Participants Roles**

The roles of the participants transition in an online learning community providing a voice to all members. The delivery format in a traditional face-to-face class is teacher centered where the teacher brings the content and the students are expected to absorb. The instructor controls both the environment and the content. Online teaching methodologies apply a student centered approach which shifts responsibility and control to the learner (Weiss, Speck and Knowlton, 2000). The instructor facilitates learning rather than dictating and the learners are required to become active participants in their learning experience rather than passive observers.

The role of the facilitator transitions to that of a coach. The facilitator is always monitoring course activity to respond when needed but observes and guides from the side lines instead of playing the game. All learners are now required to become active participants researching and interacting.

The goal of the facilitator is to guide the students learning by developing a safe environment to explore and learn in, present high order thinking questions requiring learner research and self reflection. Guidelines for the facilitator to promote electronic learning community development and enhance learning for the participants are:

1. Develop a syllabus that serves as a skeleton structure for the course to operate identifying required resources, weekly assignments, discussion topics and technical requirements.
2. Provide grading rubrics and clear expectations of participation.
3. Be present in the course room a minimum of once every forty-eight hours and respond to learners questions, provide feedback and additional thoughts to ponder.
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5. Identify absent students and attempt student contact using email or phone. Notify the site coordinator of absences or inconsistent interaction.
6. Promote critical thinking by introducing questions developed at a higher level of Bloom’s taxonomy.

### **Defining Participation**

Monitoring and promoting the interaction of the online learning community requires frequent facilitator interaction. Palloff and Pratt (1999) compare face-to-face delivery to online learning and suggest the time investment to prepare, monitor progress, provide feedback and grade assignments is up to three times more than invested for face-to-face delivery.

Serving as the facilitator there is a fine line between being absent and interacting too much engaging instead as the provider of all knowledge. Ko and Rossen (2004) stresses that “online courses depend heavily on the participation of students” (p. 13). What is not observed is equally as important to note and follow up as the type of responses and students actively participating.

Facilitator participation guidelines are:

1. Be available to respond to learners questions. Communicate to the learners how they can contact the facilitator including when and where office hours will occur. Instead of onsite office hours the sessions will now occur using some form of synchronous or asynchronous communication. (Ex: Phone, instant messenger, email, discussion board office space)
2. Enter the course room to open discussion, read, comment and input grades at least once every forty-eight hours.
3. Participation does not need to occur onsite, the interaction is recorded by the learning management system and can occur from any computer connected to the Internet.
4. Contact the online learning site coordinator if unable to meet the participation requirements. Technology support, scheduling a substitute or class cancellation may result.

## Technical Support

Computers meeting or exceeding the minimum requirements to access the online classes are available onsite at the following locations: media center, ETTC lab (room 343), Office Services Technology (room 131), Computer Technology (room 138) and all exploratory classrooms. When the rooms are open there is always a staff member present to assist with basic navigation of the course room and file management. If additional assistance is needed, contact the online learning site coordinator located in the ETTC lab (room 343) in person or by email. Lab hours of operation and phone contact sheets will be distributed to all participants during the introductory meeting.

When using a computer offsite to access the course room the minimum hardware requirements are:

- Windows 2000, XP or newer

- Pentium III or faster

- 256MB RAM

- 28.8 kbps modem or faster

- Word processing software package

- Additional software may be required to meet specific course requirements.

## Building Technology Skills

You do not need to be a computer expert to be a participant in an online course. Basic file management in a word processing package, using Email communication and attachments and Internet surfing techniques are enough to get started. The basic skills will strengthen as you build and navigate the course room.

Possessing the skills included on the list provides a solid foundation to nurture which will strengthen through experience. Prior to starting if you lack some of the basic skills there are free resources on the Internet that can be used to build. A link to get started with cut, copy and paste is <http://www.compukiss.com/sandyclassroom/tutorials/article787.htm> additionally included in this link are additional lessons and resources. To help you find additional resources access Tips and Tricks for Surfing the Internet located at <http://www.capemaytech.net/etec/links/onlinelearning/tipshomepage.htm>. Using the techniques reviewed in this lesson will help you locate additional resources while continuing to build your skills.

## Accessibility

The American Disabilities Act was passed to ensure equal opportunities to individuals having disabilities. More recently section 508 has been passed establishing technology requirements. The U.S. Department of Justice (2004) states “section 508 establishes requirements for electronic and information technology developed, maintained, procured, or used by the Federal government. Section 508 requires Federal electronic and information technology to be accessible to people with disabilities, including employees and members of the public”. Section 508 spiders out to include non-governmental sites receiving federal money – education.

While selecting resources and designing online courses evaluate compliance of the resources to determine if they incorporate the W3C universal design techniques. The guidelines suggest incorporating choices during design to increase access. Historically choices have been used increasing access to physical buildings, walk up the ramp or the steps to reach the door. The same concepts carry over to web design increasing accessibility during course development. Add closed captioning for a video or include a link to text providing similar information conveyed by the video. When using color to convey a message also use text that can be understood by those that are color blind. Incorporating Universal Design Techniques during design will increase accessibility while decreasing user frustration.

Use this link to review the W3C Universal Design Technique Quick Tips:  
<http://www.w3.org/WAI/References/QuickTips/>.

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## Appendix B

### Guidelines for Online Learning Development

#### Learner Strategies

All school rules apply while participating in online courses as a student representative of the school.

#### **Introduction**

Face-to-face classroom instruction has been experienced by current instructional staff, community members and students. Participants have grown comfortable and know what to expect in a familiar setting and how to interact in the learning community. They can relate to what they know and have experienced and are unsure of evolving online learning opportunities. Ko and Rossen (2004) observe that “teaching online is relatively new, many people don’t know what it is, or how it’s done, or even what some of the terms used to describe mean” (p. 2). The tools, participatory roles and resources are still a mystery resulting in misinterpretation of online learning by perspective students, staff and community members.

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#### **Participants Roles**

In the online environment the roles change to a student-centered classroom where the learners’ experiences and knowledge are also incorporated as part of the learning experience. The participants are unfamiliar with the roles, time investment and requirements to participate. It is thought of as being easier and not as effective. Ko and Rossen (2004) suggest “some students enroll in an online course expecting it to be much easier than a regular course” (p. 69). Understanding the expectations and examining the role changes together as a community assists to build the community and develop realistic expectations of the learning experience.

The learners roles transition to active participants requiring them take a higher level of responsibility for their knowledge acquisition. Instructors’ roles change that of a facilitator and the learners take an active part in locating resources, introducing questions and interacting with all learners.

Guidelines for the learners to enhance their educational experiences and promote electronic learning community development are:

1. Understand the goals of the course by reviewing the syllabus, timelines, technical requirements and grading rubrics. Ask the facilitator for clarification if there are any areas you are unsure of, it is likely other participants share the same concern.
2. Complete assignments within the designated timelines.
3. Don't plagiarize! Always use the writing standards (MLA or APA) identified by the facilitator to identify resources used and develop responses using your own words.
4. Observe Netiquette rules for interacting using electronic mediums. Avoid shouting and stay on topic in each discussion area. Review basic rules of Netiquette at <http://www.learnthenet.com/english/html/09netiq.htm>.
5. Respect all participants in the course.
6. Use assigned on-site class time appropriately focusing on course assignments and supplement as required completing assignments as homework.
7. Report inconsistencies in the course room to the online facilitator and site coordinator.

### **Defining Participation**

Adapting to the online environment results in different types of participation than has been previously experienced during face-to-face classroom session. Rubrics are provided by the facilitator defining levels of interaction required for the specific course. Ko and Rossen (2004) note that "online courses depend heavily on the participation of students" (p. 13). Participation is observed in the interaction on the discussion board and submission of assignments. Student absences occur when the minimum participation does not occur.

Learner participation guidelines are:

1. Read all required text and research to introduce additional sources as needed to support responses.
2. Enter the course room at least three times each week while class is in session to post responses, read learner and/or facilitator feedback and pick up announcements.
3. Contact the facilitator and site coordinator by email in advance of planned absences. (Ex. winter break, independent vacation). Your school calendar may differ from the online learning provider.
4. Review the grading rubrics and complete all assignments according to the timeline provided.
5. If you are unclear about the expectations, ask. The facilitator can clarify before you are behind.

### **Grading Scale**

Numeric grades will be issued by the online course facilitator according to the predetermined scoring rubrics. The numeric grade will be aligned to the Cape May County Technical School's grading scale to determine the letter grade.

Final grades will be included on the high school transcript and impact the overall grade point average. The number of credits awarded will be determined by the guidance department.

### **Technology Resources – Onsite**

Computers meeting or exceeding the minimum requirements to access the online classes are available onsite at the following locations: media center, ETTC lab (room 343), Office Services Technology (room 131), Computer Technology (room 138) and all exploratory classrooms. In addition to the lab locations, all classrooms have a minimum of four student computers. All students participating in online courses will be scheduled to attend an appropriate location in the school, one class period for each course.

When the rooms are open there is always a staff member present to assist with basic navigation of the course room and file management. If additional assistance is needed, contact the online learning site coordinator located in the ETTC lab (room 343) in person or by email. Evening hours are also available, lab hours of operation will be distributed to all participants during the introductory meeting.

NOTE: The use of the Internet is a privilege, not a right. Inappropriate use, including any violation of the conditions and rules accepted by signing the Internet Acceptable Use Agreement, may result in cancellation of the privilege. The Board of Education, under the agreement, is delegated the authority to determine appropriate use and may deny, evoke, suspend or close any user account at any time based upon its determination of inappropriate use by account holder or user.

### **Technology Resources – Offsite**

When using a computer offsite to access the course room the minimum hardware requirements are:

- Windows 2000, XP or newer

- Pentium III or faster

- 256MB RAM

- 28.8 kbps modem or faster

- Word processing software package

Additional software may be required to meet specific course requirements.

### **FREE Internet Access**

The Cape May County Library offers free Remote Internet Access (FRAS). You must have a current Cape May County library card and be a library patron in good standing to apply, and your computer must have both an Internet browser and dial-up networking installed. To use this service, you must apply for a user name and password at any library branch. They will be sent to you by mail.

For additional information refer to the CMC Library site: [http://www.cape-may.county.lib.nj.us/internet\\_access.asp](http://www.cape-may.county.lib.nj.us/internet_access.asp)

### Quick reference list of onsite support

Affirmative Action and 504 Officer: Insert staff name and phone number  
Email: insert email address

Guidance and Scheduling Questions: Insert staff name and phone number  
Email: insert email address

High School Principal: Insert staff name and phone number  
Email: insert email address

Tutoring Program: Insert staff name and phone number  
Email: insert email address

Online Learning site coordinator: Insert staff name and phone number  
Email: insert email address

### Tutoring

The CMCTHS is dedicated to providing an enriched and successful educational experience that changes all students to do their best, improves student readiness for post secondary education and increases student marketability in the career world.

We have implemented a mandatory Tutoring Program as one method of helping students achieve a successful high school experience. The Tutoring Program is intended to:

1. Identify and address student achievement deficiencies as soon as possible.
2. Provide extra help and support for students to improve problem areas.
3. Ensure that all students do their best.
4. Prepare students for competitive, “real world” situation.
5. Increase student success!!

Tutoring will be assigned according to mid-progress and grade reports and is mandatory for students who fail any academic subject area.

### Works Cited

- Ko, S. and Rossen, S. (2004). *Teaching online: A practical guide*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Moore, G. S., Winograd, K., & Lange, D. (2001). *You can teach online*. New York: McGraw Hill.

## Appendix C

*Time Comparisons of an Online Versus a Face-to-Face Class for one week*

Instructor activity	Face-to-face class	Online class
Preparation	2 hours per weeks to: Review assigned reading Review lecture materials Review and prepare in-class activities	2 hours per weeks to: Review assigned reading Prepare discussion questions and “lecture” material in the form of a paragraph or two
Class time	2 ½ hours per week of assigned class time	2 hours <i>daily</i> to: Read student posts Respond to student posts
Follow-up	2 to 3 hours per week for: Individual contact with students Reading student assignments	2 to 3 hours per week for: Individual contact with students via e-mail and phone Reading student assignments
Totals for the week	6 ½ to 7 ½ hours per week	18 to 19 hours per week

(Palloff &amp; Pratt, 1999, p. 50)