Technical Evaluations of Online Courses

The DELTA Center provides leadership and support to the University’s initiative to enhance teaching and learning through skillful integration of technology and the learning process. The DELTA Center is a resource for University faculty in all disciplines, providing guidance and expertise to faculty in developing a wide range of technology enhanced and online instruction. The DELTA Center identifies and evaluates equipment and software for potential utilization within the University, training needs and courses for faculty to assist them in incorporating appropriate technology in their teaching, and identify and develop new markets and opportunities that may extend the University’s education mission. In this, the DELTA Center gives technical consultation prior to the design and evaluation prior to the implementation of online courses:

1. **The course audience has been identified.**
   While this is an issue for the academic department and school, the DELTA Center recommends to the instructor that this issue be addressed prior to the design of a course as the technology used for the content greatly depends on the goal of the course. This will be verbally verified with the course instructor prior to implementation.

2. **The choice of technology is driven by the content.**
   That is, the technology fits the content; not, the content fits the technology. The technology has been chosen because it was the best delivery method for the content and how it is being taught.

3. **The course is ADA compliant.**
   Per SHSU Webservices Web Page Checklist.

4. **Course documents can be easily printed.**
   Students are able to print documents to allow for portability. Some prefer to view content in this fashion.

5. **The course layout is easily navigated.**
   The DELTA Center verifies that all hyperlinks are correctly connected. This includes, but is not limited to, clear access to the electronic classroom: assignments, lectures, course materials, off-site materials, the online bookstore, student support (library services, computer services), and instructor contact information.

6. **Interactivity of the course.**
   The DELTA Center verifies student/student, student/instructor, and instructor/class interactivity. This will take place on many levels depending on the individual course. As a result, interactivity is judged on a course-by-course basis, in close collaboration with the instructor. Interactivity may include, but is not limited to, chat rooms, email, discussion boards, and telephone.

7. **Media.**
   As online courses continue to grow in popularity, and as electronic media becomes easier and less expensive to create, instructors will rely more heavily on this media in delivering course content to students. The use of media in online courses is a decision left to the instructor and the evaluation of content to the department. However, where used, the technical quality of the media will be evaluated. This includes, but is not limited to, clarity of audio, viewing and physical size of image and video, proper file size for streaming, and media broadcast file length.

8. **Proper use off-site and secondary resources.**
   The DELTA Center will work with instructors and the University’s Copyright Officer to verify permissions to use copyrighted materials on-site. The Newton Gresham Library (NGL) has an electronic reserves service that allows, through copyright clearance, the use of articles, text, images, and the like in online courses. The DELTA Center will recommend that instructor contact NGL for more information and assistance. Links and citations to off-site materials are an example or proper use.

9. **Relative transparency of the technology.**
   Because of the primacy of the course content, technology is only used as a tool. The DELTA Center will assist the instructor and ensure that the use of technology does not hinder the dissemination of course content. The instructor and the DELTA Center will evaluate this. If the Office finds any of these aspects lacking, it offers continued training and support to help instructors meet the criteria.
Technical Evaluations of Online Courses Checklist

1. The course audience has been identified____

2. The choice of technology is driven by the content____

3. The course is ADA compliant____

4. Course documents can be easily printed____

5. The course layout is easily navigated____
   Hyperlinks connected____

6. Interactivity of the course (students and faculty)____
   Email____ Chat Rooms____ Discussion Boards____ Telephone____

7. Media____
   Text____ Still Images____ Audio____ Video____ Appropriate file sizes____

8. Proper use of off-site and secondary resources____
   Library materials____ Off-site citations____ Copyrighted materials____ (requires library
director’s signature)_________________________

9. Relative transparency of the technology____

I have reviewed_____________________________________________________. The course is easily navigable and contains appropriate interactivity. It facilitates the proper use of off-site and secondary resources and maintains a relative transparent use of technology. As such, I certify the use of technology in this course. If prior compensation agreements have been made between the faculty member course developer and academic department chair, I recommend that __________________________________________________________________________ be compensated for the development of this online course.

_________________________________________________________ _________________
Signature                                  Date

Additional signatures may be required per the department chair’s recommendation.

_________________________________________________________ _________________
Chair Signature                        Compensation AMT*              Date

_________________________________________________________ _________________
Dean Signature                           Date

_________________________________________________________ _________________
Provost Signature                       Date

*This may or may not apply to the course being evaluated.