



# Conducting Quality Online Course Evaluations: Different Modalities, Different Tools

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Do you have a separate  
process for evaluating your  
online instructors?



## Looking Back

- Throughout the development and evolution of online courses over the last 20 years, course evaluation tools and processes did not keep pace.

## Looking Back

- As LMS systems changed and improved and overall quality advanced, most college processes related to course evaluations stayed static and focused on the traditional face to face modality.



## Looking Back

- As more classes move to the online modality, colleges began to understand that evaluation processes did not fit the online modality.
- Most simply tried to fit an existing tool into an online evaluation.

# External Factors Are Requiring New Processes

- Academic Senate policy on regular and effective contact
- ACCJC policies on what constitutes distance education in California and “substantive interaction.”
- Federal Financial Aid guidelines on attendance and faculty interaction.



# How Traditional Evaluation Tools Fail to Serve Online Courses

- Attendance requirements are different.
- Instructor generated content is different in an online class.
- Defining instructor presence and interaction.
- Accessibility and other compliance standards must be evaluated and assessed.
- Separation of the instructor performance and the college tech infrastructure (the classroom)

# RSI/REC as an Example: Definition of Distance Education

## 34 C.F.R § 602.3 (ACCJC Policy on DE and on CE)

“Education that uses one or more of the technologies listed in paragraphs 1 – 4 to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor and to **support regular and substantive interaction between students and the instructor**, either synchronously or asynchronously. The technologies may include:



# What is Required by ACCJC that pertains to Evaluation?

1. Definition of Regular and Substantive Interaction
  - a. What activities demonstrate regular and substantive interaction?
  - b. Where is this found?
  - c. Do DE instructors consistently do these activities?
2. Student Authentication
  - a. Does the college have a way to assure the student that enrolled in the course is actually the student doing the work? AND
  - b. Does the instructor follow it?
- ~~3. Comparable Services~~
  - ~~a. Do DE students have access to comparable learning support services as face-to-face students?~~

## Regular and Effective Contact (REC)/Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI)

- What is your DE definition of Regular and Effective Contact? Does your college have a definition of Regular and Effective Contact?
- Can a visitor to a course see in Canvas that interaction is regular and effective as defined BY THE CAMPUS (and printed in the catalog and schedule of classes)?



# Regular and Effective Contact (REC)/Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI)

- Some examples of acceptable methods of regular and effective contact:
  - Archivable personalized feedback via CMS or district email
  - Frequent interaction in discussion boards within the CMS. (Any discussion of grades must remain private)
  - Archivable and ADA compliant Chat/IM
  - ADA compliant Synchronous Sessions / Closed captioned video conferencing
  - Regular Announcements that are Personalized to the Course

# Practical Evaluation of Online Classes: Considerations

- Who designed the course? (ID? Faculty?)
- Who is doing the evaluation? Peers? Students? Administrators?
- Do you have training for non-online teaching peers and for administrators about what to look for?



# Practical Evaluation of Online Classes: Considerations

- How do you gain access to the course and in what role? (FERPA Considerations for looking at grades will help determine which role to use)
- How much of the class are you asking to see?
- Do you have the instructor sit with you and show you the course?

# What are you looking for?

- **Clear and reasonable structure: Would the student know what to do first?**
  - If you can't figure out what to do it's likely students can't either.
    - Sometimes, instructors close the beginning information after a few weeks.
    - If you find no beginning instructions, ask the instructor if there were some and, if so, you'd like to see them.
    - Look for an announcement or syllabus document that tells students how to navigate the course.



# What are you looking for?

- Is there a syllabus?
  - Expectations?
  - Online Course Policies
  - College resources?
- Are there instructor prepared materials?
- Are there clear and varied methods used for delivering content?
- Is there sufficient content to cover the same material as in the FTF course?
- Are there additional content oriented resources?

# What are you looking for in discussions?

- Evaluation should be based on the quality of instructor postings (and not the length or number).
- Instructors should post expectations for discussions.
- Instructors need to provide two types of feedback: information feedback and acknowledgment feedback.



# What are you looking for in discussions?

- Learners should be required to participate (and their grade should depend on participation).
- Learners should receive feedback on their discussions and should, for at least some forums, be required to respond to other students' postings.
- Evaluation should be based on the quality of postings (and not the length or number).

# College School Samples

Foothill College Sample:

<http://www.fafhda.org/agreement-2016-19/appendix/Appendix%20J1.pdf>

Santa Rosa Junior College, provided by Lisa Beach:

<https://de.santarosa.edu/form/online-instructor-evaluation>

Mt. San Jacinto College provided by Anna Stirling:

<https://www.msjc.edu/CollegeInformation/Administration/AcademicSenate/Pages/Evaluations.aspx>

College of the Desert Sample Provided by Donna Green:

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1HKZwg0b2kTTpdsKI51oj3YPxlHPAN\\_ZoJbJePqYhzcc/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1HKZwg0b2kTTpdsKI51oj3YPxlHPAN_ZoJbJePqYhzcc/edit?usp=sharing)





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