Best Practices for Online Course Delivery

Pacing
- Class- and self-paced

Content Delivery
- Primarily asynchronous
- Online and/or lecture recording
- Assess learning with quizzes/assessments
- May offer occasional (e.g., monthly) live sessions

“Practicing” Content
- Use online tools to demonstrate the execution of content
- Hold synchronous activities in small groups and larger classes during live sessions
- Give time for tasks, explain how report out will happen
- Explain how small groups will be formed/distributed
- Explain breakout features
- Instructor can give prompts and suggestions using private chat features

Assignments General
- Explicit due date, time, and where to submit
- Pre-instruction instructions and announcement/email reminders
- Technology may improve assignments
- Discussion board for students
- Grading time frame and method explicit and posted visibly

Student Prep
- Reminders built into course
- Encourage group connection for whole class
- Expectation set to routinely monitor email and check LMS announcements

Exams/Quizzes
- Timed assessments with multiple attempts
- Test pools
- Open and close access to quizzes
- Release results after all test-takers are finished

Netiquette
- Built-in/assumed
- Instructor models, students expected to be using basic technology tools
- Include everything that would be in seated class

Self-Management Scaffolding
- Provide content pathways, with some reminders
- Allow students flexibility

Self-Awareness
- Synchronous discussion with prompts, anonymous polling, self-check surveys
- Real-time processing of triggers, conflicts, and disclosures optimal, but may need to be brought back to synchronous class

Instruction Creativity
- Planned and embedded activities
- More opportunities to bring tools in from external/web sources - consider audiences beyond the classroom

Experiencing Content
- Links to multimedia, discussions via flipgrid (for example), guided activities
- Group work self-organized outside of class

Instructor Prep
- Think out when to schedule interactions, assignments, exploration
- When will students most benefit from what kind of synchronous engagement?
- Provide self-directed content paths in modules for students to do at their own pace
- Label paths consistently: week-to-week and document-to-document

Schedule
- Clear schedules so students can plan their whole term across classes in advance
- Pre-instruction instructions on scheduling regarding workload
- Due dates with flexibility for students with challenging life circumstances related to weekly learning content

Contact Time
- Self-paced within the week
- Perhaps monthly synchronous sessions

Social Presence
- Create specific discussion areas for students to have non-course related conversations
- Use polling
- Small group activities assigned out of class
- Encourage connection through group apps and other social media
- Support students share questions, ideas, and solutions with one another

Cognitive Presence
- Students show up and are engaged in online synchronous/asynchronous discussions, are prepared, incorporating learning in papers, pose thoughtful questions in synchronous/asynchronous spaces etc.

Instruction Accessibility
- Virtual office hours
- Best way to contact
- Expectation of availability and response timeframes
- Daily self-survey to students - when do they want to meet?

Giving Feedback
- Needs to be scheduled
- Consider video or voicethread feedback – if ethics issue, schedule Zoom meeting