

Fifty-One Competencies for Online Instruction

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Abstract

The effectiveness of distance learning must be measured in results—quality learning. Learner-center programs and competent instructors are two oft-cited keys to success in higher education. Teaching online requires specific skill sets (competencies). This paper identifies and describes 51 competencies needed by online instructors and outlines an instructor-training program that satisfies 3 of the 24 benchmarks for excellence recommended by the Institute for Higher Education Policy.

Introduction

Phipps and Merisotis (2000) assert that the effectiveness of distance learning must be measured in results – *quality learning* – by students. They identify 24 benchmarks (Table 1) that are “essential to ensuring excellence in Internet-based distance learning” (p. vii). While several of these benchmarks address technological issues and institutional support, others address course development, course structure, evaluation and assessment, faculty support, student support, and teaching and learning. Comments from participating faculty indicate that they sometimes deem technical aspects of online teaching to be “overwhelming” (p. 20) and believe that “pedagogy of online learning must be part of training and the online environment” (p. 20).

Teaching in an online environment requires specific sets of skills (competencies). Palloff and Pratt (2001) assert that online teaching necessitates moving beyond traditional pedagogy to adopt new, more-facilitative practices (p. 20). They also opine that “Not all faculty are suited for the online environment” (p. 21). Furthermore, they believe that “faculty cannot be expected to know intuitively how to design and deliver an effective online course” (p. 23) because, even though courses in technology are becoming more available to students, “seasoned faculty have not been exposed to techniques and methods needed to make online work successful” (p. 23). Levy (2003) concurs, asserting that although the principles of designing online and traditional classroom courses are similar, “instructors need training and support to be willing to adopt this new teaching paradigm [and] need to be cognizant of how the details of their course will be implemented in the new environment” (para. 12). Weigel (2000) asserts that we need to move beyond simply trying to use the Internet to deliver standard classroom models and instead focus on developing ways to use the Internet to develop a “richness” that enhances education.

The focus of this paper is to;

- a. Review 51 instructor competencies deemed necessary for an effective online learning program, and
- b. Outline key components of a training program to enable a traditional brick-and-mortar college to transition to a university that has a significant online component.

In greater detail, the first section summarizes the characteristics of a learner-centered program and describes why a learner-centered program is important to the university. The second section lists 51 competencies, grouping and discussing them according to whether each is needed prior to, during, or after the online course. The third section outlines a training program for new online instructors at a university. The final section summarizes this information and presents conclusions.

Importance of a Learner-Centered Program

Universities are under increasing pressure to demonstrate educational effectiveness and “focus on institutional purposes and results” (Western Association of Schools and Colleges, 2001, p. 4). Whereas a few decades ago college students tended to enroll in and graduate from one institution, today they are quite mobile. This mobility inhibits institutional control over educational experiences and curricula even while students, employers, governmental agencies, and accrediting bodies demand improved performance of graduates. These same external entities also express concern about the rising cost of higher education. Thus institutions find themselves trying to minimize costs, maximize market, retain their customers, and satisfy critics.

Once enrolled, retention is an issue. Wlodkowski, Mauldin, and Campbell (2002) reported that about three-fourths of students who dropped out of two midwestern U.S. colleges indicated a desire to return to their respective schools in the future. However, Wlodkowski *et al* also note that although such findings are typical, “our previous studies indicate that adult students who leave school rarely return to the same college” (p. 4). Wlodkowski *et al* surveyed former learners at the two colleges to determine why students chose to leave prior to graduation. The most popular reasons were;

- a. Lack of time (often due to conflicting demands with family and work responsibilities),
- b. Lack of money (e.g., lack of financial aid),
- c. Quality of advising (e.g., lack of contact with advisers, incorrect advising),
- d. Quality of teaching, and
- e. Peer interaction (e.g., lack of community among distance students, age differences).

Three (c, d, and e) of the five reasons may involve faculty competencies. Two of the five involve elements that directly relate to classroom interactions—quality of teaching and peer interaction. The third—contact with advisors—could conceivably draw on or benefit from classroom interactions. For example, if students successfully develop relationships with instructors, then informal advising contacts may increase. Such contacts should not cause problems as long as the faculty and other advisors do not dispense conflicting, incomplete, or incorrect information. While some faculty may believe that they should be teachers and not advisors, Low (2000) disagrees:

“Quality academic advising has surfaced as one of the most predominant needs identified across all institutional types The importance cannot be overemphasized—students are adamant—they want, need, and expect the faculty [as opposed to professional advisors] to provide some level of meaningful advising support to them as they begin to make important academic decisions One message is clear—better academic advising is a trademark of the most successful institutions. As campuses confront competing demands for faculty time, the expectations of students regarding advising must not be ignored (p. 31)”.

In other words, learner-centered advising is a crucial element that aids retention. For online programs—with their absence of hallway contacts and informal face-to-face interaction—virtual classroom interaction becomes vital. Palloff and Pratt (2003) believe that online instructors “need to be much more deliberate [than in face-to-face classrooms] in paying attention to who our students are and what they need because we are not physically seeing or interacting with them on a daily basis” (pp. 124-125).

Regarding the two elements that directly relate to classroom interactions, White (2000) notes that “online education is structured around the dynamics of human communication” (p. 1). Palloff and Pratt (2003) stress that effective delivery of online learning programs requires a learner-focused approach because we cannot teach but can only facilitate acquisition of knowledge. Weimer (2002) states:

“Being learner-centered focuses attention squarely on learning: what the student is learning, how the student is learning, the conditions under which the student is learning, whether the student is retaining and applying learning, and how current learning positions the student for future learning (p. xvi).”

In most online settings, students not only view communications from instructors, but also messages posted by other students. A typical online course directs students to read material, respond to a question, and discuss the responses. Such an approach permits students to;

- a. Document that they have completed the assignment,
- b. Demonstrate understanding, and
- c. Develop a fuller, richer, and more complete perspective.

In such settings;

“Attention needs to be paid to the developing sense of community within the group of participants in order for the learning process to be successful. The learning community is the vehicle through which learning occurs online. Members depend on each other to achieve the learning outcomes for the course Without the support and participation of a learning community, there is no online course (Palloff & Pratt, 2001, p. 29).”

Thus, given the importance of peer interactions in online courses and the importance of peer interactions in retention, it follows that online instructors face a dual challenge:

1. How to present course content and promote learning in the virtual environment.
2. How to foster development of a community of learners.

The latter is important because, lacking a “hallway” that forces learners to encounter one other outside the classroom, students may only encounter one another within the online course room.

Key Instructor Knowledge and Competencies

Definition of Competency

“Competency” means a “condition or quality of being competent; ability; fitness; legal capability, power, or jurisdiction” (Guralnik, 1984, p. 289). Kerka (1998) says competence “is individualized, emphasizes outcomes (what individuals know and can do), and allows flexible pathways for achieving the outcomes – making as clear as possible what is to be achieved and the standards for measuring achievement” (p. 2). Opponents argue that competency-based education is “excessively reductionist, narrow, rigid, atomized, and theoretically, empirically, and pedagogically unsound” (p. 3), too often ignoring “the connections between the tasks; the attributes that underlie performance; the meaning, intention, or disposition to act; the context of performance; and the effect of interpersonal and ethical aspects” (p. 4).

Admittedly, the competency approach lends itself to creation of checklists (such as the one in Table 2), suggesting that a minimum level of performance is acceptable rather than setting a higher bar or striving for a “standard of excellence” (Kerka, p. 5). However, what is intended here is an integrated or holistic approach—one that “sees competence as a complex combination of knowledge, attitudes, skills, and values displayed in the context of task performance” (p. 6). The following proposed model illustrates how the competencies listed in Table 2 might be woven into an integrated whole.

Proposed Competency Model

Competencies Needed Prior to Start of a Course

Instructors need 18 of the competencies *prior* to the course. A key competency is the ability to create an effective online syllabus (Competency 9; Ko & Rosen, 2001, pp. 67 & 71) that lays out the terms of the class interaction, responsibilities, musts and don'ts of behavior, and the geography of the course. Several of the other competencies feed directly into this syllabus. For example, the instructor should be clear about course requirements (Competency 3; after Palloff & Pratt, 2001, p. 28), communicate high expectations (Competency 6; Coghlan, 2002, bullet 9),

and define participation and grading criteria (Competency 11; Ko & Rosen, 2001, p. 68) as these components should be spelled out in the syllabus. Instructors also need to consider factors related to Competency 32 (manage student expectations; Ko & Rosen, 2001, pp. 69-70) because the syllabus should include information designed to dispel expectations of immediate responses to questions posed by students. The syllabus should not be regarded as inflexible, but is intended to provide structure for the course while allowing for flexibility and negotiation (Competency 39; Palloff & Pratt, 2001, p. 36; see also Table 1, Benchmark 13). All of this (and other) information should be communicated in plain English (Competency 7; Coghlan, 2002, bullet 9) at a pace that avoids overwhelming new students (Competency 2; Smith, this paper).

Instructors should be able to effectively use whatever technology has been selected for course delivery (Competency 15; after Palloff & Pratt, 2001, pp. 26-28); this competency will be needed as the course is set up prior to commencing the first class and will continue to play an important role throughout the course. Note that additional software and hardware may need to be mastered (Competency 24; Conrad, 1999, bullet 14) because it is likely that instructors will develop content in Microsoft Word™, Excel™, Adobe Acrobat™, or other formats (and, as the course progresses, students probably also will submit completed work in those formats).

In addition to technological issues, instructors need to be able to set up a well-organized course site (Competency 44; Palloff & Pratt, 2001, p. 36) and translate content for online delivery (Competency 46; Moore, Winograd, & Lange, 2001, p. 9.3). The latter requires information about online instruction trends and issues and a willingness to continually improve related skills and knowledge (Competency 29; Ko & Rosen, 2001, p. 276). Web-based resources often provide a valuable resource for involving students in the search for and discovery of pertinent content, thus instructors need to be able to develop exercises that take advantage of the web (Competency 50; Ko & Rosen, 2001, p. 105). Instructors will benefit from an ability to network with others involved in online education (Competency 35; Ko & Rosen, 2001, pp. 291-292), continually evaluating themselves and their skills (Competency 19; Palloff & Pratt, 2001, p. 34) and, in effect, becoming a lifelong learner (Competency 5; Ko & Rosen, 2001, p. 292). Additionally, competencies are needed to make the transition to the online learning environment

(Competency 31; Palloff & Pratt, 2001, p. 35) and getting ready to prepare students for online learning (Competency 36; Ko & Rosen, 2001, p. 194).

Competencies Needed During the Course

After a good foundation (syllabus) has been developed, course material translated, and the instructor has a good grasp of the technology, these tools can be delivered, explained to, and discussed with students. As flaws (unclear or imprecise text, unreasonable expectations, and errors) become evident, they can be corrected and modifications to course calendar and requirements negotiated.

As the course begins, instructors need to transition into their role as facilitator (Competency 1; Palloff & Pratt, 2001, p. 36), focusing not only on course content but also on development of community (Competency 8; Palloff & Pratt, 2001, p. 32). By developing community, the instructor begins to address one of the five primary causes for attrition—peer interaction (see p. 3 above). Recall also that Benchmark 7 (see Table 1) of Phipps and Merisotis (2000) indicates that student-student and student-instructor interaction is essential. Some key aspects in community development are to promote collaborative learning (Competency 37; Palloff & Pratt, 2001, p. 36) and develop reciprocity and cooperation among students (Competency 12; Merisotis & Phipps, 1999, p. 17). Ideally, the instructor should also begin to develop relationships with students (Competency 13; after Palloff & Pratt, 2001), encourage contacts between students and faculty (Competency 17; Merisotis & Phipps, 1999, p. 17), and help integrate students into the institution and its culture (Competency 25; Gaskell & Mills, 2004, p. 12).

Especially in courses that have many new online students, instructors will need to teach students about online learning (Competency 45; Palloff & Pratt, 2001, p. 30), promote active learning techniques (Competency 46; Moore, Winograd, & Lange, 2001, p. 9.3), and help them link this delivery mode with their own personal learning styles (Competencies 27 [after Pepicello & Rice, 2000, pp. 53-54] and 41; Merisotis & Phipps, 1999, p. 17). Instructors need to accomplish all of this without overwhelming new students (Competency 2; this paper) who may be unfamiliar with the online learning platform, software needed to support learning, policies and procedures of the

institution, basic study methods, and uncertainties inherent in electronic communication that may generate fear and anxiety.

With respect to effective and efficient course management (Competency 14; Ko & Rosen, 2001, p. 211), instructors should use best practices to promote participation (Competency 48; Palloff & Pratt, 2001, p. 118), getting students to respect due-dates and agreed-upon working times (Competency 22; Gray, Ryan, & Coulon, 2004, tutoring bullet 5), emphasizing time on task (Competency 16; Merisotis & Phipps, 1999, p. 17), evaluating students (Competency 20; Palloff & Pratt, 2001, p. 34), giving prompt feedback (Competency 23; Merisotis & Phipps, 1999, p. 17), modeling good participation (Competency 34; after Palloff & Pratt, 2001, pp. 24 & 121), and, when appropriate, using humor (Competency 49; Coghlan, 2002, "Getting Started" bullet 8). Instructors should foster learner centeredness (Competency 21; Hootstein, 2002, 4), promote reflection (Competency 38; Palloff & Pratt, 2001, p. 33), helping students to identify strengths and areas of needed improvement (Competency 28; after Pepicello & Rice, 2000, p. 46) and develop critical thinking skills (Competency 26; after Pepicello & Rice, 2000, p. 52), and encouraging them to bring real-life examples to the online classroom (Competency 18; Palloff & Pratt, 2003, p. 134). This learner-centered approach helps students become aware that they are valued and have information and perspectives that may aid others in their learning quests.

Instructors must maintain the momentum of the course (Competency 30; after Coghlan, 2002). This may require taking some actions that might not normally be needed in a face-to-face setting, such as mandating participation and directing the discussion if headed in the wrong direction (Competency 33; Palloff & Pratt, 2001, pp. 31 & 36). Instructors should also be willing to contact students (typically by phone) who are not participating (Competency 4; Palloff & Pratt, 2001, p. 31) or are disruptive (Competency 10; Ko & Rosen, 2001, pp. 244-245). The instructor should remember that there are real people attached to the words on the screen (Competency 40; Palloff & Pratt, 2001, p. 31) and respect privacy issues (Competency 43; Ko & Rosen, 2001, pp. 238-239).

All of the above must be accomplished within the confines of institutional performance guidelines (Competency 42; Smith, this paper) that, for example, may mandate or constrain times

and frequency of interaction. Finally, as the course progresses, Palloff & Pratt (2001) note: “Most of all, have fun and open yourself to learning as much from your students as they will learn from one another and from you!” (p. 36; Competency 51)

Competencies Needed After the Course

As noted in Table 2, several of the needed competencies will be useful after the course has concluded. For example, if the course platform uses an online gradebook, the instructor ideally should be able to export the grades for transmittal to the university registrar [(part of Competencies 14 (Ko & Rosen, 2001, p. 211) and 15 (after Palloff & Pratt, 2001, pp. 26-28)]. Grading naturally requires evaluating students (Competency 20; Palloff & Pratt, 2001, p. 34), but instructors should also reflect on the course as a whole (Competency 38; Palloff & Pratt, 2001, p. 33). In particular, exercises, outcomes, roles, and student comments should be used by instructors to evaluate themselves (Competency 19; Palloff & Pratt, 2001, p. 34). Instructors should give prompt feedback to students on final papers and tests (Competency 23; Merisotis & Phipps, 1999, p. 17), and continue to respect individual privacy issues long after the course has ended (Competency 43; Ko & Rosen, 2001, pp. 238-239).

Discussion

Although the above list of tasks may seem complex and largely duplicates the information presented in Table 2, it attempts to illustrate a model by which such tasks may be woven into an integrated or holistic approach as advocated by Kerkla (1998). Kerka notes that “This approach [should recognize] levels of competence—entry/novice, experienced, specialist—rather than a once for all attainment. Interpreted broadly, competence is not trained behavior but thoughtful capabilities and a developmental process” (p. 6). Thus, rather than dissecting and focusing on individual competencies, judgment suggests that, for some professions (e.g., online instructor), true competency mandates;

- a. Mastery of all of the individual competencies in complex combinations,
- b. Employment of a variety of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values, and

- c. A standard of excellence that practitioners will obtain and continuously demonstrate through a process of active research.

Please note that in addition to competencies addressed herein, online instructors must also master the subject or subjects being taught. Mastery of the online instruction competencies will not assure that the information presented in a course will be accurate or that the instructor will be able to effectively engage students regarding topics with which the instructor is unfamiliar or ignorant.

Outline of Proposed Training for New Online Instructors

As previously indicated, it is not reasonable to expect experienced face-to-face faculty to magically begin to function well in the online environment. As noted in Table 1, Phipps and Merisotis (2000) indicate that faculty members should be assisted in transitioning to the online environment (Benchmark 19), trained and mentored (Benchmark 20), and provided with written resources regarding issues that are likely to arise in online courses (Benchmark 21). Initial and ongoing training, mentoring, and assessment of effectiveness are keys to the success of any new online learning program.

Any initial training program needs to cover technological aspects of the institution's learning management system (LMS) and a selected written materials (e.g., the references cited in this paper)—in essence comprising the materials needed to satisfy Benchmark 21. The training may be facilitated by online delivery using the selected LMS, with the possible inclusion of one or more hands-on face-to-face lab sessions to assist instructors in the initial exploration of LMS capabilities. Online delivery also provides opportunities for prospective online instructors to gain insights regarding the anxiety, uncertainty, and other challenges that new online students frequently experience.

During this initial training, universities should initiate a support forum. Such a forum, facilitated by an experienced online instructor, enables faculty to engage in collaborative learning through online discussions, begins to form a mutual support community, furthers strategic development of existing faculty communities (Smith, 2003), and facilitates communication among all

faculty—some of whom may not be located on the campus. The forum may also be a vehicle for conveying and discussing suggestions for improving the LMS and for clarifying and modifying institutional policies, procedures, and curriculum. As classes commence, mentors should shadow new instructors and be available for consultation as instructional and classroom management issues arise.

Comments from students, instructors, and mentors, assessments of learning outcomes, and other data should be gathered, summarized, and used to;

- a. Determine future training needs,
- b. Adjust future design of individual courses, and
- c. Modify the LMS.

In addition, literature related to online learning should be gathered on an ongoing basis, analyzed, and used to foster development of best practices.

Summary and Suggested Future Research

This paper has;

- a. Identified 51 instructor competencies that appear necessary for delivery of an effective online learning program,
- b. Proposed one possible model for weaving these competencies into a comprehensive whole, and
- c. Outlined elements of an instructor training and support program.

Future research should attempt to determine which of these competencies are best acquired via formal training, on-the-job internships, collaborative reflection and discussion, or some combination thereof. Furthermore, research should focus defining methods by which personal and/or collaborative competency-improvement programs may be recognized as qualifying scholarship for advancement and tenure-related processes.

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Table 1: Benchmarks Essential to Ensure Quality in Internet-Based Distance Education

Institutional Support Benchmarks

1. A documented technology plan that includes electronic security measures (i.e., password protection, encryption, back-up systems) is in place and operational to ensure both quality standards and the integrity and validity of information.
2. The reliability of the technology delivery system is as failsafe as possible.
3. A centralized system provides support for building and maintaining the distance education infrastructure.

Course Development Benchmarks

4. Guidelines regarding minimum standards are used for course development, design, and delivery, while learning outcomes—not the availability of existing technology—determine the technology being used to deliver course content.
5. Instructional materials are reviewed periodically to ensure they meet program standards.
6. Courses are designed to require students to engage themselves in analysis, synthesis, and evaluation as part of their course and program requirements.

Teaching/Learning Benchmarks

7. Student interaction with faculty and other students is an essential characteristic and is facilitated through a variety of ways, including voice-mail and/or e-mail.
8. Feedback to student assignments and questions is constructive and provided in a timely manner.
9. Students are instructed in the proper methods of effective research, including assessment of the validity of resources.

Course Structure Benchmarks

10. Before starting an online program, students are advised about the program to determine (1) if they possess the self-motivation and commitment to learn at a distance and (2) if they have access to the minimal technology required by the course design.
11. Students are provided with supplemental course information that outlines course objectives, concepts, and ideas, and learning outcomes for each course are summarized in a clearly written, straightforward statement.
12. Students have access to sufficient library resources that may include a “virtual library” accessible through the World Wide Web.
13. Faculty and students agree upon expectations regarding times for student assignment completion and faculty response.

Student Support Benchmarks

14. Students receive information about programs, including admission requirements, tuition and fees, books and supplies, technical and proctoring requirements, and student support services.
15. Students are provided with hands-on training and information to aid them in securing material through electronic databases, interlibrary loans, government archives, news services, and other sources.
16. Throughout the duration of the course/program, students have access to technical assistance, including detailed instructions regarding the electronic media used, practice sessions prior to the beginning of the course, and convenient access to technical support staff.
17. Questions directed to student service personnel are answered accurately and quickly, with a structured system in place to address student complaints.

Faculty Support Benchmarks

18. Technical assistance in course development is available to faculty, who are encouraged to use it.
19. Faculty members are assisted in the transition from classroom teaching to online instruction and are assessed during the process.
20. Instructor training and assistance, including peer mentoring, continues through the progression of the online course.
21. Faculty members are provided with written resources to deal with issues arising from student use of electronically-accessed data.

Evaluation and Assessment Benchmarks

22. The program’s educational effectiveness and teaching/learning process is assessed through an evaluation process that uses several methods and applies specific standards.
23. Data on enrollment, costs, and successful/innovative uses of technology are used to evaluate program effectiveness.
24. Intended learning outcomes are reviewed regularly to ensure clarity, utility, and appropriateness.

Source: Phipps and Merisotis (2000, pp. 2-3). Note: Benchmarks have been numbered to facilitate reference within this paper.

Table 2A: Competencies for online instructors, noting whether the competency will be of primary importance before, during and/or after the course

Competency	Source	Before	During	After
1. Act like a learning facilitator rather than a professor	Palloff & Pratt (2001, p. 36)		√	
2. Avoid overloading new students at the start of the course	Smith (this paper)	√	√	
3. Be clear about course requirements	After Palloff & Pratt (2001, p. 28)	√	√	
4. Be willing to contact students who are not participating	Palloff & Pratt (2001, p. 31)		√	
5. Become a lifelong learner	Ko & Rosen (2001, p. 292)	√	√	
6. Communicate high expectations	Merisotis & Phipps (1999, p. 17)	√	√	
7. Communicate technical information in plain English	Coghlan (2002, bullet 9)	√	√	
8. Create a warm and inviting atmosphere that promotes the development of a sense of community among participants	Palloff & Pratt (2001, p. 32)		√	
9. Create an effective online syllabus—one that lays out the terms of the class interaction—the expected responsibilities and duties, the grading criteria, the musts and don'ts of behavior, and explains the geography of the course	Ko & Rosen (2001, pp. 67 & 71)	√		
10. Deal effectively with disruptive students	Ko & Rosen (2001, pp. 244-245)		√	
11. Define participation and grading criteria	Ko & Rosen (2001, p. 68)	√		
12. Develop reciprocity and cooperation among students	Merisotis & Phipps (1999, p. 17)		√	
13. Develop relationships	After Palloff & Pratt (2001, pp. 161-162)		√	
14. Effectively and efficiently manage (administer) the course	Ko & Rosen (2001, p. 211)		√	√
15. Effectively use whatever technology has been selected to support online learning	After Palloff & Pratt (2001, pp. 26-28)	√	√	√
16. Emphasize time on task	Merisotis & Phipps (1999, p. 17)		√	
17. Encourage contacts between students and faculty	Merisotis & Phipps (1999, p. 17)		√	
18. Encourage students to bring real-life examples into the online classroom	Palloff & Pratt (2003, p. 134)		√	
19. Evaluate ourselves	Palloff & Pratt (2001, p. 34)	√	√	√
20. Evaluate students	Palloff & Pratt (2001, p. 34)		√	√

Source: Compiled by T. C. Smith

Table 2B: Competencies for online instructors, noting whether the competency will be of primary importance before, during and/or after the course

Competency	Source	Before	During	After
21. Foster learner centeredness	Hootstein (2002, ¶ 4)		√	
22. Get students to respect assignment due dates and agreed-upon working times	After Gray, Ryan, & Coulon (2004, tutoring, bullet 5)		√	
23. Give prompt feedback	Merisotis & Phipps (1999, p. 17)		√	√
24. Harness the technology	Conrad (1999, bullet 14)	√	√	√
25. Help integrate students into the institution and its culture	Gaskell & Mills (2004, ¶ 12)		√	
26. Help students develop critical thinking skills	After Pepicello & Rice (2000, p. 52)		√	
27. Help students identify and use appropriate learning techniques	After Pepicello and Rice (2000, pp. 53-54)		√	
28. Help students identify strengths and areas of needed improvement	After Pepicello and Rice (2000, p. 46)		√	
29. Keep informed of the latest trends and issues; continually improve your skills and knowledge	Ko and Rosen (2001, p. 276)	√	√	
30. Maintain the momentum of the course	After Coghlan (2002, #momentum)		√	
31. Make the transition to the online learning environment	Palloff and Pratt (2001, p. 35)	√	√	
32. Manage student expectations	Ko and Rosen (2001, pp. 69-70)	√	√	
33. Mandate participation. Step in and set limits if participation wanes or if the conversation is headed in the wrong direction	Palloff and Pratt (2001, pp. 31 & 36)		√	
34. Model good participation	After Palloff and Pratt (2001, pp. 24 & 121)		√	
35. Network with others involved in online education	Ko and Rosen (2001, pp. 291-292)	√	√	
36. Prepare students for online learning	Ko and Rosen (2001, p. 194)	√	√	
37. Promote collaborative learning	Palloff and Pratt (2001, p. 36)		√	
38. Promote reflection	Palloff and Pratt (2001, p. 33)		√	√
39. Provide structure for students but allow for flexibility and negotiation	Palloff and Pratt (2001, p. 36)	√	√	
40. Remember that there are people attached to the words on the screen	Palloff and Pratt (2001, p. 31)		√	
41. Respect diverse talents and ways of learning	Merisotis and Phipps (1999, p. 17)		√	

Source: Compiled by T. C. Smith

Table 2C: Competencies for online instructors, noting whether the competency will be of primary importance before, during and/or after the course

Competency	Source	Before	During	After
42. Respect institutional performance guidelines	Smith (this paper)		√	
43. Respect privacy issues	Ko and Rosen (2001, pp. 238-239)		√	√
44. Set up a well-organized course site	Palloff and Pratt (2001, p. 36)		√	
45. Teach students about online learning	Palloff and Pratt (2001, p. 30)		√	
46. Translate content for online delivery	Moore, Winograd, and Lange (2001, p. 9.3)	√		
47. Use active learning techniques	Merisotis and Phipps (1999, p. 17)		√	
48. Use best practices to promote participation	Palloff and Pratt (2001, p. 118)		√	
49. Use humor	Coghlan (2002, "Getting Started" bullet 8)		√	
50. Use the web as a resource	Ko and Rosen (2001, p. 105)	√	√	
51. Most of all, have fun and open yourself to learning as much from your students as they will learn from one another and from you!	Palloff and Pratt (2001, p. 36)		√	

Source: Compiled by T. C. Smith