

This pointer lays out a long list of competencies that have been found to improve practice and student learning and satisfaction in online education. The alignment of these competencies with MVCR courses is also included. An overview of how these competencies were arrived at has been submitted for publication in the Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration.

Legend

- Standards Alignment (used in parenthesis after appropriate competencies)
 - ISBE refers to Illinois State Board of Education Professional Teaching Standards.
 - NETS-T refers to the National Educational Technology Standards for Teachers put forth by the International Society for Technology in Education.
 - If a competency relates to another competency in this document, the location of that item is provided in parentheses after the given competency.
- Indicators
 - KI is a knowledge indicator and is not necessarily a directly observable behavior.
 - PI is a performance indicator and is a directly observable behavior.
 - When appropriate, Knowledge Indicators are presented before Performance Indicators. They are not completely separate as some items fall within both categories.
- Core Competencies
 - Core competencies are marked as a **competent** instructor.
 - Competencies beyond the core are marked as an **exemplary** instructor.
 - Competencies specific to the MVCR program have been underlined.
 - In general, core competencies are listed before exemplary ones.
- Course Abbreviations (Courses in the MVCR program in which a competency is learned or explored are labeled in [brackets])
 - CR = Copyright and IP Issues
 - EC = Encouraging Communications
 - ID = Instructional Design
 - IS = Issues and Strategies for Faculty Development
 - MM = Multimedia Principles
 - OO = Online Learning: An Overview
 - PR = Practicum
 - SA = Student Assessment
 - SC = Synchronous Communications
 - SO = Supporting Online Students
 - TM = Time Management
 - TO = Tutoring Online
 - TT = Technology Tools
 - WD = Web Design

I. **Administrative Roles (Systems, Ethical and Legal Issues)**

The **competent** instructor has an understanding of and belief in the administrative system under which s/he is employed.

A. Institutional Context:

The **exemplary** instructor understands the context in which the institution and its instructors fall (KI).

Rationale: Although exemplary since the competencies listed here are not necessarily teaching related, this competency is listed first since aspects of the institutional context can affect the implementation of other competencies later in this category.

1. The **exemplary** instructor is able to state principle aspects of the institutional mission (PI) and has a belief in that mission (KI). (Partially relates to ISBE Standard 11B.)

Rationale: The institutional mission can affect the priorities that an instructor gives to the students and the methods employed in teaching those students.

2. The **exemplary** instructor understands that the school has an organizational structure (KI).

Rationale: Knowledge of the institutional system can aid the instructor in navigating the administrative landscape within which a course falls.

3. The **exemplary** instructor understands that the school falls within a larger community, national, and global context (KI). (See ISBE Standard 9A.) [OO]

Rationale: In some cases, appropriate use of this larger community can lead to a better course. Applications within this larger community affect social competencies listed later.

B. Intellectual Property Issues and Regulations:

The **competent** instructor possesses a basic understanding of intellectual property issues in online education (KI). (Relates to NETS-T Area VI.A. and ISBE Standards 11C, 11D, 11J, & 11K.)

Rationale: The potential for litigation both in what is used in the online classroom and the ownership of materials developed is important enough to warrant that this competency be labeled as a core competency.

1. The **competent** instructor understands material ownership within the program. (KI)

Rationale: The manner in which works are presented may fall within teaching expression, but the works themselves as created by the instructor may or may not be the property of the institution. (KI) [CR]

2. The **competent** instructor is copyright compliant with all materials (including student work) selection and use. No materials are used without proper copyright clearance. All resources utilized by the instructor within the course are properly cited. (PI) [CR]

Rationale: A requirement professionally, ethically, and legally.

3. The **exemplary** instructor is able to answer basic student questions regarding intellectual property issues in the online classroom. The instructor will be able to refer the student to the proper administrator when questions arise. (PI) [CR]

Rationale: Although being able to answer these questions is helpful, it is not necessarily a function of instruction.

C. Student Issues and Management:

The **competent** instructor understands how to administer students within the program including obtaining the student roster, academic honesty policies, grade reporting, student conduct, and issues with regards to students with disabilities (KI/PI).

Rationale: Proper treatment of students is essential for effective instruction and program legal standards.

1. The **competent** instructor knows and applies proper rules for academic reporting and student privacy (KI/PI). (Relates to ISBE Standards 11C & 11J) [CR, OO]

Rationale: Not only is it important that student grades be processed correctly for their transcript uses, but the student academic record, which may include online course posts, is subject to many legal requirements.

2. The **competent** instructor is aware of and follows regulations regarding students with disabilities (KI/PI). [OO, MM, TT, WD]

Rationale: In many cases they are a legal requirement with firm ethical backing.

- a. The **competent** instructor knows applicable institutional, state, and federal rules and regulations for implementing programs for individuals with disabilities (KI). (See ISBE Standard 5F., 11F., 11G., & 11H.)

Rationale: In many cases it is a legal requirement that such rules and regulations be followed.

- b. The **competent** instructor insures that the course is in compliance with ADA regulations and other accessibility regulations proposed by the institution (PI). (Relates to ISBE Standard 5P. See ISBE Standards 11O., 11R., 11S., & 11T.)

Rationale: Once again, it is a legal requirement in many cases.

3. The **competent** instructor has knowledge of honesty policies and procedures towards students and from where these policies can be accessed (KI/PI). [OO, SA]

Rationale: Academic honesty is a common concern among critics of distance education because the distance is seen as a promoting factor.

4. The **competent** instructor has a willingness and ability to follow these academic honesty procedures (KI/PI). [OO, SA]

Rationale: Academic honesty policies that go unenforced may lead to an increased student willingness to cheat.

5. The **competent** instructor conducts student discipline under ethical constraints and within parameters set forth by the program including procedures for removing students from a course when necessary (PI). (See also VII. D.) [OO, PR]

Rationale: Proper treatment of students is governed by legal requirements. All students should be granted due process.

D. Additional Legal and Ethical Issues:

The **competent** online instructor has knowledge of various additional legal, privacy, and ethical issues in online education and how they can impact the virtual classroom and its students (KI). The **competent** instructor can list at least three examples of ethical issues such as those listed below with a description of each (PI). The **exemplary** instructor can list more than three. [IS, OO, PR, SA, SC, SO, TO]

Rationale: These issues can be pervasive and have impacts on how a course is instructed. Lack of knowledge in these areas may lead to missteps in the online classroom.

1. Should an online course be student-paced or instructor-paced?

2. Should the course require synchronous sessions?
3. How much of an online course should or can be available anytime based upon the curriculum and educational paradigm being employed?
4. In what ways can or should an online instructor conduct research with or of the students? How can or should areas such as action research play a part in the virtual classroom?
5. What can and cannot be said in a public v. private forum?
6. When if ever should anonymous postings be allowed by the students?
7. How, when, can, and should inflammatory, racist, or otherwise harmful comments be handled in an online classroom?

E. Instructor Selection and Evaluation:

The **exemplary** instructor understands how courses/instructors are selected and evaluated (KI).

Rationale: These are listed as exemplary for two reasons. First, they may not apply in many cases where instructors of a department develop their own courses. Second, understanding these issues will not so much impact one's ability to teach, merely when the institution would provide that teaching opportunity.

F. Support Mechanisms:

The **exemplary** instructor has an awareness of support mechanisms available to him/her (KI). [OO]

Rationale: Interestingly, this area was not listed as a competency in any of the documents reviewed, but such awareness can be important to a successful as well as happy instructor. Still, it is listed as exemplary in this document since a given instructor may not have a need for these support mechanisms.

II. *Personal Roles (Personal Qualities and Characteristics)*

The **competent** instructor possesses certain attributes that enhance his/her ability to instruct within any given educational paradigm.

A. Content Knowledge:

The **competent** instructor is qualified in the given field of study and demonstrates knowledge in the content area (KI/PI). According to ISBE Standard 1, "The competent teacher understands the central concepts, methods of inquiry, and structures of the discipline"

Rationale: To teach the content, you need an advanced level of knowledge in that content.

1. The **competent** instructor can adequately address detailed, higher-order questions in the field of study and demonstrates a clear conceptual and systemic understanding of the course content (KI / PI). (ISBE Standards 1A & 1B)

Rationale: Having this ability contributes to the instructor's ability to answer questions and appear as an authority to the students.

2. The **competent** instructor is continuously developing new knowledge of the pertinent content area (KI). Such development may include being at least a peripheral member of the relevant community of practice (PI). (Relates to NETS-T Standard V.A. & V.D. ISBE Standard 10G.)

Rationale: Keeping current in the field is required in order to instruct the students in the most recent accounts in the given field.

3. The **competent** instructor understands the relationships that exist between knowledge in a given domain and among different knowledge domains (KI). (See ISBE Standards 1D.)

Rationale: Most knowledge can be inter-related, and in so doing, the knowledge can be interlinked with various internal schemas in the students, thus increasing recall and learning.

4. The **exemplary** instructor has knowledge of a variety of appropriate Internet resources for the given topic beyond those used in the course itself (KI). [PR]

Rationale: Listed as exemplary, as the instructor may simply refer to personal notes rather than outside resources; however, referring to such sources can be useful in answering student questions and supporting their learning. The instructor could also ask others in the field or conduct online searches for such resources if s/he does not already know, also lending this competency towards exemplary status.

B. Teaching Commitment:

The **competent** instructor shows a dedication to education and commitment to quality teaching (PI).

Rationale: While one can teach, and possibly teach well, without a commitment to teaching well, it is listed as a core competency in the MVCR program as we see teaching as a core mission.

1. The **competent** instructor undergoes continual professional development in his/her teaching practice and lifelong learning (KI / PI). (See NETS-T Standard V.A. Relates to ISBE Standard 10E.) [All MVCR]

Rationale: Initially listed as exemplary, for it is possible that simply the act of teaching, especially if performed from an action research standpoint, can itself serve as a professional development activity. However, there are always changes in the system that require a teacher to remain up-to-date, thus is it listed as a core competency, however underlined as perhaps an MVCR specific competency.

2. The **exemplary** instructor uses classroom experiences, evaluations, and research as sources for active reflection about and revision of teaching practice (PI). (See ISBE Standard 10B. & 10E.) [ID, PR]

Rationale: If done, this demonstrates that the teacher has a commitment to being the best teacher s/he can be. This item also supports the notion that action research by a teacher about practice has the potential to improve that practice and possibly the practice of those associated with the instructor.

3. The **exemplary** instructor has knowledge of resources available to aid in professional teaching development (KI). (Relates to ISBE Standard 10C.) [All MVCR]

Rationale: Listed as exemplary since the instructor could also consult with others easily to find such sources.

4. The **exemplary** instructor is enthusiastic and excited about (KI):
 - a. Subject area content.
 - b. Teaching and reaching students.
 - c. Distance education.

C. Communication Ability:

The **competent** instructor possesses an adequate typing ability or technological means to communicate through writing and/or audio to the students, peers, and community at large as permitted within the individual's state of disability, the resources provided by the institution, and within the requirements of the given curriculum and modality of effective instruction (PI).

Rationale: Such ability is simply a feasibility requirement for teaching online. Note that institutional accommodations are included.

D. Time Management:

The **competent** instructor has lifestyle commitments that may include children, other employment, travel, hobbies, etc., but they do not interfere with his/her ability to instruct the course. The **competent** instructor has adequate time management skills (PI). (See ISBE Standard 5M.) [OO, PR, TM]

Rationale: Many see online teaching as a time consuming process, especially for someone who has only been teaching the given content in the given format for a short period of time. Over time, proficiencies in other areas may compensate for a lack of available time or time management, but it is retained here as a core competency.

E. Other Characteristics:

1. The **competent** instructor is patient, showing perseverance and diligence in dealing with students, colleagues, technology, and instructional materials (PI). [OO, PR, TM]

Rationale: There are bound to be difficulties of some sort when teaching. A competent teacher must be able to get over these obstacles and deliver a valuable educational experience to the students.

2. The **competent** instructor is capable of relative objectivity (KI).

Rationale: This skill is necessary for fairness in assessment of self and students.

3. The **exemplary** instructor possesses first-hand experience as a student of an online class (KI). [All MVCR]

Rationale: It can be difficult but not necessarily impossible to connect with student needs when one has never experienced them.

4. The **exemplary** instructor pays attention to detail, limiting any errors in the course itself and dialogues within it (PI). [ID, SA, TO]

Rationale: Even small errors can lead an online student astray, especially if they go unnoticed. They can also make the course appear less professional and lead to a lower opinion of the instructor. But mistakes are bound to happen and can be overcome, so this is listed as an exemplary competency.

5. The **exemplary** instructor shows flexibility (KI / PI): [OO, ID]

a. In dealing with students.

Rationale: Different students will have different needs and abilities.

b. In approach to education.

Rationale: Online education can present unique challenges that require flexibility in technique and action.

6. The **exemplary** instructor shows a tolerance for ambiguity (PI). [OO, SA, SC, TO]

Rationale: At times, text-based discourse can include ambiguities.

7. The **exemplary** instructor accepts and endeavors to remove his/her own limitations (KI). [All MVCR]
Rationale: The instructor will improve as an instructor with such a competency, but an instructor can still instruct without it.
8. The **exemplary** instructor understands that reflection is an integral part of professional growth (KI). (See ISBE Standard 10A.) [All MVCR]
Rationale: Understanding oneself can be the first step in improvement, but may or may not be an absolute requirement.
9. The **exemplary** instructor has the ability to work at a computer for extended periods of time (KI/PI).
Rationale: This item is not so much a requirement, but something that aids the instructor in teaching online.
10. The **exemplary** instructor is caring, charismatic, compassionate, honest, authentic, non-judgmental, and an affective listener (KI/PI).
Rationale: All of these descriptors help the students to connect better with the instructor.

III. *Technological Roles (Technology Knowledge and Abilities)*

The **competent** online instructor is knowledgeable about the technologies used in the virtual classroom and can make effective use of those technologies.

A. Access:

The **competent** instructor has access to the required technical equipment and software for the given medium and the course (PI).

Rationale: If the instructor does not have easy access, it will show in a reduced ability to effectively instruct.

1. The **competent** instructor owns or has easy access to necessary technical equipment and software including a computer, and Internet connection, and other equipment such as video editing that might be required by the given course and content (PI).
Rationale: If the equipment is not readily available, online instruction is severely hindered.
2. The **competent** instructor has the necessary equipment and/or accommodations to overcome disability issues that might normally inhibit access to the necessary technical equipment or software in Part III.A.1 (PI). A physical disability will not be used in the instructor placement or hiring decision as long as an appropriate enabling technology or service exists or can be developed and the person is otherwise qualified.
Rationale: One advantage of online education is that it can sometimes be easier to overcome disabilities to tap into the potential of one's mind. When possible, such minds must be utilized for human and legal reasons.

B. Technical Proficiencies:

The **competent** instructor is knowledgeable and has the ability to use computer programs that are typically required in online education to improve learning/teaching, personal productivity, and information management. (See NETS-T Standard I. & V.C. & ISBE Standard 4G.)

Rationale: If the instructor cannot use the software, then the instructor simply cannot effectively instruct in an environment that requires such knowledge.

1. The **competent** instructor has an understanding of various commonly used Web browsing softwares (KI). [All MVCRC]

Rationale: Such software is an absolute minimum in order to effectively navigate within the Web-based course management system.

- a. The **competent** instructor can adequately perform various functions within Web browsing software (PI).

These functions may include:

- 1) Browse and search the Web.
- 2) Print from a browser.
- 3) Change settings such as security, font size, etc. within the browser.
- 4) Troubleshoot typical issues that may arise with browsers.

- b. The **exemplary** instructor can help students to troubleshoot issues that may arise with browsers (PI).

Rationale: Listed as exemplary since MVCRC courses have technical support available. In other programs, it might be a listed prerequisite to students being able to take the course, thus removing a requirement on the instructor to have such advanced troubleshooting knowledge as well.

2. The **competent** instructor is proficient in the chosen course management system (KI). (Planning for the management of resources within the CMS will apply to NETS-T Standard II.D.) [ID, OO, TT, WD]

Rationale: If the instructor cannot use the course management system with at least a basic level of knowledge, then it will be difficult to effectively organize information and communicate with the students within the system among other needed functions from the instructor.

- a. The **competent** instructor can modify content within the system as necessary (PI).
Rationale: Although many courses may be ready for delivery to the students at the beginning, there is always the chance of link rot or a new hot resource coming out that should be relayed to the students.

- b. The **competent** instructor can manage all student activities within the CMS (PI). (See NETS-T Standard III.D. Relates to NETS-T Standard II.E. & ISBE Standard 5A.)

Rationale: Managing student activity is important in order to maintain students on the right track to learning and to enable them to assess their own progress in the course.

These activities include but are not limited to:

- 1) Students can be placed within groups.
- 2) Student grades can be entered.
- 3) Assignment feedback can be entered into the appropriate space.
- 4) Instructions and announcements can be presented clearly.

- c. The **competent** instructor has clear abilities within the primary communication channels of the CMS and can state the rationales behind their use (KI / PI).

Rationale: Since communication is a key in so many ways to online courses, it is an absolute requirement that the instructor be able to use and manage the primary communication mode for the course.

- d. The **exemplary** instructor can make changes to the course settings within the CMS such as CSS styles, tool settings, etc. (PI).
Rationale: Since these changes are often mostly aesthetic in an environment that should already be presented in a usable manner, this is listed as exemplary. Often, instructor presence may prompt for such changes, which can aid the instructor to best teach to his/her style.
 - e. The **exemplary** instructor can perform other activities within CMS as necessary for the course and content (PI).
Rationale: This competency is retained to accommodate unforeseen changes in the CMS technologies.
3. The **competent** instructor has the ability to use word processing software including the ability to compose documents using accessibility software as required (PI).
Rationale: This item is a core requirement because most course management systems have a word processor type of interface for entering text-based information. Furthermore, in many instances it is more appropriate to construct text outside of the course management system using a word processor. Finally, it is important that a disabled instructor have the ability to use the appropriate enabling software for the composition of text-based or voice-based discourse.
 4. The **competent** instructor has the ability to use and manage asynchronous and synchronous communication programs as required by the course (PI). Note that this competency does not cover the communications systems within the CMS, but those outside, such as personal email. CMS-based communication is covered by competency III.B.2.c. [PR, SC]
Rationale: All distance education courses rely on communication for success, and currently this communication extends beyond the course management system. Many instructors include AOL, MSN, Skype, and other communication addresses in the course that students can use for individual contact with the instructor. In the MVCR program, this competency is listed as a core competency because of the use of the Elluminate synchronous conferencing system.
 5. The **competent** instructor has a proficiency managing a computer operating system to maintain security updates, virus scanning software, and other software updates as necessary for the course (PI).
Rationale: Because of the need to maintain a secure system that does not jeopardize the CMS or the computer systems of the students, this is a core requirement.
 6. The **competent** instructor has knowledge of other computer programs and hardware as required by the course being taught (KI). [MM, TT]
Rationale: Some courses will have specialized technology needs, such as a mathematics course requiring Mathematica, Geometer's Sketchpad, etc., a statistics course using SAS or SPSS, a multimedia course using video editing software, courses using library systems, presentation software, publishing software, scanners, cameras, audio recording devices, etc.
 7. The **competent** instructor can apply computer program knowledge to improve student learning and increase personal productivity (PI). (See NETS-T Standard V.C.) [TT]
Rationale: If the technology is utilized in a confusing manner or without properly informing the students, it may lead to confusion, lack of learning, etc.

8. The **exemplary** instructor can search the Web for information using information sources beyond just a search engine but include online information resources such as online libraries and information repositories. The instructor can state the rationale for any search strategy (PI). [ID, OO, WD]
Rationale: Most institutions have librarians who can help instructors complete such tasks. Therefore, while it is functional knowledge that can help an online instructor, it is not an absolute requirement.
9. The **exemplary** instructor continually develops knowledge and skills in technology, including current and emergent technologies (KI). Currently this knowledge would include such technologies as wikis, podcasts, vodcasts, blogs, and VoIP. (See NETS-T Standard I.B.) [TT]
Rationale: This item is marked as exemplary, because as a core requirement an instructor would have to be able to utilize current technologies, but not necessarily maintain constant vigil over the newest trends in technology in order to effectively instruct students. At the same time, keeping up on current trends may lead to a better way of doing thing, but the competent instructor need not be an early adopter of the components behind such trends.
10. The **exemplary** instructor has an ability to multitask in a computerized environment (PI).
Rationale: Online education often requires juggling several concurrent applications, such as application sharing during a synchronous text/audio session, but it is recognized that a competent instructor could find ways to inform students without use of multitasking or by multitasking on a limited basis.

C. Technical Assistance:

The **competent** instructor assists students with technology used in the course. (Relates to NETS-T Standard I.A.) [TT]

Rationale: When a program does not have a technology support person or department, even if the instructor does not have the required technical knowledge to directly provide assistance to the students, s/he should be willing and able to direct students towards an answer to their problem.

1. The **competent** instructor has a strong enough understanding of the technology used and an ability to work with students such that s/he is able to help students with basic technical issues while referring more difficult issues to the technical support person for that course or program or appropriate technology tutorials and user's guides (KI / PI). [TT]
Rationale: Students will inevitably ask the instructor some technical questions, and the ability of the instructor to answer those questions can affect the student's perceptions of the instructor and the student's speed with which to resolve technical issues.
2. The **competent** instructor can provide basic assistance in the use of technology to support the needs of learners with disabilities. These technologies include adaptive and assistive technologies (PI). (See also IV.L.6. & V.C.8.) (See NETS-T Standard II.A.) [TT]
Rationale: In many cases, such knowledge is a legal requirement.

3. The **exemplary** online instructor is a master of the technology used and can answer almost any question the students or other teachers may have about that technology (PI). (Relates to TFIE Standard I.A.2.)
Rationale: Included here as it can be a quality trait for an instructor to possess, but such advanced knowledge can be reserved for professional technical support in most cases.
4. The **exemplary** instructor promotes healthy use of technology resources. For example, activities are not developed that would require a student to sit in front of a computer screen for 3 or more consecutive hours (PI). (See NETS-T Standard VI.D.) [ID, TT, WD]
Rationale: This item is not necessarily a requirement of effective learning by the students, but can affect the student's overall well-being and help to develop healthy life-long habits.

IV. Instructional Design Roles (Instructional Design Processes, Knowledge, and Abilities)

The **competent** instructor can judge the appropriateness and adequacy of materials and technology used in a course for the given audience (KI) and make materials and technology adjustments due to shifting audience needs and abilities (PI). (Relates to ISBE Standard 4 & 6F. and NETS-T Standard II. & III.)

Rationale: These competencies are not for instructional designers. Rather, they are a list of competencies for the instructors once a course has already been developed. However, there are certain instructional design principles that still must be known and followed when the competent instructor inevitably makes adjustments to the course in order to best serve the students.

- A. The **competent** instructor maintains a valid and useful syllabus (PI). [ID, PR]
Rationale: The syllabus is often the first item that an online student reads. It must be properly maintained to insure a valuable first impression by the student and to insure that the student is properly aligned to the policies, requirements, and goals of the given course.
- B. The **competent** instructor understands how and when to determine if adjustments to instructional materials of the course are necessary and can make such inferences based upon student performance, feedback, and other indicators as appropriate (KI). (See ISBE Standard 4D., 5M., & 6F.) [ID, PR]
Rationale: Listed as a core competency since one needs to understand these processes before appropriate material changes might be considered.
- C. The **competent** instructor reviews and evaluates the instructional effectiveness and value of the instructional materials of a course. The instructor makes use of student evaluations and other feedback within a course in order to improve selection of learning materials (PI). (See ISBE Standard 8I. Relates to NETS-T Standard IV.B. & IV.C.) [PR]
Rationale: Such evaluations and feedback are valuable resources of information when deciding about materials adjustments. If the instructor does not make use of them, the course may stagnate or depreciate in value with time.

- D. The **competent** instructor is able to judge the credibility, clarity, validity, reliability, accuracy, currency, and quality of course resources in the given topic of study (KI) including an ability to state the rationale for such judgments (PI). [ID]
Rationale: The quality of the materials in the course speaks to the quality of the course as a whole. (This competency relates to an ability to properly select materials as discussed in IV.B.)
These items can be defined as:
1. Credibility = Is the given information believable?
 2. Clarity = How understandable will the given information be in the given content area and for the given student audience?
 3. Validity = Is the given information acceptable knowledge in the given community of practice?
 4. Reliability = Does the information remain constant over time? Also, for online resources, is it susceptible to link rot (failure of link to function over time)?
 5. Accuracy = Is data presented without errors or omissions?
 6. Currency = How current is the information source, and how applicable is it to the current state of the content area?
 7. Quality = Is the information presented in a pedagogically sound manner for the given content and audience?
 8. **Exemplary** instructors will also judge the beauty = Is the information presented in an aesthetically pleasing manner?
- E. The **competent** instructor maintains the currency, comprehensiveness, applicability, interaction level, and accuracy of materials used in the course (PI). (See ISBE Standard 1F. & 4Q. & NETS-T Standard II.C.) [ID, PR]
Rationale: Failing to do so can negatively affect the instructor's cognitive presence in the course and the value of the educational experience for the students.
- F. The **competent** instructor maintains a variety in resources that appeal to various learner demographics and skills (PI). (NETS-T Standard II.A. Relates to ISBE Standard 6M., NETS-T Standard II.C.) [ID]
Rationale: Such resources may be included in various iterations of the course and allow for content adjustments based upon learner compositions.
- G. The **competent** instructor creates and selects learning materials and experiences appropriate for the curriculum, the students, and principles of effective instruction (PI). (See ISBE Standard 4L.) [ID, MM, WD]
Rationale: Proper materials selection is important for effective instruction.
- H. The **exemplary** instructor creates and selects learning materials and readings that demonstrate the interconnectedness of subject areas (PI). (See ISBE Standard 6L.)
Rationale: This item is primarily exemplary here for 2 reasons. First, such interconnectedness can be brought about during instructional discourse rather than through the learning materials. Second, interconnectedness of information among subjects may not be appropriate for all courses, especially training programs that are trying to address specific skills.

- I. The **competent** instructor utilizes a variety of technologies (such as simulations, multimedia, etc.) designed to reach course objectives and to promote skills relevant to the field of study (KI/PI). (See also V.C.4.n. for the facilitation of such technology use.) (Relates to ISBE Standard 1I., 3K., 4E., 5M., 6K., & 6N., NETS-T Standard III.A. & II.C.) [ID, MM, TT]
 Rationale: There must be some sort of flexibility and variation in the instruction to best reach the most students for the given content. All online courses will make use of some form of technology, and the instructor should be able to utilize and choose such technology effectively.
- J. The **competent** instructor reviews and evaluates the instructional effectiveness and value of the technologies utilized in a course from an instructor, student, and administrative perspective (PI). (See ISBE Standard 4F., 4Q., & 6H.) [TT]
 Rationale: The instructor must both actively review the content and do so from various perspectives in order to effectively make materials decisions that help lead to the most effective educational experience for the students.
- K. The **competent** instructor adequately plans for instruction (PI). [PR]
 Rationale: Planning for instruction is especially important in online education as there are many contingency plans that are needed in case technology fails or other situations occur. It can also take time to implement certain plans into the online course.
1. The **competent** instructor has an awareness of numerous pedagogical approaches such as inductive/deductive, exploratory, guided didactic conversation, lecture/discussion, etc. (KI). (See ISBE Standard 6B.)
 Rationale: Awareness is needed to chose, plan, and/or design an approach.
 2. The **competent** instructor understands the advantages and limitations of various pedagogical approaches, especially in the online environment (KI). (See ISBE Standard 6B.)
 Rationale: Such understanding is necessary in order to make the appropriate choices.
 3. The **competent** instructor understands and makes use of appropriate learning theories and developmental theories when planning instruction (KI/PI). (See ISBE Standards 2E., 3L., 4A., & 6O. and NETS-T Standard II.A.)
 4. The **competent** instructor plans the use of numerous pedagogical approaches to achieve a given instructional purpose and to meet students' needs (PI). (See ISBE Standard 6F. & 6G.)
 Rationale: Planning to use more than one approach has many benefits. More student needs may be addressed, and contingency plans exist when inevitable change occurs.
 5. The **competent** instructor incorporates knowledge of the content and current research when planning instruction (KI). (See ISBE Standards 4A. and NETS-T Standard III.E.)
 Rationale: Such knowledge helps in many ways such as proper ordering and spacing of information delivery.
 6. The **competent** instructor understands and considers disability impacts on online learning when planning instruction (KI/PI). (See ISBE Standard 6M.) [ID, PR, SA, TT, WD]

Rationale: Different students will have different needs that must be planned for.

- L. The **competent** instructor effectively presents information to the students (PI). (See ISBE Standards 4. & 6.) [ID, OO, SC, PR, TT, WD]

Rationale: Proper presentation aids in interpretation, understanding, and internalization of new information by the students.

1. The **competent** instructor introduces materials in logical progression at increasingly complex levels in a manner meaningful to students at varying levels of development and with diverse learning needs (PI). (See ISBE Standard 2I. & 4J.)

Rationale: A learner must have the prerequisite knowledge and abilities before effectively being able to learn a new piece of information or new action sequence.

2. The **competent** instructor presents information appropriately chunked with units presented in a logical progression within a well organized design (PI). (See ISBE Standard 4J.)

Rationale: Proper materials presentation in learnable units is necessary for student internalization and retention.

3. The **competent** instructor presents information in an unambiguous and clear manner (PI).

Rationale: The students must be able to understand what is presented.

- a. The **competent** instructor maintains consistency, conciseness, clarity, cohesiveness, and grammar of materials, communications, etc.
 - b. The **competent** instructor clearly defines any acronym, lingo, jargon, or ‘Web-speak’ used.
 - c. The **competent** instructor uses frames of reference familiar to the students.
4. The **competent** instructor presents course content in a manner of personal relevance to the students (PI). (See ISBE Standards 3I., 4C., & 4N.)

Rationale: Personal linkages increase motivation, internalization, and retention.

5. The **competent** instructor presents diverse experiences and counter-experiences and multiple representations of the subject matter including diverse applications of that subject matter (PI). (See ISBE Standard 1K. & 6J. See ISBE Standard 4N. when relating student current knowledge and future career experiences.)

Rationale: Diversity of experience increases student self-applicability and the use of multiple experiences encourages respect, acknowledgement, and consideration of multiple perspectives.

6. The **competent** instructor knows techniques for modifying content for those with disabilities and/or diverse learning capabilities and styles (KI). (See ISBE Standard 6E.)

Rationale: Proper accommodations must be made to enable all learners to effectively learn the content.

7. The **exemplary** instructor displays creativity in the manner in which the course is presented to the students (PI).

Rationale: Similar to innovation, creativity can be helpful, but is not a necessity.

8. The **exemplary** instructor strives to maintain an aesthetic appeal to the course while providing for accessibility and usability (KI / PI).

Rationale: Listed as exemplary since the lack of aesthetic appeal may not directly

influence learning.

- M. The **competent** instructor can provide a rationale for any shift in content or materials. Any materials used are aligned with applicable standards, the needs of the students, and the given curriculum (PI). (See ISBE Standard 4A. & 4D. and NETS-T Standard II.B.) Rationale: If you don't know why you are making the adjustment, then perhaps it is being made in error. [ID, PR, WD]
- N. The **exemplary** instructor seeks appropriate media richness for the course and can state rationales for use of multimedia (KI / PI). [MM] Rationale: Media richness can increase the visual appeal of a course, but may not be a pedagogical necessity and add value in the given subject. The use of multimedia can also be limited by institutional constraints such as the appropriate servers.
- O. The **exemplary** online instructor can develop technology resources designed to reach course objectives (PI). (Relates to TFIE Standard II.F.) Rationale: While it is nice if an instructor can develop his/her own technologies, the actual development of these technologies is not a requirement since many are freely available or can be found at a reasonable fee.
- P. The **exemplary** instructor utilizes materials in line with the mission of the institution and the objectives of the given program (PI). In other words, any changes to the content are made with this mission in mind. Rationale: Listed as exemplary since there are many models of instruction that may fit within the institutional objectives and the model of instruction should best fit with the students and the curriculum.

V. ***Pedagogical Roles (Teaching Processes, Knowledge, and Abilities)***

The **competent** instructor must be well versed and capable in the instruction of a high quality and effective educational experience for all participants.

A. Education and Learning Theory:

The **competent** instructor has knowledge of the theory behind the educational paradigm employed in the course or by the department as a whole and for the student population being taught (KI).

Rationale: Such knowledge helps an instructor to utilize the appropriate teaching methodology for a given unit of information and given student population.

1. The **competent** instructor has basic learning theory knowledge for the age group and ability level of students instructed and understands how said students construct knowledge and acquire skills (KI). (See ISBE Standards 2A & 2C) Rationale: At least a basic level of theory knowledge is required to best instruct the students and to provide a rationale for the choice of instructional method and activities chosen for assessment among other actions.
2. The **competent** instructor understands differences in approaches to learning including but not limited to multiple intelligences theory, learning styles, and performance

modes (KI). (See ISBE Standard 3D.)

Rationale: This knowledge helps an instructor make instructional decisions.

3. The **competent** instructor understands the cognitive processes associated with various kinds of learning and how these processes can be stimulated (KI). (See ISBE Standard 6A.)

Rationale: The key to this item being a core competency is the ability of the instructor to stimulate the appropriate process in the students in the virtual environment. Such stimulation appears as a competency under teaching roles below.

4. The **competent** instructor understands how a student's physical, social, emotional, ethical, and cognitive development influences learning (KI). (See ISBE Standard 1E., 2B., & 3C.)

Rationale: This knowledge is required in order to effectively monitor students and to address such issues when planning instruction, selecting materials, and actively teaching/guiding students to knowledge acquisition.

5. The **competent** instructor understands that a student's socioeconomic, cultural, religious, and other dispositions can influence learning (KI).

Rationale: As distance education among other forces expands the audience of a given institutions educational endeavor, an understanding of the different backgrounds of the incoming students becomes a core competency.

6. The **competent** instructor understands the impact that cognitive, emotional, physical, and sensory disabilities can have on various communication processes in a virtual classroom (KI). (Relates to ISBE Standard 2F.)

Rationale: Items 4-6 relate to an understanding of the student and how best to reach a student given this information. This particular item regards how the state of the student affects communication processes. Such knowledge is a core competency in online education since communication is vital for many aspects of distance education.

7. The **exemplary** instructor has an advanced understanding of various learning theories including behaviorism, constructivism, cognitivism, group theory, etc. (KI).

Rationale: Although some knowledge is a core competency, advanced knowledge is not necessarily needed in order to further practice unless the instructor's practice is such theory.

B. Cognitive Presence:

The **competent** instructor not only knows the materials (See II.A), but also creates a student awareness of that knowledge. Unlike cognitive presence as defined by Garrison (2003), here the instructor demonstrates an ability to construct and confirm meaning within the course community (PI). [OO, PR]

Rationale: These competencies are separated out as their own item as they relate specifically to the ability of an instructor to communicate his/her expertise to the students in such a way that s/he is considered an expert by the students in the given knowledge domain.

1. The **competent** instructor contributes advanced knowledge and insights to class discussion. The instructor is able to integrate his/her knowledge into posts that occur within the general course discussion (PI).

Rationale: Doing so demonstrates the instructor's knowledge to the students and develops cognitive presence.

2. The **competent** instructor contributes current resources from the field (PI).
Rationale: This item does not relate to the course in general, as that is covered in instructional design above. Rather, an example demonstrating this competency would be an instructor posting an announcement about a recent discovery or theory in the given field with appropriate associated commentary. The instructor might also maintain a blog in the field as another example. By doing so, the instructor is seen as an expert by the students.
3. The **exemplary** instructor can map knowledge to be acquired using a concept map or other technique as appropriate and needed (PI).
Rationale: The instructor should be able to demonstrate knowledge to students by mapping its interconnection with other knowledge. Such knowledge will also assist the instructor in answering student questions and in general decision making about course materials. It is listed as exemplary since other methods may reach students as well.

C. Instructional Processes / Pedagogy / Presence:

The **competent** instructor can effectively educate and guide the students toward new cognitive structures and meaningful educational outcomes using proven techniques and personal skill (PI). [EC, ID, OO, PR, TT]

Rationale: Such is one of the primary purposes of education.

1. The **competent** instructor makes use of valid and effective course objectives (PI). (See ISBE Standard 6P.) [ID, OO, PR]
Rationale: All courses should have some sort of objective against which learning can be determined. When course objectives are the method used for this measurement, the following guidelines apply.
 - a. Course objectives are maintained as strong, appropriate, important, and relevant to the students.
 - b. Course objectives are maintained within the curricular mandates of the program.
2. The **competent** instructor understands the importance of learner motivation (KI) and is able to employ strategies to motivate students in the virtual classroom towards an appropriate learning set (PI). [OO, PR]
Rationale: Motivating the students is a key to providing the proper learning set, increasing student diligence, maintaining student progression through course content, etc.
 - a. The **competent** instructor understands factors that influence student motivation in an online classroom (KI). (Relates to ISBE Standard 5D.)
Rationale: The control of these factors affects student performance.
These factors include but are not limited to:
 - 1) Transactional distance & feelings of isolation.
 - 2) Learning set.
 - 3) Personal context.
 - b. The **competent** instructor acknowledges learner contributions both publicly and privately as appropriate (PI).
Rationale: Appropriate acknowledgement increases motivation and feelings of personal accomplishment.

- c. The **competent** instructor communicates persistently high expectations to the students (PI). [OO, EC, PR]
Rationale: Presenting high expectations helps lead to higher achievement.
 - d. The **competent** instructor encourages students to incorporate their own goals into the course work and engage in practical inquiry. Personal experiences are linked to educational and career goals of students (PI). (See ISBE Standards 3I., 4C., & 4N.) [OO, PR]
Rationale: Such efforts positively contribute to student motivation.
 - e. The **competent** instructor finds additional appropriate means to encourage students to contribute (PI). [EC]
Rationale: This competency represents acknowledgement that motivation is a complex factor, and a wide variety of methods may need to be employed to reach all students.
 - f. The **competent** instructor can judge the adequacy and appropriateness of a given motivational strategy (KI) and state a rationale for that judgment (PI).
Rationale: If one doesn't know why one is doing something, perhaps it shouldn't be done.
 - g. The **exemplary** instructor sets short and long-term goals for the students consistent with the curricular goals of the course and program (PI). (See ISBE Standard 4B & 4K)
Rationale: If the instructor sets goals for the student, the instructor may be more prone to follow-up the accomplishment of those goals. It was included as exemplary since it is also probable that students will set their own goals.
 - h. The **exemplary** instructor will make students aware of how to be successful in the online environment and the given course (PI). [All MVCR courses]
Rationale: For the MVCR program such information is presented within the MVCR orientation that students complete prior to starting the program, and is not the direct responsibility of the instructor. A competent instructor is aware of such information's importance though and can reinforce the information to a student who may have a question. However, such information should be presented at a program level or through a student orientation that may or may not be a part of the given course, thus the listing of this item as exemplary. (See ISBE Standard 5D.)
3. The **competent** online instructor has a clear understanding of various communication methods (KI) and a clear ability to make effective, educational uses of those methods (PI). (Relates to ISBE Standard 7) [EC, MM, OO, PR, SC, TT]
Rationale: Communication is a key to distance education. There are many forms of communication that need to be properly applied to effectively develop a learning relationship among participants and between instructor and students.
- a. The **competent** instructor understands the importance of language in learning (KI). (See ISBE Standard 7A.) [EC]
Rationale: Learning in online discourse is highly dependent on language use.
 - b. The **competent** instructor understands how the type of media used, from text to audio/video, can influence communication (KI). [EC, MM, TT]
Rationale: Since many media formats may be used in online communications, how these can influence communication can effect proper selection of the

communication modality for a given unit of information and student demographic. The medium is the message in the words of McLuhan (1967).

- c. The **competent** instructor understands how the purpose of the given communication can affect both the message intended by the instructor and the message received by the students (KI). (See ISBE Standard 7D.) [EC]
Rationale: Understanding the possibilities of the message received aid in proper wording of instructor communications.
- d. The **competent** instructor understands how cultural, gender, and other demographic distinctions can affect online communications and learning (KI). (See ISBE Standard 7B., 7C., & 7D.) [EC]
Rationale: This understanding can help reduce miscommunication and misinterpretation of communications.
- e. The **competent** instructor appropriately creates, maintains, and organizes online communications in the course to provide for effective teaching and learning (PI). (Relates to ISBE Standard 5A.) [EC, OO, PR]
Rationale: Proper organization helps the student to follow the appropriate threads of information, post in the correct location, and generally understand the flow of course discussions, all of which lead to more effective learning.
- f. The **competent** instructor makes use of a variety of communication means dependent upon the student and course needs (PI). (See ISBE Standard 7I. & 7K.) [EC, PR, SC]
Rationale: Not everything works equally well for everyone.
- g. The **competent** instructor models effective online communication. The instructor uses a transactional not transmissive mode of communication (PI). (See ISBE Standard 7E.) [EC, PR]
Rationale: Students need a model of appropriate behavior in order to understand the expectations placed upon them. Also, transactional modes of communication can lead to increased student involvement and success.
- h. The **competent** instructor actively engages in effective communication with the students (PI). [EC, OO, PR]
Rationale: Without communication, there can be little teaching and direct guidance. The key word is active.
- i. The **competent** instructor has the ability to carry on an internal dialogue in order to formulate effective responses and statements within the course dialogue (KI).
Rationale: In other words, the instructor thinks about what is said before saying/writing it in order to deliver effective educational discourse.
- j. The **competent** instructor is emotive in the communicative mode(s) used in the given course through appropriate use of computer mediated communication paralanguage (PI). [EC, OO, PR]
Rationale: The loss of traditional face-to-face communication paralanguage can lead to a reduction in the fullness of communication. An instructor needs to be able to overcome this issue to help student properly perceive the intended messages.
- k. The **competent** instructor posts items that reflect upon student posts and ideas (PI). [EC, PR]
Rationale: Such posts reduce transactional distance, show the students that the

instructor has actually read their posts, and help the students to interrelate new information being presented by the instructor's post.

- l. The **competent** instructor provides varied opportunities for the students to demonstrate effective communication skills (PI). (See ISBE Standard 7G.) [EC, ID, PR]
Rationale: Even if the course does not focus on discussion, communication is a key to an instructor's ability to assess student learning, reduce transactional distance, receive feedback from students, etc.
- m. The **competent** instructor can judge the effectiveness of the communications taking place (KI) and can state a rationale for that judgment (PI). [EC, PR]
Rationale: There must be an adequate rationale to account for the means and manner of communications employed.
4. The **competent** instructor guides students to knowledge acquisition (PI). (See NETS-T Standard II.A. and ISBE Standards 4. & 6.) [EC, ID, OO, PR, SA, TT]
Rationale: The primary job of the instructor is to form a path that the student can follow to knowledge acquisition and internalization.
 - a. The **competent** instructor respects diverse ways of learning (KI). (See NETS-T Standard III.B. & VI.C.) [ID, OO, PR, SA]
Rationale: Different manners of learning require different manners of instruction.
 - b. The **competent** instructor knows and uses a wide range of activities, information, and technologies that are age and cognitive level appropriate to the audience and appeal to diverse student needs to enhance student learning (KI/PI). (Relates to ISBE Standard 3K., 4M., 4R., 6C., & 6G.) [ID, PR, TT]
Rationale: Applying activities that are not appropriate for the given audience will not result in effective learning.
 - c. The **competent** instructor is able to vary his/her role among instructor, facilitator, coach, collaborator, co-participant, and observer as necessary for the given content and educational needs (PI). (See ISBE Standard 6I.) [EC, PR]
Rationale: Student perceptions of the course tend to be more positive with a flexible instructor.
 - d. The **competent** instructor incorporates active learning into the online classroom (PI). (See ISBE Standard 6G.) [ID, OO, PR]
Rationale: Many argue that actively engaging in the content provides one of the most effective means of learning that content. Actively involving the students aids motivation and learning.
 - e. The **competent** online instructor effectively utilizes student-centered, discussion-oriented pedagogy (PI). (Relates to ISBE Standard 4M. when used in conjunction with other activities.) [EC, ID, OO, PR]
Rationale: In some programs this might be considered an exemplary competency. In the MVCR program, all courses utilize this paradigm though, thus our instructors must be able to effectively teach in such an environment.
 - f. The **competent** instructor links inquiry to genuine problems or issues of interest to the learners. [ID]
Rationale: Such inquiry can increase and accelerate learning.

- g. The **competent** instructor uses questioning effectively (PI). (See ISBE Standard 7F.) [EC, PR]
 Rationale: Such questioning stimulates discussion and leads to student learning.
- h. The **competent** instructor encourages metacognition within students and actively assists linking of new ideas and concepts to already existing ones (PI). (See ISBE Standard 2H.) [All MVCR courses]
 Rationale: Thinking about knowledge and the structure of that knowledge within one's mental schema helps to reinforce it and properly organize it within one's knowledge base.
- 1) The **competent** instructor elicits critical and active reflection from the learners about what they are learning and how it is applied in their own practice (PI).
 Rationale: It may not happen if the instructor does not promote it.
 - 2) The **competent** instructor guides students towards understanding and recognition of their own and others' inferences for validity, timeliness, reliability, and quality (PI).
 Rationale: It is important to direct the reflection that students are undertaking for it to be the most effective and to hit critical areas.
 - 3) The **competent** instructor connects and facilitates the self-connection of student's learning experiences to other content areas and to the student's life as a whole (PI). (See ISBE Standard 1L.)
 Rationale: Most knowledge is in some way interconnected, and drawing upon these connections can help cognitive structures to develop.
- i. The **competent** instructor encourages students to consider alternative explanations of their own experiences. Multiple viewpoints are allowed when appropriate. Multiple 'ways of knowing' are accepted. (See ISBE Standard 1G & 6J. Relates to ISBE Standard 3J.) [EC, ID, OO, PR]
 Rationale: Such encouragement aids formation of proper learning structures that consider a full range of knowledge.
- j. The **competent** instructor understands how a student's conceptions and misconceptions influence learning (KI). (See ISBE Standard 1C).
 Rationale: If misconceptions are not addressed, students will not be as likely to incorporate new knowledge into their internal information structures.
- 1) The **competent** instructor has knowledge of common misconceptions in the field of study (KI).
 Rationale: Knowledge of probable misconceptions is needed in order to address them.
 - 2) The **competent** instructor determines student misconceptions and adapts instruction to enforce proper conceptualization or re-conceptualization by the students (PI). (See ISBE Standard 1J.)
 Rationale: It is important to address the misconceptions that are actually present in order to reformulate a student's cognitive structures.
- k. The **competent** instructor maintains appropriate pacing of course progression (PI). [ID, OO, PR]
 Rationale: Online courses can have special time management issues that the instructor can help students overcome through proper pacing. There is also a need

that students effectively incorporate one piece of knowledge before another is presented in a fashion that requires the earlier knowledge.

- 1) The **competent** instructor provides students time to explore and develop required inquiry, skills, knowledge, etc. (PI).
Rationale: If the time is not provided, they may not develop.
 - 2) The **competent** instructor provides appropriate time for assignment and readings completion. Activities are balanced to help students manage time and load (PI).
Rationale: The modality of online instruction can sometimes lead to student difficulties in time management. Helping this process will keep the students involved with the content as it is delivered rather than constantly trying to catch up.
 - 3) The **competent** instructor presents a timeline or calendar with explicit key points towards successful completion of the course (PI).
Rationale: Same as previous competency.
- l. The **competent** instructor demonstrates immediacy and timeliness (PI). [EC, OO, PR]
Rationale: Online students work anytime and anyplace. An instructor needs to keep up with the students so that they are not hindered in progress and do not begin to feel isolation.
 - m. The **competent** instructor engages students in generating and testing knowledge according to the process of inquiry and standards of evidence of the given context (PI). (See ISBE Standard 1H.)
Rationale: Students should be prepared to function within the context according to the standards of that field.
 - n. The **competent** instructor facilitates the use of learning technologies such as multimedia, simulations, etc. to aid students in reaching course objectives (PI). (See also IV.I. for the design of such instruction) (See ISBE Standard 6K. and NETS-T Standard III.A.) [MM, PR, TT]
Rationale: Providing the proper assistance to the students is necessary for them to effectively use learning technologies. Unlike technical assistance, this item refers to assisting the students in applying technologies in an educationally constructive manner.
 - o. The **competent** instructor demonstrates and expects higher-order, critical thinking and problem solving. Such skills are developed among the students (KI/PI). (See ISBE Standard 6G. When technology is used to develop the skills see NETS-T Standard III.C.)
Rationale: Because such skills are of high value in the workplace.
 - p. The **competent** instructor can state a rationale for the given choice of pedagogical approach (PI). [ID, PR]
Rationale: If the instructor does not know why something is being done, then perhaps it is being done for the wrong reasons or should not have been done in the first place.
 - q. The **exemplary** instructor helps students organize and manage their time (PI). [TM]
Rationale: This competency goes beyond time management aspects listed above

and refers to a direct involvement of an instructor in providing tips to students throughout the course on how to best schedule their activities. Exemplary since it is difficult and not expected for an instructor to hold every student's hands throughout a course.

- r. The **exemplary** instructor uses innovative approaches to knowledge development in students and can state rationales for the use of such approaches (PI).
Rationale: Listed as exemplary because while innovation can lead to increased motivation among other things, it is not a requirement to effectively instruct since effective approaches should already be in use.
- s. The **exemplary** instructor allows student criticism or questioning of instructor's views as appropriate yet maintains a clear position of authority (PI). [PR]
Listed as exemplary since such activities may not be appropriate in a given classroom context and could lead to loss of instructor authority in some cases.
- t. The **exemplary** instructor understands how his/her personal biases may affect instruction (KI). (See ISBE Standard 3F. & 10D.) [PR]
Rationale: Such knowledge will aid the instructor in professional development activities and maintaining a flexibility that helps him/her to reach the largest student audience. However, it is possible that an instructor could still teach somewhat effectively without knowing one's own biases.
- u. The **exemplary** instructor will encourage and expect creativity among the students (PI). (When technology is employed to develop the creativity see NETS-T Standard III.C.) [EC, ID, MM, PR]
Rationale: Creativity by one student may influence that student's motivation and may affect increased learning in other students whose learning is in some way enhanced through the creativity being shown.
- v. The **exemplary** instructor individually tailors instruction to the students when possible and appropriate (PI). [PR]
Rationale: This item may or may not be a core competency depending on the nature of the course. It is anticipated that courses will exist in which individual tailoring is not feasible, but when it is feasible; it should be attempted by the instructor.
- w. The **exemplary** instructor will provide more than one path as appropriate to complete course objectives (PI). (Relates to ISBE Standard 4M.) [ID, PR]
Rationale: Having more than one path to an objective helps address multiple learning styles and ways of knowing, however, since it may not be appropriate or necessary, it is listed as exemplary.
- x. The **exemplary** instructor strives to utilize approaches that are interdisciplinary and integrate multiple content areas into instruction (PI). (See ISBE Standard 4O.)
Rationale: For some programs this will be a core competency. The MVCR program is primarily concerned with instruction, which is cross-disciplinary in its application; however, effective instruction can be accomplished with a narrow approach depending on the program needs.
- y. The **exemplary** instructor's teaching practice is in line with philosophical models in place at the institution. In other words, not only does the instructor have knowledge of the principles stated in I.A.1., but the instructor carries out that belief in his/her observable practice through items listed in competency area IV

(PI).

Rationale: Such practice can lead to a stronger relationship with the institution and perhaps greater job security, but is not necessary for effective instruction.

5. The **competent** instructor utilizes group and collaborative learning in the online class (PI). [All MVCR courses use group work]

Rationale: In addition to simple discussion questions, all MVCR courses utilize some form of social, group, or collaborative activities. Examples include wikis, group projects, and hypothetical cross-analysis. These competencies may not be core in all programs.

- a. The **competent** instructor understands the dynamics of online cooperative and group work (KI). (Relates to ISBE Standard 5C.)

Rationale: Online group work, and group work in general, has many issues that need to be understood in order to have successful group experiences by the students.

- b. The **competent** instructor develops and utilizes collaborative activities and group work as appropriate to meet the needs of the given content and audience. (Relates to ISBE Standard 4M.)

Key items include:

- 1) The **competent** instructor uses a range of member roles in collaborative exercises (PI).
- 2) The **competent** instructor keeps groups at an appropriate size (PI).
- 3) The **competent** instructor assigns group tasks that result in a product that the students can use (PI).
- 4) The **competent** instructor keeps group discussions focused on task as appropriate (PI).
- 5) The **competent** instructor promotes effective leadership within groups (PI).

6. The **competent** online instructor can monitor student activity to help manage student learning (PI). (See NETS-T Standard II.E.) [PR]

Rationale: Monitoring the students is required to actively perceive their progress in a distance education setting and to provide for proper modifications when appropriate.

- a. The **competent** instructor can analyze individual and group performance in order to continually redesign the learning experience to meet the students' needs (KI/PI). (See ISBE Standard 2G. & 5E.)

Rationale: Redesign may become necessary if student needs are not being met.

- b. The **competent** instructor identifies differences in approaches to learning such as multiple intelligences in students (PI). (See also IV.B.2.) (See ISBE Standard 3D.)

Rationale: Identification of these differences can help the instructor to successfully address that students needs and remove potential barriers to learning.

- c. The **competent** instructor is able to determine if and when a student is struggling (KI).

Rationale: If a struggling student is not identified, the student will continue to struggle and possibly fail to learn.

- d. The **competent** instructor assists students having difficulties at the appropriate time and through the appropriate method (PI).

Rationale: Such assistance is necessary to maintain student progress towards course objectives.

- e. The **competent** instructor can state a rationale for such judgments in a-d (PI).
Rationale: If the instructor does not know why something is being done, then it is likely not being done when necessary or in a way that aids student learning.
 - f. The **exemplary** instructor is able to use appropriate technologies to assist in student monitoring (PI). (See ISBE Standard 8M.)
Rationale: Technologies such as student tracking in an online course management system, can aid student monitoring, but are not a necessity.
7. The **competent** instructor evaluates the effectiveness of instruction (PI). [ID, PR]
Rationale: Evaluation provides for improvement.
- a. The **competent** online instructor makes use of assessment results, course evaluations, and personal reflections (See II.B.2.) to insure that technology is appropriately applied by both the teacher and the students for the given context leading to student learning or other needs such as effective communications. (NETS-T Standard IV.C. & V.B. and ISBE Standard 6H., 6N., & 8I.)
Rationale: As stated, this competency insures proper technology usage for effective learning and communication.
 - b. The **competent** instructor makes use of student evaluations, assessment results, personal reflections, and other feedback within a course in order to improve practice and maximize student learning (PI). (See ISBE Standard 6H. & 8D.)
Rationale: Same as previous competency, but as relates to aspects other than the technology usage.
8. The **competent** online instructor addresses the diverse needs of the students including but not limited to cultural needs, economic needs, and students with disabilities (PI). (See ISBE Standard 6M. Relates to ISBE Standard 3C.) (Understanding of such needs as a knowledge indicator is given under competency V.A.5, 7 & 6.) [ID, MM, PR, TT]
Rationale: Addressing such needs will help to maintain student progress, motivation, and learning.
- a. The **competent** instructor designs learning experiences and utilizes adaptive devices/technologies that enable students with diverse backgrounds and abilities to experience the content (PI). (See ISBE Standard 1M. and NETS-T Standards II.A., III.B., & VI.B.)
Rationale: In its absence, there may be students who for one reason or another fail due to lack of access to or understanding of the content.
 - b. The **competent** instructor will facilitate equitable and effective access to technology resources required by the given course for all students with attention to diverse backgrounds, cultures, and abilities (PI). (NETS-T Standard VI.B., VI.C., & VI.E.)
Rationale: This competency is a legal and ethical requirement in many cases.
 - c. The **exemplary** instructor understands the importance of cultural diversity (KI) and makes an attempt to learn about and incorporate this understanding into instruction (PI). (See ISBE Standard 3E. & 3I.)
Rationale: In a culturally diverse class, this competency will increase in importance, but a successful course may not require cultural diversity in delivery as long as possible cultural impacts on communications and assessment are accounted for.

- d. The **exemplary** instructor supports, through specific strategies, the acquisition of knowledge by students whose first language is not English (PI). (See ISBE Standard 3B.)
Rationale: In situations where students are minimally fluent in the primary course language (English in the MVCR program), this becomes a core competency since communication is necessary for effective learning.
- 9. The **competent** online instructor models and teaches legal and ethical practices related to the use of technology and the online environment (PI). (See NETS-T Standard VI.A.) [CR, TT]
Rationale: Listed as core because an instructor failing to model legal and ethical practices can undermine various course values such as student academic honesty.

VI. *Assessment Roles (Assessing Student Learning and Abilities)*

The **competent** online instructor is aware of online assessment issues and can effectively assess students using a variety of techniques in the online classroom designed not just to determine student progress but to aid in student learning. (See NETS-T Standard IV. and ISBE Standard 8.)

- A. The **competent** instructor understands the purpose of assessment in terms of student learning and evaluation (KI). (See ISBE Standard 8A.) [PR, SA]
Rationale: The key here is that the instructor needs to understand that assessment is more than a means of measurement and comparison, but a means to aid student learning.
- B. The **competent** online instructor understands that online assessments can provide unique difficulties to online students (KI). [OO, SA]
Rationale: Online education has a set of issues that can add difficulty for the student trying to complete an assessment. Knowledge of these issues makes it possible to address them.
Examples of such difficulties include but are not limited to:
 1. Wondering how, where, and in what form to submit assignments.
 2. Difficulty understanding instructions without immediate ability to ask for and receive assistance.
 3. Wondering where the student stands in regards to successful course completion.
 4. Difficulty managing time.
 5. Difficulty performing activities due to disability or language difficulties.
- C. The **competent** instructor understands how to select, construct, and utilize a rational assessment strategy or instrument for a given context (KI). (See ISBE Standard 8E.) [SA]
Rationale: Such knowledge is needed to construct and implement the proper strategy to best assess student progress and aid the students in learning.
 1. The **competent** instructor respects diverse ways of applying knowledge (KI).
Rationale: Not only will learning styles vary among students, but also their ability to relay what has been learned. Respecting this fact allows students to be assessed to their strengths for possibly a more accurate assessment of their knowledge.
 2. The **competent** instructor understands the purpose and effectiveness of various assessment methods in different contexts (KI). (See ISBE Standard 8B.)

- Rationale: Such knowledge is needed to select the proper method for the given context.
3. The **competent** instructor appropriately makes use of a variety of assessment methods that appeal to a variety of learner preferences, abilities, intelligences, etc. (PI). (See ISBE Standard 8J. See NETS-T Standard IV.A. when technology applied)
Rationale: Variety adds to student motivation and allows for a larger course appeal and success rate based on student differences.
 4. The **competent** instructor makes use of assessments that directly address the course objectives (PI).
Rationale: The instructor should address that the students are actually learning the intended materials.
 5. The **competent** instructor will provide assessments that challenge the students (PI).
Rationale: If the students are not challenged, then they may not push themselves to achieve beyond a basal level.
 6. The **competent** instructor can state a rationale for assessment choice (PI).
Rationale: If the instructor doesn't know why s/he is doing what s/he is doing, then s/he shouldn't be doing it.
 7. The **competent** instructor uses appropriate scoring rubrics and grading (PI).
Rationale: Assessments should address actual course objectives and what was learned. Rubrics help insure the correct items are assessed. They also provide students an outline of assignment expectations and provide for some level of objectivity in grading.
 - a. The **competent** instructor can provide a clear pedagogical rationale for grading method and/or rubric use and included criteria (PI).
Rationale: If the instructor doesn't know why something is being done, it probably shouldn't be done.
 - b. The **competent** instructor provides students with a clear delineation of how assignments will be or have been graded (PI).
Rationale: Reduces assignment confusion, helps students meet objectives, and allows students to learn from incorrect answers.
 - c. The **competent** instructor is not subject to grade inflation issues (PI).
Rationale: If poor work received high marks, students will have reduced motivation to produce quality work.
 - d. The **competent** instructor can judge the effectiveness, adequacy, reliability, and any bias in questions and activities used (KI/PI). (See ISBE Standard 8C.)
Rationale: Such judgments allow for the improvement of practice over time.
 8. The **competent** instructor will build participation into assessments and course grading.
Rationale: In the MVCR program, student involvement is a key to a successful course based upon the instructional design and underlying paradigms built into the course frameworks. This is therefore listed as a core competency.
 9. The **exemplary** online instructor provides for a choice of assignment by the students when appropriate (PI).
Rationale: The instructor can provide for variability in assignments during the course without providing for variability in a single assessment, however, providing such choice can aid student motivation and achievement.

- D. The **competent** online instructor provides very thorough explanations of all online assignments including both how to complete the assignment and where/how to submit the completed work (PI). [ID, PR, SA]
Rationale: Addresses unique issues that occur in the online classroom such as difficulty students have in getting instant feedback on questions they have about an assignment.
- E. The **competent** instructor provides adequate time for learners to state questions, make comments, and display concern about assessment procedures and activities (PI). [EC, ID, PR, SA]
Rationale: Addresses some of the unique issues that occur in the online classroom such as the difficulty students have in getting instant feedback on questions they may have about an assignment.
- F. The **competent** instructor provides adequate time for effective completion of the assignments for the given student audience and ability levels (PI). [PR, SA]
Rationale: Although the time should be limited to reduce cheating, to challenge the students, and to effectively allow for delineations of student achievement as appropriate, an adequate amount of time needs to be provided for effective completion and adequate achievement by the students.
- G. The **competent** instructor maintains an up-to-date grade book or portfolio of student work (PI). (See ISBE Standard 8L.) [SA]
Rationale: This maintenance allows both students and instructor to monitor progress. If monitoring is not conducted, students may drop out of the learning context.
- H. The **competent** instructor understands the importance of (KI) and provides for student feedback (PI). (See ISBE Standard 7H.) [EC, OO, PR, SA, TO]
Rationale: Feedback is a core motivator of work, helps students learn from mistakes, demonstrates instructor presence in the learning of students, etc.
1. The **competent** instructor quickly acknowledges receipt of assignments when not built into the course management system (PI).
Rationale: Without acknowledgement, students do not know the assignment was received. With it, the students know that the instructor is involved in their learning and assessing their activities.
 2. The **competent** instructor bases clear and concise feedback on clear rationales (PI).
Rationale: Respect of the instructor by the students is improved when the students understand why they are getting the given feedback.
 3. The **competent** instructor provides a prompt turnaround time when grading or marking-up assessments (PI).
Rationale: The quicker the students get their work returned, the less their feeling of isolation, the more likely the assignment context is still fresh in their minds, the greater their respect for the instructor, etc.
 4. The **competent** instructor provides constructive and supportive feedback and critiques with suggestions for improvement when appropriate. Achievements, errors, and the causes of errors are identified (PI).

Rationale: Such feedback provides an opportunity for students to learn from mistakes and be motivated by successes.

5. The **competent** instructor communicates course achievement with the students in general terms and in terms of progress towards stated objectives (PI). (See ISBE Standard 8L.)

Rationale:

6. The **competent** instructor maintains continual feedback throughout the course (PI).
Rationale: This competency provides that formative feedback is important as well as summative.

7. The **competent** instructor focuses feedback on specifics when possible (PI).
Rationale: If the feedback is too general, the student will not be provided with a means for improvement.

8. The **competent** instructor uses multidimensional feedback – covers content, presentation, attitude, grammar, etc. (PI).
Rationale: The more aspects that feedback covers, the more aspects of student learning can be affected.

9. The **competent** instructor can judge the adequacy of feedback for a given student and present a rationale for that judgment (PI).
Rationale: If the feedback is inadequate or not understood, then the student may not learn from it.

10. The **competent** instructor provides a mechanism by which students can ask about or determine by some means their progress in the course (PI).
Rationale: Such a mechanism is necessary for student self-monitoring of progress.

- I. The **competent** instructor can make use of appropriate technologies to assist in conducting assessments and interpreting results (PI). (See ISBE Standard 8P.) [SA, TT]
Rationale: Listed as a core competency here since technological methods of assessment are the norm in online education.

- J. The **competent** instructor is aware of and takes account of academic honesty issues in the virtual classroom (KI/PI). [OO, SA]
Rationale: These issues are highly debated due to the nature of online education in general.

1. The **competent** instructor understands the issues involved with academic honesty in the online / distance learning environment (KI).

Rationale: Instructors can curb academic dishonesty through proper pedagogy and assessment techniques when they have a clear understanding of all of the issues involved. Such knowledge will increase the instructor's ability to make any necessary instructional design decisions though.

These issues include but are not limited to:

- a. Reasons for student cheating such as lack of time, societal acceptance, and lack of understanding of what constitutes cheating.
- b. Administrative support or lack of support for policy adherence concerning academic honesty.
- c. Keeping distance students from cheating when visual presence is not available.

2. The **competent** instructor has knowledge of methods for reducing the probability and possibility of cheating in the virtual classroom (KI). (Relates to ISBE Standard 11C.)
Rationale: Since academic honesty is a primary concern in the field of distance education, instructors need knowledge of the issues involved and an ability to overcome them in order to validate the quality of their course(s).
 3. The **competent** instructor implements strategies to reduce academic honesty in the online classroom (PI).
Rationale: Knowledge is not enough if it is not put into practice to keep students honest.
- K. The **competent** instructor can make appropriate and legal provisions for the adequate assessment of students with special needs or disabilities (PI). (See ISBE Standard 8F., 8G., 8O., & 8Q.) [SA]
Rationale: Such provisions are an ethical and legal requirement.
- L. The **exemplary** instructor actively engages students in self-assessment and skill practicing activities to encourage them to become personally involved in monitoring their own learning and setting personal goals for achievement (PI). (See ISBE Standard 8K.) [ID, PR, SA]
Rationale: While an aid to personal development and continued learning after the class, the student may effectively be able to learn and retain the content without personally monitoring their progress if they successfully complete assignments and complete the required readings and other requirements of the course.
- M. The **exemplary** instructor provides a pre-assessment of student knowledge (PI). [ID, SA]
Rationale: Although a preset curriculum can be utilized, modifications in design of instruction based on student prior knowledge require an assessment of that knowledge. Pre-assessment may be used to:
1. Assist in instructional methods, organization, and level.
 2. Function as an ice-breaking activity when properly constructed.
 3. Determine growth during the course.
- N. The **exemplary** instructor provides sample assignments when appropriate and possible (PI). [SA]
Rationale: While not a requirement of student learning, they can aid in understanding assignment requirements. The key is to provide such samples in a manner that does not lead to students mimicking the model.
- O. The **exemplary** instructor reminds students of important assignment deadlines (PI). [SA]
Rationale: While this information is readily available to the students, not all student keep up to date, and an email or other communication can be helpful, especially for struggling students.
- P. The **exemplary** instructor has a deep understanding of measurement theory and statistics (KI). (See ISBE Standard 8C.)

Rationale: Such knowledge can help the instructor decide placement and selection of assessments as well as determining bias in questions.

VII. *Social Processes and Presence (Social Roles)*

The **competent** instructor recognizes that a social aspect to education exists. The instructor will effectively incorporate that aspect into the teaching and learning process with the intent of creating a learning community.

A. Community of Learners:

The **competent** instructor creates an appropriate environment for learning that encompasses elements beyond just the virtual classroom design itself (PI). (See ISBE Standard 5 and parts of 9.) [EC, ID, OO, PR]

Rationale: Unless study is independent, students are not alone. An effective community element within a course can improve student learning and reduce feelings of isolation and alienation.

1. The **competent** online instructor recognizes the importance of creating an effective learning environment in the virtual classroom (KI). [EC, ID, OO, PR, SO]

Rationale: Without recognizing its importance, the instructor may not develop or maintain an effective learning community in order to increase student learning and satisfaction.

2. The **competent** instructor understands collaborative processes and possesses the skills necessary to carry them out (KI). (See ISBE Standards 9D. & 9E.) [EC, ID, OO, PR]

Rationale: Perhaps related to the paradigm employed by MVCR and not core in all programs, this understanding can be a requirement in the formation of a community of learners.

3. The **competent** instructor understands how individuals influence groups (KI). (See ISBE Standard 5B.) [EC]

Rationale: In any course including student-student interaction, a single abusive, authoritarian, or other disruptive personality can lead to student dissatisfaction and drop out.

4. The **competent** online instructor has an understanding of how to effectively create a community of learners in an online classroom, promoting positive behavior and learning among diverse students (KI). (Relates to ISBE Standard 5A., 5H., 5K., & 5M.) [EC, ID, OO, PR, SO]

Rationale: Encouraging positive behavior increases student participation and satisfaction and reduces disruptive behavior.

5. The **competent** instructor facilitates a community in which individual differences are respected (PI). (See ISBE Standard 3G., 3N., 5H., 5L., & 5K.) [EC, ID, OO, PR, SA, SO]

Rationale: Doing so reduces conflict and can increase students' abilities to reflect on self and the ideas of others.

6. The **competent** online instructor involves learners immediately in the development of the course atmosphere including ice-breaking activities (PI). (See ISBE Standard 5K.) [All MVCR courses]

Rationale: An effective atmosphere can take time to develop, especially online.

Providing time will increase the community and student ownership of that community and the subsequent learning.

- a. A **competent** instructor provides time for students to acclimate to the course. [All MVCR courses]
Rationale: Because it takes time, time has to be provided (PI).
 - b. A **competent** instructor is able to judge and provide a rationale for determining when that time has been met (KI/PI). [PR]
Rationale: One does not want to take too much time away from content delivery and acquisition.
 - c. The **exemplary** instructor provides a space for students to enter information about themselves (PI). [All MVCR courses]
Rationale: Biographies and other activities help students get to know one another, but some argue any requirement of such reduces individual learner's choice of anonymity to some degree, thus this item is listed as exemplary.
7. The **competent** instructor understands, applies, and promotes interactivity among students and between students and instructor (KI/PI). [EC, ID, OO, PR]
Rationale: Such is required for synergistic relationships helpful to student satisfaction and learning.
- a. The **competent** instructor incorporates group and collaborative assessments into the online class (KI). (See IV.D.6.)
Rationale: In the paradigm employed in the MVCR program, group work is used in all courses, thus the instructor must be able to incorporate them. In some programs, this may be listed as exemplary.
 - b. The **competent** instructor understands how important continual, effective communication is between the instructor and the students, as well as among the students to the development and maintenance of a community of learners in an online course (KI).
Rationale: Such communication is required to reduce transactional distance and possible feelings of isolation by students that might reduce motivation and learning.
 - c. The **competent** instructor builds interactivity elements into the course assignments (PI).
Rationale: These elements can help students complete assignments, decrease feelings of isolation, and help build a community of learners by providing student support mechanisms.
 - d. The **competent** instructor provides clearly defined purposes for interactivity in the course (PI).
Rationale: Knowing why they are important and available can increase student motivation to participate.
 - e. The **competent** instructor provides clear expectations of interactivity. Posting requirements are clearly provided for each activity and for the course as a whole (PI).
Rationale: These expectations aid student time management and help to reduce possible frustration when an unknown expectation is not met.
 - f. The **competent** instructor can state the rationales for interactivity elements being employed in the course (PI).

Rationale: A competent instructor should know why something is being done. For example, it can be needed to help explain the use to the students.

- g. The **competent** instructor has an appropriate activity level (approximately every 48 hours minimum) for which students are made aware (PI).

Rationale: This activity helps increase instructor presence, thus reducing student isolation and increasing student satisfaction and ability and propensity to ask questions of the instructor.

- h. The **competent** instructor models, coaches, and instructs on appropriate and expected behaviors and posting requirements. The instructor shows active and interactive involvement (PI).

Rationale: Modeling the behavior will help students to do the same.

- i. The **competent** instructor possesses adequate patience in order for students to develop their own threads of communication (KI/PI). The **competent** instructor does not dominate discussions through the wording or mannerisms exposed during communications (PI).

Rationale: An effective instructor does not want to dominate the discussion and hinder student involvement. Increased student involvement will increase student ownership of content and allows students to work through problems as appropriate in order to increase learning.

- j. The **exemplary** instructor will find ways to encourage and foster sharing by and from the students (PI).

Rationale: Additional items are likely to be needed to meet the special needs of a specific classroom, but are exemplary since they may not be necessary of all instruction or even a majority.

8. The **competent** instructor continuously judges the climate of the course to determine if successful performance is being facilitated. The instructor can state a rationale for such judgments (PI). (See ISBE Standard 5L.) [PR]

Rationale: Without this judgment, the instructor cannot know that it is happening.

9. The **competent** online instructor will provide a content free zone for off topic discussions (PI). [All MVCR courses]

Rationale: Such a zone has been shown to be extremely useful in the MVCR program at increasing community and student involvement, but studies without such a zone have not been conducted to warrant this as a core competency as of yet, and some authors report that content free zones already exist outside of the classroom and do not need to be recreated, thus it may not be a core competency in all programs.

B. Community of Practice:

The **competent** instructor understands the collaborative processes involved in instruction and works with other members of various communities to further educational goals. [All MVCR courses]

Rationale: A successful instructor will accept the assistance of others in order to help reduce stress and workload and to increase positive professional relationships.

1. The **competent** instructor understands the need to collaborate with other professionals in online education when possible and appropriate (KI). (See ISBE Standard 10F. Relates to ISBE Standard 9I.)

Rationale: Activities such as guest lecturers, information validity checking, staying up-to-date in a field, etc. are all facilitated by this understanding.

2. The **exemplary** instructor demonstrates the willingness and ability to co-teach or co-plan instruction when applicable. The competent instructor is flexible when working with colleagues (PI). (See ISBE Standard 9S.)

Rationale: Guest lectures shown to be a positive influence on student satisfaction and motivation to participate.

3. The **exemplary** online instructor communicates and collaborates with the larger academic and social communities of relevance to enhance student learning and personal growth. (See NETS-T Standard V.D. and ISBE Standards 9H. & 9M.)

Rationale: In some cases, such collaborations can increase student learning as well as facilitate possible research partnerships.

4. The **exemplary** online instructor has a presence within the online education community of practice and understands the importance of such participation (KI) (Relates to ISBE Standard 11E). In practice, the exemplary online instructor will contribute knowledge to the profession and the community of practice (PI) (relates to ISBE Standard 11I).

Rationale: Exemplary, since such a presence not really necessary unless such is one's practice, as in the MVCR program.

C. Cultural Competency:

The **competent** instructor understands that cultural differences among students will affect the manner in which those students are willing and able to participate in an online community (KI). [OO]

Rationale: Distance education is international and multicultural.

D. Conflict Management:

The **competent** online instructor understands is capable at managing conflict in the virtual classroom (KI/PI). (Relates to ISBE Standard 5A. & 11C. and more directly 5G. & 5I.) [EC, OO, PR, SO]

Rationale: Conflict can destroy a learning community, reduce effective learning and student satisfaction, and lower retention.

1. The **competent** online instructor understands that online communications can be misconstrued (KI).

Rationale: This understanding leads to more careful language selection and a greater understanding when conflicts do occur.

2. The **competent** online instructor understands that there is a tendency that online personalities can be more volatile than face-to-face personalities (KI).

Rationale: An increased recognition of this tendency helps an instructor understand the cause of conflict and increase an instructor's ability to avoid conflict.

3. The **competent** instructor maintains an environment free from intimidation and otherwise in proper decorum (PI). (See ISBE Standard 5I.)

Rationale: Such maintenance helps to reduce conflict.

4. The **competent** instructor swiftly recognizes conflict (KI).

Rationale: Recognition is required in order to address it.

5. The **competent** instructor has knowledge of procedures for handling student conflict in an online forum (KI) and is capable of conducting such procedures (PI). However, groups and individuals are given an opportunity to resolve conflicts on their own when appropriate.
Rationale: Must overcome conflict to limit consequences, minimize any damage, and get students quickly back on task.
6. The **competent** instructor follows up conflict resolution with students involved (PI).
Rationale: Student satisfaction and learning will increase if the instructor verifies that the student has regained focus and returned to an appropriate learning set. Future conflict can also be avoided due to unresolved conflict.
7. The **competent** instructor can gauge the appropriateness and state the rationale for any procedure undertaking to subdue student conflict (KI/PI).
Rationale: As always, a competent instructor should know why something is being done in order to assure that it is the correct action.

E. Social Presence:

The **competent** instructor maintains an online social presence (PI). [EC, OO, PR]
Rationale: In some paradigms, this may be considered exemplary, but any social aspect to the course will help increase student satisfaction and development of appropriate communities for learning. A primary focus here is instructor approachability.

1. The **competent** instructor models open and honest communication with students (PI).
Rationale: Required so that students will be able to do the same, including revealing possible problems that they may have.
Methods of such modeling may include:
 - a. The instructor creates a sense of approachability.
 - b. The instructor takes the initiative in sharing with the group.
 - c. Instructor-student interaction is encouraged.
2. The **competent** instructor provides affective as well as effective responses. The instructor shows an ability to convey compassion, humanity, patience, and emotion at a distance (PI).
Rationale: Such activity helps reduce instructor-student transactional distance and increases student ability to community concerns to the instructor.
3. The **competent** instructor properly treats the students (PI). (See ISBE Standard 11P.)
Rationale: The students, who legally and rationally deserve proper treatment and respect, are the life blood of the institution.
Aspects of such treatment include but are not limited to:
 - a. Demonstrating positive regard for all students.
 - b. Not purposefully coercing, berating, humiliating, or demeaning students.

F. Socializing Agent:

The **competent** online instructor is both a knowledge builder and social agent among the students (KI/PI). [EC, OO, PR]

Rationale: In the absence of a 'campus' for socializing activity, such may need to be provided in the course itself.

1. The **competent** online instructor understands the social nature of the classroom and how it can contribute to the success of the students (KI).

- Rationale: Such understanding needed to effectively reduce student feelings of isolation, increase active learning, and increase synergistic relationships in the classroom.
2. The **competent** instructor encourages and builds student-student interaction, cooperation, and collaboration (PI).
Rationale: Same as F.1. above.
 3. The **competent** instructor clearly presents norms, performance guidelines, expectations, and code of conduct to the group or negotiates these items through a collaborative process (PI).
Rationale: This presentation is needed so students realize expectations yielding decreased conflict and increased participation.

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- * All references marked with an asterisk were used in the formulation of competencies.

Acknowledgements:

I would like to thank the participants of the 2006 Illinois Faculty Summer Institute Instructor Competencies Learning Team for their input and critiques. Thanks also to the Illinois Virtual Campus and Illinois Online Network administration for help, especially in proofreading. Thanks also to the MVCR instructors for their input. Furthermore, thanks to the hundreds of students in the program that took the time to complete surveys. Thanks finally to anyone that I may have inadvertently failed to mention.