Master Online Teacher Competencies

Virgil E. Varvel Jr.
University of Illinois
Department of Outreach and Public Service
Illinois Virtual Campus / Illinois Online Network

Abstract

Online education continues to flourish across the globe. As we pass from the early adopter phase into acceptance by the masses, the number of instructors taking part in online education grows. Although qualified in their field, many instructors have no education in the methods of instruction or facilitation. Those that have such training often do not have any additional training or experience specifically in the field of distance or online education. But what should such training consist of, and what additional faculties of an individual help one to be a proficient online educator? Furthermore, once a listing of such skills or competencies has been developed, how can or should they be assessed and when should such an assessment occur? This paper discusses the process of constructing a competency document for online instructors. In addition, issues and axioms that developed as an online instructor competency list, geared to the needs of a particular program, was generated. Implications for assessment of program and individuals are discussed. The competencies that were delineated are then discussed followed by the rationales for their choice and categorization.

Introduction

Online Education and the Online Education Instructor

In its most basic form, online education is the use of asynchronous (and sometimes synchronous) computer networks in order to instruct students. Although the use of networked information technologies for education dates back to at least the 1960's and PLATO systems (Engelbart, 1962), online education began a rapid growth with the advent of visual browsing software and advanced information technologies in the 1990's. Today, online curriculum is flourishing across the globe (Allen & Seaman, 2003). Consider that according to the Illinois Virtual Campus (http://www.ivc.illinois.edu), 7168 online course sections were offered in Illinois in the spring/winter of 2006. The California Virtual Campus (http://pdc.cvc.edu/common/) likewise had greater than 9000 courses offered in the 2003-2004 school year. In some cases the demand may even be exceeding course availability. Many reasons for this growth can be postulated as extensions from the need for distance education in general such as the need for quick growth in education systems (Perraton, Creed, & Robinson, 2002), the demand for courses ahead of resources (Singh, 1982), the need for additional qualifications, personal fulfillment, and degree completion (Anderson, 1993; Barrett, 1998; Haehl, 1996; Peters, 1992). In any case, one item that online education succeeds at is allowing for an instructional interaction previously difficult to obtain or unavailable in distance education. With this interaction possibility, online instruction usually includes the creation of an effective learning environment through mediated activities and/or materials dispersal. These are not easy tasks or responsibilities, but numerous researchers have demonstrated that online instruction can be effective and of high quality (Phipps & Merisotis, 1999).

Despite the educational need and growth as well as the reported successes, distance education is still looked down upon as less than equal to its face-to-face counterpart (Phipps & Merisotis, 1999; Twigg, 2001). Items such as educational effectiveness, camaraderie among students, and other factors considered a common aspect of traditional education, whether actually present or not, are questioned in distance education (Russell, 1999). As an answer to these and other points, numerous benchmarks have been developed to measure the successes and failures of online education from an administrative, student, instructor, or support perspective (Broadbent & Cotter, 2003; Horton, 2001; ION, 2006; Lorenzo & Moore, 2002; Phillips, Phillips, & Zuniga, 2000; Phipps & Harvey, 2000; Sonwalkar, 2002; & WebCT, 2004). Effective use of the Internet to extend the educational experience beyond the limitations of both time and space while maintaining interactivity and high quality instruction has begun to overcome many perceived limitations of the medium.

Just as a quality course is important, quality instruction is also important. Although no accurate statistics exist for the number of instructors currently teaching online courses, a conservative estimate would place the number at over 50,000 in the United States. Most of these instructors have no formal education training, relying primarily on experience both as a student and face-to-face instructor. While perhaps not the ideal situation, clearly there are many quality courses being taught by quality faculty having only this traditional experiential knowledge. Usually though, neither of these experiences exists in the online context as one moves into online instruction, leaving one to ask, just how ready are instructors for teaching online. Furthermore, the technology surrounding online education keeps changing so rapidly, that this readiness may be in a state of flux.

As an online faculty development program, the Making the Virtual Classroom a Reality (MVCR, http://www.ion.uillinois.edu/courses/) program is concerned with producing quality online instructors who meet this readiness state. One step in such an activity is to define exactly what a quality instructor is and then devise a program that can produce such a state in an individual. This paper represents the first step in that process. Herein, the competencies required or at least recommended for a quality online instructor are discerned.

What Is a Competency?

Before defining the various competencies of a quality instructor, an explanation of what is meant by a competency in the first place should be addressed. One could come up with any number of definitions of the term competency. In the formulation of a definition for competency in this paper, numerous resources were utilized. Various lexical definitions (American Heritage Publishing Company, 2000; Merriam-Webster, 1997; Miller, 2006; MSN, 2006) were considered along with implied definitions among the various competency documents referenced in this report. A one-hour brainstorming session among Illinois educational faculty was conducted at the 2006 Illinois Faculty Summer Institute (FSI, http://www.ion.uillinois.edu/institutes/fsi/2006/) at which the definition of competency was discussed. Once all of the sources had been compiled and carefully considered, a definition that expressed the intent of competency in an online education setting was generated. Instructors within the MVCR program then commented on the tentative definition before a final version was accepted. Herein, competency will refer to *appropriate prior knowledge, skills, attitudes, and abilities in a given context that adjust and develop with time and needs in order to effectively and efficiently accomplish a task and that are measured against a minimum standard.* The task under consideration is that of a teacher in an online classroom context.

But what does it mean to be competent? It is more than simply an alignment to a competency document. The document is only a guide laying out the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and abilities expected in a competent instructor. To be competent is not the awareness, the attainment, or even the knowledge of the various attributes within the document, although all of these play a part. To be competent is the juxtaposition of this knowledge with the application of that knowledge in a teaching practice. In other words, a competent individual is *one who effectively and efficiently accomplishes a task [instructs] in a given context [digital distance education] using appropriate knowledge, skills, attitudes, and abilities that have adjusted and developed with time and needs*. These individuals are who is sought after for instructing online courses.

Purposes of a Competency Document

In some way, the knowledge, skills, attitudes, abilities, etc. that comprise a competent online instructor need to be articulated and organized into a competency document in order to assess one's competence in the given context. In other words, it is one thing to say that an individual is competent, while it is another thing to say that an individual possesses a given set of skills as determined in a given way. For this purpose, an organized representation of criteria for competence needs to be developed. The first purpose of a competency document is therefore to define in functional and, when appropriate, observable terms the abilities and expectations of one labeled as competent.

A competency model can serve many additional purposes. The first purpose above may seem self-evident, but several additional reasons exist for the value and purpose of a competency document that may not be recognized at first glance. For example, few online educational systems move beyond the axiomatic acceptance that their instructors are competent and provide documentation of their interpretation of competency and the criteria under which competency is assigned to parties within that system. By providing such information, the institution speaks to the quality of the program, its instructors, and any courses offered. The expectations of an administration become clear to present and potential instructors. Furthermore, the expectations that a prospective student can have of instructors and in some ways the courses they teach are spelled out. In a way, the quality of the program and its instructors can be advertised through competency models.

Another purpose for a competency document is to help instructors lay out a professional development plan. In other words, it is not so much intended as a test of whether one is or is not competent, but rather a listing of goals for which one can strive to increase one's competency over time. The document provides instructors with attainable goals in their lifelong learning plans.

With such a prospect, another purpose reveals itself. Not only can a competency document serve as a guide for faculty, it can serve as a guide for those charged with providing faculty development services. If an analysis of faculty shows a given skill set is lacking, then that skill set should be developed. Essential learning objectives geared to achieve a core level of competency among participants can be used to design a faculty development program. Courses within the program can be designed to insure that all appropriate competencies are developed by the program.

Finally, a competency document can have special purpose in an education program aimed at online educators. It is important to outline the skills that students are expected to possess upon completion of a teacher education program. When the skills are so outlined, the students know prior to enrollment what they will learn in the program. Furthermore, competencies developed within the program can be linked to portfolio systems for those completing the program. Participants can then leave the program with a means to demonstrate their abilities. Linking artifacts to a competency system can provide a tangible means for both the participant and potential employers to describe someone as a master online teacher.

Issues Involved

Despite the many purposes and uses that a competency document fulfills, issues still remain. During the creation of this document, many issues revealed themselves. Some of these issues were alluded to when looking at the purposes above.

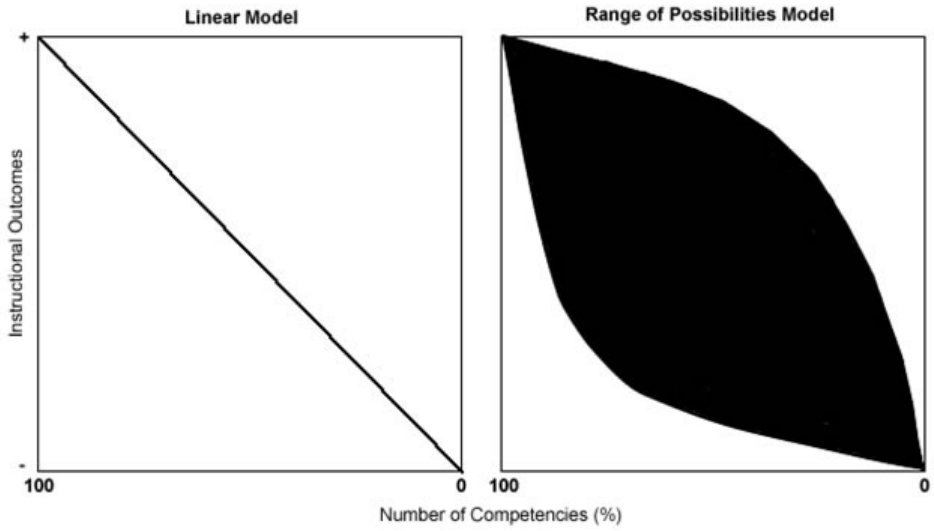
A primary issue involves the institutional mindset, meaning from what perspective does an administration approach instructor competencies. Is the purpose for the document seen as a list of requirements, or is it a goal setting formula used to help those planning to teach online? In practice, the primary purpose of a competency document should not be an outline for faculty hiring or

retention decisions. Rather than requirements, they should be seen as expectations or goals. Expectations for faculty are very helpful in providing direction and an understanding of their roles. Placing too much weight on a single aspect of an instructor, however, denies that other factors such as experience, actual competency requirements for the given teaching position, social and professional networks, publications, research, student learning, student satisfaction, etc. are all important considerations of faculty quality. That being said, it is still possible that a competency document can be referenced in hiring and retention decisions, and it inevitably may be so, but it should not be intended as the primary weight in such decisions.

Consider also that having or not having one or more competencies does not make one less competent in general, but simply not as knowledgeable in a given area in a manner which may affect instructional effectiveness. Teaching as a whole requires a complex association of many skills, and the necessary associations may vary widely among contexts. At times, there may be one competency that is more important than others, and at other times, a large number of competencies may be necessary. Furthermore, while two instructors may have unequal competencies, the one with fewer overall competencies may have higher abilities in the ones that are possessed. The end result may be equivalent teaching practice.

Figure 1 graphically demonstrates that competency is not a linear model. Rather, it is a range of possibilities for which successful teaching may or may not result based upon unknown factors. Other important factors in any successful instructional event will include course design, student variables (such as prior knowledge, online learning experience, intrinsic motivation, etc.), technology aspects, social context and world events, etc. If the right combination exists at the right time, successful teaching results, although it is still argued that more successful teaching should result as more competencies are in use. In other words, *the more competencies that an instructor possesses, the higher the propensity that courses instructed by that instructor will result in positive outcomes for a greater number of students*. Therein lays a primary value of competency models. The goal is not to exceed 80% of competencies in order to be considered qualified, but rather to make the best use of the competencies that one does possess and then strive to develop the ones lacking and helpful to the given context.

Figure 1 : Competency to Instructional Outcomes Relationships



Implementing such a program can be a challenge. A faculty development program can be fashioned around a competency protocol, but if there are no administrative incentives, then there is a potential lack of motivation for participation in the program so developed. Some faculty will be intrinsically motivated to pursue online education knowledge, but not enough to sustain the program. Prominent motivators determined during the creation of this competency model included faculty leave time or reduced teaching load while taking courses within the program and inclusion of successful participation in the program in advancement decisions. An additional motivator that did not come up in our study (probably because the MVCR program is already free to most partners) is that the participation in the program should be at no monetary cost to the faculty.

Faculty acceptance also ties into the method and means of evaluating competency. To whom will the faculty need to demonstrate competence? A competency document could be a goal setting form, or it could be a listing of requirements. These requirements can be discerned individually or by a faculty committee or administrative panel. They can also be tied into student evaluations. Those questioned during analysis showed that in general faculty believe that a competency model should be a self-assessed goal setting form, but many also believe that successful completion of at least a core course addressing specific online instructional competencies could be required prior to online instruction. So some level of competency demonstrable through successful course completion was important. Some form of administrative determination of general faculty competency variables is also needed in order to fashion a faculty development program, but such determinations can be anonymous and still meet the intended purpose.

In any case, historical context needs considering. For example, if a faculty member is already teaching online and a new policy requires a certain competency that is lacking, how long will the instructor have in order to demonstrate the competency? A timeframe should show when any policies centered or affected by the document will take effect.

Once support and acceptance exist, issues involving the actual creation of the document come to surface. Initially, one has to question who can and should be involved in the creation of competencies. Clearly faculty should be involved in decisions in order to aid acceptance, but which faculty and how many can be a difficult decision. Furthermore, if there are no faculty members at the institution with online education experience, deciding on faculty to involve becomes more difficult. The entire process may first need to be processed externally. After experience is developed, future internal review by faculty, staff, administration, and/or students can be conducted to tune the document to the given institutional needs.

The issues continue when one comes to the organization of the document. A long list of questions develops. How should the competencies be chosen? Which competencies should be included? How many competencies should there be? Which competencies are most important? How should the competencies be organized? Will all online programs follow the same competencies? The answers to these questions will differ by the needs under which the document is created. The answers are in part determined by the primary instructional paradigm being employed, the typical number of students per course, demographics of the students, the needs of the students, the curriculum, and any number of additional determinants. Several of these questions are answered in terms of this competency document in the document design section below.

Finally, design is an ongoing process. Technologies, incoming faculty, student needs, curriculum, etc. are always changing. The document will therefore continually need revision. Document revision can be on a structured or unstructured time scale. It can also be performed by any number of committee formulations. Then the process of acceptance of any new formulation of the document must reiterate itself.

Document Design

Choice of Competencies

To construct the competency list herein, numerous sources were considered using the following methodology. Initially, ongoing survey data from 248 pre- and 47 post-program student surveys and additional summaries of course evaluations given to students within the MVCR program were analyzed for student beliefs about necessary qualities for their instructors. This preliminary list was given a high weight in final decisions about which competencies should be included and how necessary a given competency would be. To this list, numerous competencies were added and amended after a literature survey of applicable research (all references marked with an asterisk). The resulting expanded list was further clarified, extended, and organized following an email request for comments to the instructors in the MVCR program (4 respondents), the personal experiences of the administration of the program (3 respondents), and the author of this paper. This evolving list was further clarified and organized (but by this point reduced rather than expanded) after feedback within a competency models working group / learning team at the 2006 Illinois FSI (18 participants from both 2-year and 4-year institutions, http://www.ion.uillinois.edu/institutes/fsi/) and during competency discussions at two, 2006 ION faculty trainer institutes (50 participants, http://www.ion.uillinois.edu/institutes/fti/). In the end, approximately 247 competencies were identified. These competencies are outlined in Table 1.

In some cases, in order to apply to various learning situations, such as differences that might be experienced between a mathematics versus a history instructor, the competencies are listed in general terms. This legitimates the need for a given form of knowledge or ability, but provides the flexibility to modify the language to the given context.

When applicable, various nationally and regionally recognized standards for teaching were aligned with these competencies as well. The Illinois State Board of Education Professional Teaching Standards (ISBE, 2002) and the National Educational Technology Standards for Teachers (ISTE, 2000) included competencies that matched many of the competencies in this document. In some cases, these competencies had to be extrapolated to apply in an online context. In other cases, they did not apply due to a change in modality, context, or educational level. In particular, these competencies are aligned primarily for a higher education context, but will still hold value across other contexts.

When choosing competencies, this document attempts to take nothing as a given and lists all pertinent knowledge that an online instructor should possess. Many competency documents leave out what might be considered ‘given' competencies. For example, if someone has a higher degree in a given field, that person can be assumed to have advanced knowledge in that area. Since the program would not hire anyone without such a degree, then such knowledge need not be included in the competency document since it is implied by employment. Explicitly stating all required knowledge serves to validate this knowledge and to openly communicate it to potential students though, and is therefore included.

Core Competencies, and not Core Competencies

Many competencies are ancillary or preferred attributes rather than absolute or core requirements to effectively instruct students. In some cases it is difficult to tell one from the other. Feedback during the choice and organization of competencies stage helped determine one from the other in terms of the needs of our program. Preferred attributes became referred to as exemplary since an instructor possessing such attributes has excelled beyond the norm. The remaining core competencies are believed to be necessities in a highly capable online instructor. In questionable cases, the error is on the side of caution, and the competency is listed as core.

Category Organization

The competencies in this document were organized using a grounded approach. In other words, the data sources came first. A long list of competencies was developed by integrating numerous sources as discussed above. This list was segmented and re-segmented by topics until a tangible organization began to resolve itself. The final organization of competencies came after many recapitulations of the evolving document and feedback during the focus group stage.

Even with this grounded approach, a choice had to be made about what type of overall organization would be conducted. There are many different manners in which competencies could be organized. For example, the primary headings can be the relationships that an instructor has with various parties, such as student, faculty, administration, community, community of practice, etc. relationships. When the emerging criteria were organized in this fashion, a large amount of functional overlap occurred, creating unnecessary redundancy in the competency list. Another method of primary categorization involves organization by types of instructor presence (Garrison & Anderson, 2003). This method also developed into redundancy issues when considering cognitive versus teaching and social versus teaching presences. The arrangement could also be by temporality as far as what an instructor does before, during, and after a course, however any non-purely instructional activity such as professional development and peer relations are ongoing processes that do not fit into these categories. Functions or roles eventually constructed the primary organization of the competencies. This organization showed a lack of uncategorized competencies and the strongest connection to the needs of the MVCR program.

As with other manners of organization, there are possible issues of overlap among the functional role categories chosen though. For example, communications could overlap with functions such as teaching and social maintenance. In an effort to reduce any overlap, the categories are defined in narrow terms. For example, communication processes as a whole are divided into the functional needs of teaching, social applications of communication, and the functional knowledge of technology used for communication, rather than a communication category unto itself. So categorization involves both the function and the purpose of that function. The final categories chosen were administrative, personal, technological, pedagogical (subdivided into instructional design, instructional delivery, and assessment), and social roles and abilities.

Administrative roles involve the processes that are required to function within the given institutional setting, the legal setting, and general institutionalized ethics. They are not necessarily instructional competencies, but are nonetheless inclusive of knowledge that an instructor should have. An instructor unable to function within the given administrative setting may still be a highly competent facilitator of knowledge acquisition, but may lose the opportunity to demonstrate that ability due to policy or legal violations.

In some ways, competencies placed into the administrative roles category will be institution specific. The method of instructor evaluation, policies regarding student management, academic honesty polices, etc. will differ by institution. However, the underlying principles, such as a need for awareness of the policies and methods utilized by the institution in such matters are still necessary.

Personal roles and abilities involve the overall physical and mental abilities of the instructor and the instructor's personality attributes. In most, but not all cases, these abilities function within an instructor's intrapersonal cognitive domain. These competencies are institution independent and involve qualities of the instructor him/herself such as content knowledge, teaching commitment, personality, thought processes, etc. Often, these competencies are taken for granted and not included in competency models, but they are included here for completeness and to validate their importance. In some cases, such as time management abilities, they are not even considered in competency documents centered too much on directly observable teaching-centered abilities. But there is still a need to validate the many skills that instructors utilize outside of the actual classroom but that still have an impact in the classroom.

Technological roles and abilities are specific to the utilization of the technology independent of pedagogy. They include the technical knowledge of the instructor, the availability of that technology, and ability to actually use and help others in the use of a given form of technology. They do not include the planning for use or actual implementation of that technology (which are included under pedagogical roles below), but rather simply the ability to make use of technology independent of purpose.

Pedagogical roles and abilities is the largest category due to the fact that this document is primarily involved with instruction. They involve aspects of actual design and implementation of instruction. Although all are interrelated, pedagogical roles are split in this document into design of instruction, conducting or implementing instruction, and assessment of students. These categories will have some institution level variation, primarily when alternative primary paradigms of instruction are being employed. As such, some competencies listed in this category may not be considered core necessities in all systems, but rather exemplary practices.

Finally, a social category is included. This category provides value to the social functions that an online instructor in a student-centered, social learning environment is expected to possess. Participation with a community of practice is probably the most general of the social roles that all instructors should possess, providing this category with some application independent of instructional context. However, some of these social roles may not be as highly valued in some paradigms of instruction, especially a model based entirely on student-only self-paced instruction. Within online education though, pedagogical ideals that adhere to a social constructivist paradigm such as collaborative, student-centered, and discussion-oriented methods are widely touted as effective means of instruction (Elbaum, McIntyre, & Smith, 2002; Gulati, 2004; Harasim, 1990; Haythornthwaite & Kazmer, 2004; Jaffee, 2001; Ko & Rossen, 2001; Mason & Kaye, 1989 & 1990; Palloff & Pratt, 1999; White & Weight, 2000). Interestingly, although some argue that part of the success of online education depends on the ability of students and instructor to come to know one another, perhaps in a synergistic relationship (Palloff & Pratt, 1999), the social dimension is often listed as a limitation of online education by others, in part due to a loss of paralanguage and interpersonal physical contact (Hine, 2000; Joinson, 2003) . Consider that a tenet of social constructivist aligned pedagogy is an ability to communicate with the student in a context sensitive manner that will aid his/her understanding. One must go beyond a simple delivery modality and understand that even with ‘guided didactic instruction' (Holmberg, 1977) , the educational conversation must be underscored by mutual understanding in a social context.

As can be seen, categorization speaks not just the function and purpose of that function, but also to the value that the given context places on the given category in the given educational paradigm being utilized. Since adult learning theory and social constructivism are the primary philosophical models used in the MVCR program, aspects of instruction that could be linked or hold value in these paradigms show themselves in these competencies.

Further Discussion

While this document was initially designed for the MVCR program, its applicability outside this program can be addressed. Context will alter competency requirements, for some might not apply equivalently in other institutions. For example, not all educational programs will adhere to a belief in social-constructivist aligned pedagogy. For the MVCR program, such methodology has proven very successful. Aspects of an institution, such as audience needs and demographics, teaching assistant reliance, curriculum, administrative mindset, etc. may yield different functional needs for the instructors. Still, most of the competencies listed herein will apply across many contexts. At the least, this document should function as a valuable resource in the development of competency models that fit well within the given institutional context. To aid in realignment of these competencies, competencies believed to be a core competency in an MVCR-aligned manner are underlined in Table 1 to aid identification.

It is also likely that some will disagree with some aspect of this document. To help explain some of the decisions made in this document, especially in terms of core versus exemplary status, a brief rationale is provided for competency inclusion and valuation in Table 1. Based upon these rationales and their alignment within another program, choices may be easier as to the inclusion of the given competency in other contexts.

Finally, one very important aspect of online education that can and will alter these competencies with time is technology. To feasibly be able to keep such a document current in a field that is so heavily dependent on technology, when possible, specific technologies are not included in Table 1, but rather the purpose of those technologies and the need for some means to meet that purpose. The goal is to create a document that can accommodate the ever changing landscape of technologies used in distance education. When specific technologies are discussed, they are done so with the understanding that these are currently and prevalently used technologies that warranted specific inclusion at the present time. As time passes and technologies change, the competencies can and should be updated as already discussed above under issues.

Table I: Online Instructor Competencies

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.

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.)
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)

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)
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)
Rationale: Although being able to answer these questions is helpful, it is not necessarily a function of instruction and lack of this knowledge does not jeopardize one's ability to teach in the system.

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)
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).
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.) (This competency will in some ways relate to Instructional Design competencies listed later.)
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 polices can be accessed (KI/PI).
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).
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.)
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 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.
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).
Rationale: Interestingly, this area was not listed as a competency in most 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 personal 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).
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.)
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.)
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.)
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. This competency is the physiological ability to communicate. 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.)
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).
Rationale: There are bound to be difficulties of some sort when teaching, especially when technology is involved. 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).
Rationale: It can be difficult but not necessarily impossible (based on focus group feedback) 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).
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):

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

7. The exemplary instructor accepts and endeavors to remove his/her own limitations (KI).
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.)
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 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, a reliable 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 utilizes 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).
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).
Rationale: All of these were listed as necessary on average in student surveys.
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 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).
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.

c. The exemplary instructor can help students to troubleshoot issues that may arise with browsers (PI).
Rationale: Listed as exemplary since MVCR 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 has basic HTML knowledge.
Rationale: Web-based instruction will eventually require the instructor to utilize at least a basic understanding of HTML.

3. 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.)
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 (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.

4. 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.

5. 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 and Web 2.0 applications. CMS-based communication is covered by competency III.B.2.c.
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.

6. 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.

7. The competent instructor has knowledge of other computer programs and hardware as required by the course being taught (KI).
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.

8. The competent instructor can apply computer program knowledge to improve student learning and increase personal productivity (PI). (See NETS-T Standard V.C.)
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.

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.)
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.)
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).
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.)
Rationale: In many cases, such knowledge is a legal requirement.

3. The exemplary 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.)
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.

D. ***Legal and Ethical Usage:***
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.)
Rationale: Listed as core because an instructor failing to model legal and ethical practices can undermine various course values such as student academic honesty.

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.)

A. ***Course Overview:***
The competent instructor presents a course overview to enhance student learning (PI).
Rationale: Initial informational contacts are vital in an online classroom to avoid student confusion and drop out.

1. The competent instructor maintains a valid and useful syllabus (PI).
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.

2. The competent instructor makes use of valid and effective course objectives (PI). (See ISBE Standard 6P.)

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.

B. ***Resource Evaluation:***
The competent instructor understands how to evaluate learning materials (KI) and actively evaluates the materials used in a course (PI).
Rationale: For the course to maintain a high level of quality, the materials used must be constantly monitoried.

1. 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.)
Rationale: Listed as a core competency since one needs to understand these processes before appropriate material changes might be considered.

2. 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.)
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.

3. 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).
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:

a. Credibility = Is the given information believable?

b. Clarity = How understandable will the given information be in the given content area and for the given student audience?

c. Validity = Is the given information acceptable knowledge in the given community of practice?

d. 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)?

e. Accuracy = Is data presented without errors or omissions?

f. Currency = How current is the information source, and how applicable is it to the current state of the content area?

g. Quality = Is the information presented in a pedagogically sound manner for the given content and audience?

h. Exemplary instructors will also judge the beauty = Is the information presented in an aesthetically pleasing manner?

C. ***Resource Creation and Selection:***
The competent instructor selects materials and resources appropriate to the given context and that lead to effective learning outcomes (PI).
Rationale: For the course to possess a high level of quality, the materials used must also be of high quality.

1. 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.)
Rationale: Proper materials selection is important for effective instruction.

2. 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.)

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.

3. 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.)
Rationale: Such resources may be included in various iterations of the course and allow for content adjustments based upon learner compositions.

4. 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.

5. 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.

6. 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.

D. ***Technology Selection:***
The competent instructor selects technologies appropriate of the given context that lead to effective learning outcomes (KI).
Rationale: The technology chosen must match the needs of the curriculum and the students in order to meet learning objectives.

1. 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.)
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.

2. 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.)
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.

3. The exemplary 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.

E. ***Media Richness:***
The exemplary instructor seeks appropriate media richness for the course and can state rationales for use of multimedia (KI / PI).
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.

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 has an awareness of and understands the advantages and limitations within the online classroom 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.

4. 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.

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. 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.

8. 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).
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 Planning:***
The competent instructor adequately plans for instruction (PI).
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 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.)

2. 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.

3. 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.

4. The competent instructor understands and considers disability impacts on online learning when planning instruction (KI/PI). (See ISBE Standard 6M.)
Rationale: Different students will have different needs that must be planned for.

D. ***Motivating Students:***
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).
Rationale: Motivating the students is a key to providing the proper learning set, increasing student diligence, maintaining student progression through course content, etc.

1. 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:

a. Transactional distance & feelings of isolation.

b. Learning set.

c. Personal context.

2. The competent instructor acknowledges learner contributions both publicly and privately as appropriate (PI).
Rationale: Appropriate acknowledgement increases motivation and feelings of personal accomplishment.

3. The competent instructor communicates persistently high expectations to the students (PI).
Rationale: Presenting high expectations helps lead to higher achievement.

4. 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.)
Rationale: Such efforts positively contribute to student motivation.

5. The competent instructor finds additional appropriate means to encourage students to contribute (PI).

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.

6. 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.

7. 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.

8. The exemplary instructor will make students aware of how to be successful in the online environment and the given course (PI).
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.)

E. ***Communications Usage:***
The competent instructor has a clear ability to make effective, educational uses of communication methods (PI). (Relates to ISBE Standard 7)
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.

1. The competent instructor understands the importance of language in learning (KI). (See ISBE Standard 7A.)
Rationale: Learning in online discourse is highly dependent on language use.

2. The competent instructor understands how the type of media used, from text to audio/video, can influence communication (KI). (See ISBE Standard 7B.)
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. Understanding the possibilities of the message received aids proper wording of instructor communications. The medium is the message in the words of McLuhan (1967).

3. The competent instructor understands how cultural, gender, and other demographic distinctions can affect online communications and learning (KI). (See ISBE Standard 7B., 7C., & 7D.)
Rationale: This understanding can help reduce miscommunication and misinterpretation of communications.

4. 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.)
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.

5. The competent instructor makes use of a variety of communication means dependent upon the student and course needs (PI). (See ISBE Standard 7I. & 7K.)
Rationale: Not everything works equally well for everyone.

6. The competent instructor models active, effective, and engaging online communication. The instructor uses a transactional not transmissive mode of communication (PI). (See ISBE Standard 7E.)
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.

7. 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.

8. The competent instructor is emotive in the communicative mode(s) used in the given course through appropriate use of computer mediated communication paralanguage (PI).

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.

9. The competent instructor posts items that reflect upon student posts and ideas (PI).
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.

10. The competent instructor provides varied opportunities for the students to demonstrate effective communication skills (PI). (See ISBE Standard 7G.)
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.

11. The competent instructor can judge the effectiveness of the communications taking place (KI) and can state a rationale for that judgment (PI).
Rationale: There must be an adequate rationale to account for the means and manner of communications employed.

F. ***Materials Presentation:***
The competent instructor effectively presents information to the students in a manner that aids in interpretation, understanding, and internalization of new information by the students.
Rationale: Properly presented materials increase student understanding and interpretation.

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. The competent online instructor links inquiry to genuine problems or issues of interest to the learners (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.

G. ***Instructional Processes:***
The competent instructor effectively presents information to the students (PI). 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). (See ISBE Standards 4. & 6.)
Rationale: Such is one of the primary purposes of education.

1. The competent instructor guides students to knowledge acquisition (PI). (See NETS-T Standard II.A. and ISBE Standards 4. & 6.)

Rationale: The primary job of the instructor is to form a path that the student can follow to knowledge acquisition and internalization.

2. 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.)
Rationale: Student perceptions of the course tend to be more positive with a flexible instructor.

3. The competent instructor incorporates active learning into the online classroom (PI). (See ISBE Standard 6G.)
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.

4. The competent instructor effectively utilizes student-centered, discussion-oriented pedagogy (PI). (Relates to ISBE Standard 4M. when used in conjunction with other activities.)
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.

5. The competent instructor uses questioning effectively (PI). (See ISBE Standard 7F.)
Rationale: Such questioning stimulates discussion and leads to student learning.

6. 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.)
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.

a. 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.

b. 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.

c. 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.

7. 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.

8. 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.)
Rationale: Such encouragement aids formation of proper learning structures that consider a full range of knowledge.

9. 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.

a. 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.

b. 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.

10. The competent instructor maintains appropriate pacing of course progression (PI).
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.

a. 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.

b. 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.

c. The competent instructor presents a timeline or calendar with explicit key points towards successful completion of the course (PI).
Rationale: Same as previous competency.

11. The competent instructor demonstrates immediacy and timeliness (PI).
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.

12. 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.

13. 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.)
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.

14. The competent instructor can state a rationale for the given choice of pedagogical approach (PI).
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.

15. The exemplary instructor helps students organize and manage their time (PI).
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.

16. 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.

17. The exemplary instructor allows student criticism or questioning of instructor's views as appropriate yet maintains a clear position of authority (PI).
Rationale: 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.

18. The exemplary instructor understands how his/her personal biases may affect instruction (KI). (See ISBE Standard 3F. & 10D.)
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.

19. 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.

20. 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.)
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.

21. 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.

22. 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.

23. 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.

H. ***Tailored Instruction:***
The competent instructor individually tailors instruction to meet student needs.
Rationale: Not all students are the same, and online instruction affords the opportunity to meet these varied needs.

1. The competent instructor respects diverse ways of learning (KI). (See NETS-T Standard III.B. & VI.C.)
Rationale: Different manners of learning require different manners of instruction.

2. 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.)
Rationale: Applying activities that are not appropriate for the given audience will not result in effective learning.

3. 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.

4. The competent 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.)
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.

5. The exemplary instructor individually tailors instruction to the students when possible and appropriate (PI).
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.

6. The exemplary instructor will provide more than one path as appropriate to complete course objectives (PI). (Relates to ISBE Standard 4M.)
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.

I. ***Collaboration:***
The competent instructor implements effective group and collaborative/cooperative learning (PI).
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.

1. 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.

2. The competent instructor develops and utilizes collaborative activities and group work as appropriate to meet the needs of the given content and audience (PI). (Relates to ISBE Standard 4M.)
Rationale: MVCR courses utilize group work, and different groups and audiences will have different approaches and challenges within the group setting.
Key items include:

a. The competent instructor uses a range of member roles in collaborative exercises (PI).

b. The competent instructor keeps groups at an appropriate size (PI).

c. The competent instructor assigns group tasks that result in a product that the students can use (PI).

d. The competent instructor keeps group discussions focused on task as appropriate (PI).

3. The competent instructor promotes effective leadership within groups (PI).
Rationale: Poor leadership or discourse within a group will quickly reduce its effectiveness.

J. ***Student Monitoring:***
The competent instructor monitors student activity to help manage student success (PI). (See NETS-T Standard II.E.)
Rationale: Monitoring the students is required to actively perceive their progress in a distance education setting and to provide for proper modifications when appropriate.

1. 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.

2. 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.

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. The competent instructor can state a rationale for such judgments in 1-4 above (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.

6. 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.

K. ***Evaluation:***
The competent instructor evaluates the effectiveness of instruction (PI).
Rationale: Evaluation provides for improvement.

1. The competent 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.

2. 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.

VI. Assessment Roles (Assessing Student Learning and Abilities)
The competent 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. ***Assessment Purpose:***
The competent instructor understands the purposes of assessment in terms of student learning and evaluation (KI). (See ISBE Standard 8A.)
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. ***Online Assessment Challenges:***
The competent instructor understands that online assessments can provide unique difficulties to online students (KI).
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. ***Assessment Design:***
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.)
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 will build participation into assessments and course grading (PI).
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.

7. 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.

8. 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.

9. The exemplary instructor provides a pre-assessment of student knowledge (PI).
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:

a. Assist in instructional methods, organization, and level.

b. Function as an ice-breaking activity when properly constructed.

c. Determine growth during the course.

D. ***Assessment Delivery:***
The competent instructor effectively presents assessments to the students (PI).
Rationale: Students have to understand the assessment to complete it.

1. The competent instructor provides clear objectives and purposes to all assignments (PI).
Rationale: Understanding purpose increases student motivation to complete assignment and to what end the assignment is directed.

2. The competent 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).
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.

3. The competent instructor provides adequate time for learners to state questions, make comments, and display concern about assessment procedures and activities (PI).
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.

4. The competent instructor provides adequate time for effective completion of the assignments for the given student

audience and ability levels (PI).
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.

5. 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.)
Rationale: Such provisions are an ethical and legal requirement.

6. The exemplary instructor provides sample assignments when appropriate and possible (PI).
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.

7. The exemplary instructor reminds students of important assignment deadlines (PI).
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.

E. ***Grading:***
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.

1. The competent instructor can provide a clear pedagogical rational 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.

2. The competent instructor provides students with a clear delineation of how or if assignments will be or have been graded (PI).
Rationale: Reduces assignment confusion, helps students meet objectives, and allows students to learn from incorrect answers.

3. 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.

4. 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.

F. ***Feedback:***
The competent instructor understands the importance of (KI) and provides for student feedback (PI). (See ISBE Standard 7H.)
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 maintains continual feedback throughout the course (PI).
Rationale: This competency provides that formative feedback is important as well as summative.

2. 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.

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 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.

5. 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.

6. 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: Students need to know where they stand in terms of course progression in order to judge their time commitment and effort needs for the rest of the course.

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 maintains an up-to-date grade book or portfolio of student work (PI). (See ISBE Standard 8L.) The competent instructor provides a mechanism by which students can ask about or determine by some means their progress in the course (PI).
Rationale: This maintenance allows both students and instructor to monitor progress. If monitoring is not conducted, students may drop out of the learning context.

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

H. ***Academic Honesty:***
The competent instructor is aware of and takes account of academic honesty issues in the virtual classroom (KI/PI).
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.

d. Ethical and legal concerns of plagiarism detection services.

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.

I. ***Self Assessment:***

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.)
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.

J. ***Theory***:
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. ***Social Presence:***
The competent instructor maintains an online social presence (PI).
Rationale: In some paradigms, this may be considered exemplary, but a 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 is visibly available for the students (PI). 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.

4. 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.

B. ***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.)
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 instructor recognizes the importance of creating an effective learning environment in the virtual classroom (KI).
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.)
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.)
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 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.)
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., 5I., & 5K.)
Rationale: Doing so reduces conflict and can increase students' abilities to reflect on self and the ideas of others.

6. The competent instructor involves learners immediately in the development of the course atmosphere including ice-breaking activities (PI). (See ISBE Standard 5K.)
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.
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).
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).
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 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.

8. The competent instructor understands, applies, and promotes interactivity among students and between students and instructor (KI/PI).
Rationale: Such is required for synergistic relationships helpful to student satisfaction and learning.

a. 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.

b. 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.

c. 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.

d. 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.

e. 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.

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 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.

h. 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.

i. The competent instructor will provide a content free zone for off topic discussions (PI).
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.

9. The competent instructor continuously judges the climate of the course to determine if successful performance is being encouraged. The instructor can state a rationale for such judgments (PI). (See ISBE Standard 5L.)
Rationale: Without this judgment, the instructor cannot know that it is happening.

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).
Rationale: Distance education is international and multicultural.

D. ***Conflict Management:***
The competent instructor understands and is capable at managing conflict in the virtual classroom (KI/PI). (Relates to ISBE Standard 5A. & 11C. and more directly 5G. & 5I.)
Rationale: Conflict can destroy a learning community, reduce effective learning and student satisfaction, and lower retention.

1. The competent 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 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. ***Socializing Agent:***
The competent instructor understands the social nature of the classroom and how it can contribute to the success of the students (KI). The exemplary instructor is both a knowledge builder and social agent among the students (KI/PI).
Rationale: In the absence of a 'campus' for socializing activity, such may need to be provided in the course itself. An understanding of the social nature is needed to effectively reduce student feelings of isolation, increase active learning, and increase synergistic relationships in the classroom.

F. ***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.
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 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.

References

Allen, I. E., & Seaman, J. (2003). *Sizing the opportunity: The quality and extent of online education in the United States, 2002 and 2003*. Needham, MA: The Sloan Consortium.

American Heritage Publishing Company (Ed.). (2000). *The American Heritage dictionary of the English language* (4th ed.). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Anderson, M. R. (1993). *Success in distance education courses versus traditional classroom courses.* Unpublished Ph.D., Oregon State University, Corvallis, OR.

*Anderson, T., Rourke, L., Garrison, D.R., & Archer, W. (2001, September). Assessing teacher presence in a computer conferencing context. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks, 5*(2). Retrieved January 26, 2006, from http://www.sloan-c.org/publications/jaln/v5n2/v5n2_anderson.asp

*Baker, J.D. (2004). An investigation of relationships among instructor immediacy and affective and cognitive learning in the online classroom. *Internet and Higher Education, 7*, 1-13.

Barrett, N. F. (1998). *Theory and practice of distance education*. Unpublished Ph.D. of Education, University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana, IL.

*Bourne, J., & Moore, J. C. (Eds.) (2002). *Elements of quality online education*. Needham, MA: Sloan Center for OnLine Education.

*Bourne, J., & Moore, J. C. (Eds.) (2003). *Elements of quality online education: Practice and direction*. Needham, MA: Sloan Center for OnLine Education.

Broadbent, B., & Cotter, C. (2003). *Evaluating e-learning*. Retrieved September 19, 2003, from http://www.e-learninghub.com/articles/evaluating_e-learning.html

*California State University, Chico (CSUC). (2004). *Rubric for online instruction*. Retrieved February 16, 2006, from http://www.csuchico.edu/tlp/onlinelearning/rubric/rubric.pdf

*Cerritos College. (2001). *Competencies for online instructors*. Norwalk, CA: Author. Retrieved January 26, 2006, from http://www.cerritos.edu/ic/teched/competencies.html

*Chickering, A.W., & Gamson, Z.F. (1987, March). Seven principles for good practice in undergraduate education. *AAHE Bulletin, 39*(7), 3-7 (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED282491)

*Chickering, A.W., & Ehrmann, S.C. (1996). Implementing the seven principles: Technology as a lever. *AAHE Bulletin, 49*(2), 3-6.

*Collins, M. (1996, June). *Facilitating interaction in computer mediated online courses.* Background paper presented at the FSU/AECT Distance Education Conference, Tallahassee, FL. Retrieved March 30, 2001, from http://www.emoderators.com/moderators/flcc.html

*Coppola, N.W., & Hiltz, S.R. (2001). Becoming a virtual professor: Pedagogical roles and ALN. *Proceedings of the 34th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences*.

*Darabi, A. A., Sikorski, C. G., Harvey, R. B., (2006, May). Validated competencies for distance teaching. *Distance Education, 27*(1), 105-122.

*Elbaum, B., McIntyre, C., & Smith, A. (2002). *Essential elements: Prepare, design, and teach your online course*. Madison, WI: Atwood Publishing.

Engelbart, D. C., (1962, October). *Augmenting human intellect: A conceptual framework*. (Stanford Research Institute Project No. 3578, Air Force Office of Scientific Research Summary Report # 3233). Menlo Park, CA: Stanford Research Institute. Retrieved October 17, 2006, from http://www.bootstrap.org/augdocs/friedewald030402/augmentinghumanintellect/ahi62index.html

*Full Circle Associates. (2001). *Facilitator qualities and skills*. Retrieved October 3, 2006, from http://www.fullcirc.com/community/facilitatorqualities.htm

*Fuller, D., Norby, R., Pearce, K., & Strand, S. (2000). Internet teaching by style: Profiling the on-line professor. *Educational Technology & Society, 3*(2). Retrieved February 16, 2006, from http://ifets.ieee.org/periodical/vol_2_2000/pearce.html

*Garrison, D.R., & Anderson, T. (2003). *E-learning in the 21st century: A framework for research and practice*. New York: RoutledgeFalmer.

*Graham, C., Cagiltay, K., Craner, J., Lim, B., & Duffy, T.M. (2000). *Teaching in a Web based distance learning environment: An evaluation summary based on four courses.* (CRLT Technical Report No 13-00). Retrieved February 16, 2006, from http://www.crlt.indiana.edu/publications/crlt00-13.pdf

*Graham, C., Cagiltay, K., Lim, B., Craner, J., & Duffy, T.M. (2001, March/April). Seven principles of effective teaching: A practical lens for evaluating online courses. *The Technology Source*. Retrieved June 9, 2003, from http://ts.mivu.org/default.asp?show=article&id=839

*Grant-MacEwan College. (n.d.) *Learn online: Instructor competencies*. Retrieved June 25, 2003, from http://learn.gmcc.ab.ca/lol/staff/lit_comp.cfm

*Gulati, S. (2004). *Constructivism and emerging online learning pedagogy: A discussion for formal to acknowledge and promote the*

informal. Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Universities Association for Continuing Education – Regional Futures: Formal and Informal Learning Perspectives, University of Glamorgan, England.

Haehl, S. L. (1996, November 25). *Characteristics common to adult students enrolling in a distance education course via the Internet*. Unpublished Ph.D. of Education, Spalding University, Louisville, KY.

*Hanna, D.E., Glowacki-Dudka, M., & Conceição-Runlee, S. (2000). *147 practical tips for teaching online groups: Essentials of Web-based education*. Madison, WI: Atwood Publishing.

Harasim, L. M. (1990). Online education: An environment for collaboration and intellectual amplification. In L. M. Harasim (Ed.), *Online education: Perspectives on a new environment* (pp. 39-64). New York: Praeger.

*Haythornthwaite, C., & Kazmer, M. M. (Eds.). (2004). *Learning, culture and community in online education: Research and practice*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc.

Hine, C. (2000). *Virtual ethnography*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Holmberg, B. (1977). *Distance education: A survey and bibliography*. New York: Nichols Publishing Company.

Horton, W. (2001). *Evaluating e-learning*. Alexandria, VA: American Society for Training & Development.

*Hutchins, H.M. (2003, Fall). Instructional immediacy and the seven principles: Strategies for facilitating online courses. *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration, 6*(3). Retrieved February 8, 2006, from http://www.westga.edu/~distance/ojdla/fall63/hutchins63.html

*Illinois Online Network (ION). (2006). *ION's quality online course initiative*. Retrieved October 17, 2006, from http://www.ion.uillinois.edu/initiatives/qoci/index.asp

*Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). (2002). *Illinois professional teaching standards* (2nd ed.). Retrieved April 14, 2006, from http://www.isbe.state.il.us/profprep/CASCDvr/pdfs/24100_ipts.pdf

*International Association of Facilitators. (2003, February). *IAF foundational competencies for certification*. Retrieved October 5, 2006, from http://www.iaf-world.org/i4a/pages/Index.cfm?pageid=3331

*International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE). (2000). *ISTE national educational technology standards (NETS) and performance indicators for teachers*. Retrieved April 14, 2006, from http://cnets.iste.org/teachers/t_stands.html

Jaffee, D. (2001). *Virtual transformation: Web-based technology and pedagogical change* (ITForum Paper #58). Retrieved July 17, 2004, from http://it.coe.uga.edu/itforum/paper58/paper58.htm

Joinson, A. N. (2003). *Understanding the psychology of Internet behavior: Virtual worlds, real lives*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Kavuma, (nd). *Research study into virtual learning behaviour.* Retrieved April 20, 2004, from http://general.rau.ac.za/infosci/www2003/Papers/Kavuma,%20H%20Research%20Study%20into%20Virtual%20Learning%20Behaviour.pdf

*Kearsley, G., & Blomeyer, R. (2004). *Preparing K-12 teachers to teach online*. Retrieved January 26, 2006, from http://home.sprynet.com/~gkearsley/TeachingOnline.htm

*Keeton, M.T. (2004, April). Best online instructional practices: Report of phase I of an ongoing study. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks, 8*(2), 75-100.

*Kemshal-Bell, G. (2001, April). *The online teacher: Final report prepared for the project steering committee of the VET Teaching and Online Learning Project, ITAM ESD, TAFENSW*. New South Wales. Retrieved March 25, 2004, from http://cyberteacher.onestop.net/final%20report.pdf

*Klein, J.D., Spector, J.M., Grabowski, B., & de la Teja, I. (2004). *Instructor competencies: Standards for face-to-face, online, and blended settings.* Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing.

*Ko, S., & Rossen, S. (2001). *Teaching online: A practical guide*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company.

*Learning Peaks, (2003). *Asynchronous online learning instructor competencies*. Retrieved June 25, 2003, from

http://www.insighted.com/instrcomp.html

*Lorenzo, G., & Moore, J. (2002). *The Sloan Consortium report to the nation: Five pillars of quality online education* (Report). Needham, MA: The Sloan Consortium. Retrieved October 16, 2006, from http://www.sloan-c.org/effective/pillarreport1.pdf

*MacDonald, J.B. (1964). An image of man: The learner himself. In R.C. Doll (Ed.) *Individualizing Instruction*, pp. 29-49. Washington, DC: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Mason, R. & Kaye, A. (1989). *Mindweave: Communication, computers and distance education*. Oxford, England: Pergamon Press plc.

Mason, R., & Kaye, T. (1990). Towards a new paradigm for distance education. In L. M. Harasim (Ed.), *Online education: Perspectives on a new environment* (pp. 15-38). New York: Praeger.

McLuhan, M., & Fiore, Q. (1967) *The medium is the massage: An inventory of effects.* New York: Bantam Books

Merriam-Webster (Ed.). (1996). *Merriam-Webster's dictionary of law*. Springfield, MA: Author.

Miller, G. A. (Ed.). (2006). *WordNet*. (version 2.1) (Computer software). Princeton, NJ: Cognitive Science Laboratory at Princeton University. Retrieved June 1, 2006, from http://wordnet.princeton.edu/

Monjan, S.V., & Gassner, S.M. (1979). *Critical issues in competency based education*. New York: Pergamon Press.

MSN. (2006). *Competency definition*. Retrieved June 1, 2006, from http://encarta.msn.com/dictionary_/ competency.html

*Munro, J.S. (1998). *Presence at a distance: The educator-learner relationship in distance learning*. University Park, PA: American Center for the Study of Distance Education, The Pennsylvania State University.

*National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), & International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) (2005). *Educational computing and technology programs: Technology facilitation initial endorsement*. Retrieved April 14, 2006, from http://cnets.iste.org/ncate/n_fac-stands.html

*Padavano, D., & Gould, M. (2004, December). Best practices for faculty who teach online. *DEOSNews, 13*(9). Retrieved February 16, 2006, from http://www.ed.psu.edu/acsde/deos/deosnews/deosnews13_9.pdf

*Palloff, R.M., & Pratt, K. (1999). *Building learning communities in cyberspace: Effective strategies for the online classroom.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

*Perraton, H., Creed, C., & Robinson, B. (2002). *Teacher education guidelines: Using open and distance learning: Technology – curriculum – cost – evaluation.* Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization.

Peters, O. (1992). Distance education: A revolutionary concept. In G. E. Ortner, K. Graff, & H. Wilmersdoerfer (Eds.), *Distance education as two-way communication: Essays in honour of Börje Holmberg*. (pp. 28-34) Frankfurt: Verlag Peter Lang.

Phillips, J., Phillips, P. P., & Zuniga, L. (2000). *Evaluating the effectiveness and the return on investment of e-learning: What works online*. Alexandria, VA: American Society for Training and Development (ASTD).

*Phipps, R., & Harvey, J. (2000). *Quality on the line: Benchmarks for success in Internet-based distance education.* (Report) Washington, D.C.: Institute for Higher Education Policy. Retrieved January 1, 2006, from http://www.ihep.com/Pubs/PDF/Quality.pdf

Phipps, R., & Merisotis, J. (1999). *What's the difference? A review of contemporary research on the effectiveness of distance learning in higher education* (Report). Washington, D.C.: American Federation of Teachers, National Education Association, & The Institute for Higher Education Policy.

Rogers, C. (1969). *Freedom to learn*. Columbus, OH: Merrill.

Russell, T. L. (1999). *The no significant difference phenomenon as reported in 355 research reports, summaries and papers: A comparative research annotated bibliography on technology for distance education*. Raleigh, NC: North Carolina State University.

*Salmon, G. (2000). *E-moderating: The key to teaching and learning online*. London: Kogan Page.

*Sammons, M. (2003). Exploring the new conception of teaching and learning in distance education. In M.G. Moore & W.G. Anderson (Eds.) *Handbook of Distance Education*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

*Shank, P., (2004). *Competencies for online instructors*. Denver, CO: Learning Peaks, LLC. Retrieved February 8, 2005, from http://www.learningpeaks.com/instrcomp.pdf

Singh, B. (1982). Distance education in developing countries: The need for central planning. In J. S. Daniel, M. A. Stroud, & J. R. Thompson (Eds.), *Learning at a distance: A world perspective* (pp. 61-63). Edmonton: Athabasca University / International Council for Correspondence Education.

Sonwalkar, N. (2002, January). A new methodology for evaluation: The pedagogical rating of online courses. *Syllabus: Technology for Higher Education 15*(6), 18-21.

*Turner, L. (2005, June). 20 technology skills every educator should have. *THE Journal, 33*(11). Retrieved October 5, 2006, from http://thejournal.com/the/printarticle/?id=17325

Twigg, C. A. (2001). *Innovations in online learning moving beyond no significant difference*. Troy, NY: The PEW Learning and Technology Program, Center for Academic Transformation at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

*University of Maryland University College (2004). *Expectations for classroom setup and online teaching*. Retrieved February 16, 2006, from http://www.umuc.edu/distance/odell/ctla/expectations/online_exp_doc_042105.pdf

*van Rooij, S.W. (1999). Clash of the titans: Managing conflict online among adult distance learners. *Webnet (1)*, 1461-1462.

*Varvel, V. (2005). Honesty in online education. *Pointers & Clickers, 6*(1). Retrieved January 10, 2005 from, http://www.ion.uillinois.edu/resources/pointersclickers/2005_01/ VarvelCheatPoint2005.pdf

*Varvel, V. (2004). Shifting to online education and back again: One educators experience learning to teach online, online and transferring instructional knowledge to face-to-face. *ION Research Case Studies, 3*(2). Retrieved January 10, 2005 from, http://www.ion.uillinois.edu/resources/casestudies/vol3num2/index.asp

*WebCT (2004). *WebCT exemplary course project: 2004 nominations / rubric form.* Retrieved May 5, 2004, from http://www.webct.com/service/ViewContent?contentID=18963979

*White, K.E., & Weight, B.H. (2000). *The online teaching guide: A handbook of attitudes, strategies, and techniques for the virtual classroom.* Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

*Williams, P.E. (2003). Roles and competencies for distance education programs in higher education institutions. *The American Journal of Distance Education, 17*(1) 45-57.

* 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.

Author Biography

Virgil Varvel is a computer assisted instruction specialist for the University of Illinois Department of Outreach and Public Service. He works in the Illinois Virtual Campus / Illinois Online Network division as an instructional designer, instructor, registrar, database programmer, webmaster, and researcher. For various institutions, he has developed, taught, and/or evaluated numerous Web-based courses with training and advisory input on many others. In 2005, he was a recipient of a WebCT Exemplary Course Award and in 2002 was part of the team awarded the Sloan-C Excellence in ALN Faculty Development Award.

Virgil is also a finishing graduate student in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. His research projects have included the use of wireless networks in educational settings, academic honesty issues, online education policy, and text-based discourse analysis. He has an M.S. in Biomolecular Chemisty from the University of Wisconsin at Madison, an M.Ed. in Science Instruction from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, an Illinois 6^{th}-12^{th} grade teaching certificate for Biology, Chemistry, Physics, and General Science, and a Master Online Teacher Certificate from the

University of Illinois.
