

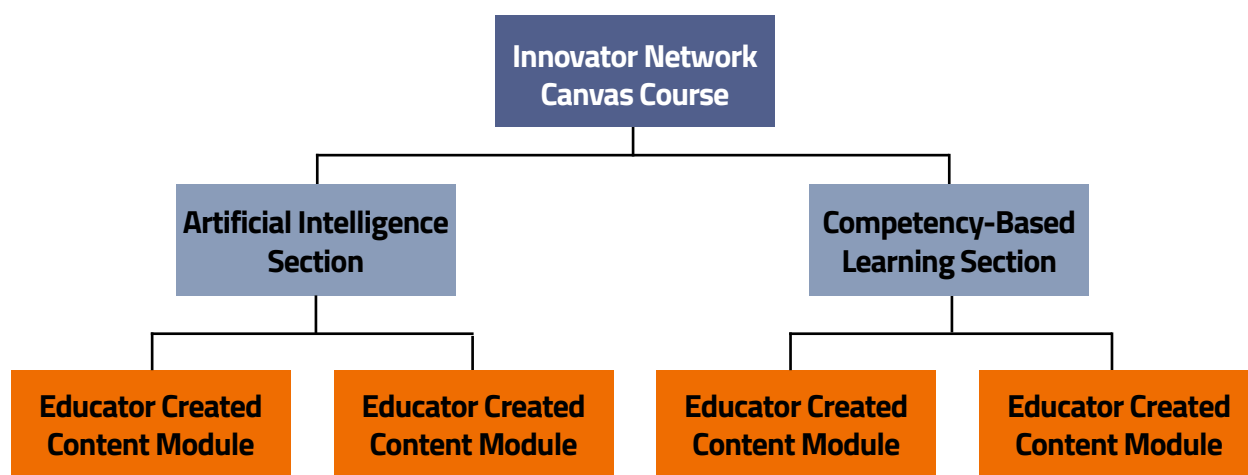
Common Vocabulary

To avoid confusion among network users, please use the following terms in the way in which they are defined below.¹

Course: The Innovator Network is one course housed inside the WDE Canvas.

Sections: Within the Innovator Network course, there are multiple Sections to represent various educational topics.

Module: Each Section is comprised of Modules. The Modules house the professional development content created by Wyoming educators. Below is an example of the organizational flow.



Quizzes: Quizzes are built within a module using the Canvas quiz tool. They are online quizzes used to measure understanding and assess the comprehension of the course materials. Quizzes can be long or short. Quizzes can be formative or summative (taking on the role of a test).

Assignments: The term used in Canvas to describe a variety of Learning Artifacts that measure understanding, comprehension, and/or mastery of course materials.

Learning Artifacts: Refers to evidence that can be used to document learning. Examples are essays, portfolios, posters, websites, tests, and other types of assignments.

Formative Assessments (assessments for learning): Describes ongoing assessment tools that help teachers improve teaching and learning while learning. Teachers use data from the formative assessments to modify the instruction (slow it down, speed it up, reteach certain concepts, dive deeper, etc.) Examples: check for understanding, exit tickets, think-pair-share, short quizzes, journals, student-teacher mini-conferences, proposals, outlines, socratic seminars, etc. It is generally accepted that formative assessments are not part of the final grade of a course.

Summative Assessments (assessment of learning): Refers to assessments that evaluate a student's learning at the end of a course or unit of study; they are used to determine if the student is ready to move on to the next level. Examples: final exams, midterm exams, end-of-unit tests, essays, presentations, portfolios, projects, etc. It is generally accepted that summative assessments are part of the final grade as evidence of proficiency or mastery of the course content.

Standards-Based Learning: What a student "knows" based on a set of academic standards; usually measured by standardized assessments for all students in the course.

Competency-Based Learning: What a student can "do" with their knowledge by demonstrating practical skills and abilities. Usually measured based on authentic-type assessments (portfolios, projects, performances, demonstrations, creations, real-world application, etc.) and created by the instructor with student input, allowing for choice, ownership, and flexibility.

Best Instructional Practices in Virtual Courses

The following is a brief overview of best practices to use when delivering online content to maximize the learning experience for users.

Physical Background: Be cognizant of your background when instructing virtual courses/workshops; your background should be neutral and non-distracting to students and participants. Use an appropriate virtual background if possible. If using a virtual background is not possible due to the nature of your presentation, make sure that what is being displayed behind you does not reference personal information or personal preferences or opinions (examples include: student work with identifying information on it, pictures of your family, political signage, or even just a cluttered space).

Camera: If using a camera is part of your instruction, make sure the camera is of high quality so that your image and other relevant displayed material are visible. Also, make sure that your movements do not distract from the quality of your instruction (moving in and out of the camera frame, rocking back and forth in an office chair, and lighting glares).

Microphone: It is highly recommended that you utilize a quality headset with a built-in noise-cancelling microphone. This helps to ensure that your voice is clearly heard by all participants. If you do not have a headset or do not wish to use one, ensure that the microphone used is of high quality and its placement is in close proximity to your voice so that all your words are clearly heard.

General Audio/Visual: Make sure that you record your material at a time that eliminates distractions that might interfere with your instruction. Make sure you are the only one around when you are recording. Try locking your door and placing a “Recording in Progress” sign on the outside. After recording, make use of editing tools to remove errors or distractions. Make sure that any materials displayed on the screen are large enough and clear enough that participants can easily see the content.

Organization and Flow: Write a script and practice multiple times before recording or going live. You can also practice presenting to someone whose opinion you trust to provide you with constructive feedback to help improve organization, flow, and understanding of your material.

Clear and Concise: Through practice, feedback, and editing, your instruction becomes clear and concise, including using easy-to-follow directions. Over-explaining or using too many words to describe something may cause participants to get lost or tune out during a virtual course. You may also need to verbally explain something in your virtual course that you would not need to explain in a face-to-face course.

Terminology: Education is filled with a lot of terms, jargon, and acronyms. Make sure that you check this guidebook and use the agreed-upon vocabulary for the purposes of this network. Fully define terms prior to using the acronym—do not assume your participants know exactly what you mean.

Know Your Audience: Although it can be difficult to fully know your audience since you will not know who is taking your course, be sure to teach to the level of the course participants. If you are instructing a beginning course, start at the very beginning, assuming that your participants will not know anything about your topic. If you are teaching an advanced course, it is still best practice to go over the basics to ensure full understanding of the content to come.