

Quality Methodologies in the Evaluation of Online Programs



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Session Objectives

- Provide information on how to assess quality of online courses and programs
- Review process used to assess quality of online courses at one institution
- Review process used to assess quality of online programs at one institution
- Share lessons learned, challenges, and best practices related to assessing quality of online courses and programs

Just a little background on us...

Joanna Palmer, PhD

- Director of Academic Affairs and Dean of Psychology Programs
- Initial exposure to online learning as a doctoral student
- Became an adjunct, moved to full time teaching, program director, Dean, and now oversee academics for Baker College's Online and Graduate Studies campus.



Just a little background on us...

Blair Stamper

- Creative Manager
- Began career as a middle school teacher and fell in love with incorporating technology in the classroom. Obtained Masters in Educational Technology.
- Became an instructional designer and moved to Creative Manager, overseeing the other IDs in the department.



A little bit about you...Poll Everywhere



When poll is active, respond at **PollEv.com/joannapalmer619**



Text **JOANNAPALMER619** to **37607** once to join

- Do you offer Online Education?
 - Do you have a method of evaluating online courses and/or online programs?
- What methodologies do you use to evaluate your online courses and programs?
- Is anyone pursuing any sort of badge, certification, award for their online courses and programs?

Important to Consider

- Do you have Quality Courses? Quality Online Programs?
 - How do you know?
- Question for the Audience- Who are our stakeholders?
 - Internal?
 - External?
- How do stakeholders know if you have Quality Online Courses and Programs?

Who are our Stakeholders?

- Internal
 - School administration
 - Deans
 - Faculty
 - Instructional designers
- Public facing
 - Students
 - Public
 - Employers of graduates
 - Accrediting agencies
 - Community partners and partner institutions

Our Goal is to Share...



Assessing and Ensuring Quality in Online Courses



Washtenaw Community College

- Founded in 1965
- Mission
 - Our college strives to make a positive difference in people's lives through accessible and excellent educational programs and services.
- First Online Course Launched in 2004
- Online Learning Awards
 - #26 in the Nation for “Best Colleges” [Best Online Community Colleges](#)
 - #2 in the nation for “OnlineU” [Most Affordable Online Colleges - Associate Degrees](#)
 - #46 in the nation for “Affordable Colleges” [Best Online Community Colleges](#)

Center for interactive Teaching and Learning (CiTL)

- Who is CiTL?
 - 4 Instructional Designers
 - 2 Videographers
 - 2 Multi-media Specialists
 - 3 Online Innovation Team Members
 - Part-Timers
- Mission
 - The Center for interactive Teaching and Learning will enable Washtenaw Community College to become a nationally recognized leader in the new higher education landscape by creating stimulating, accessible, collaborative learning environments that empower students to attain and exceed their educational goals.

Background

Why Use a Rubric?

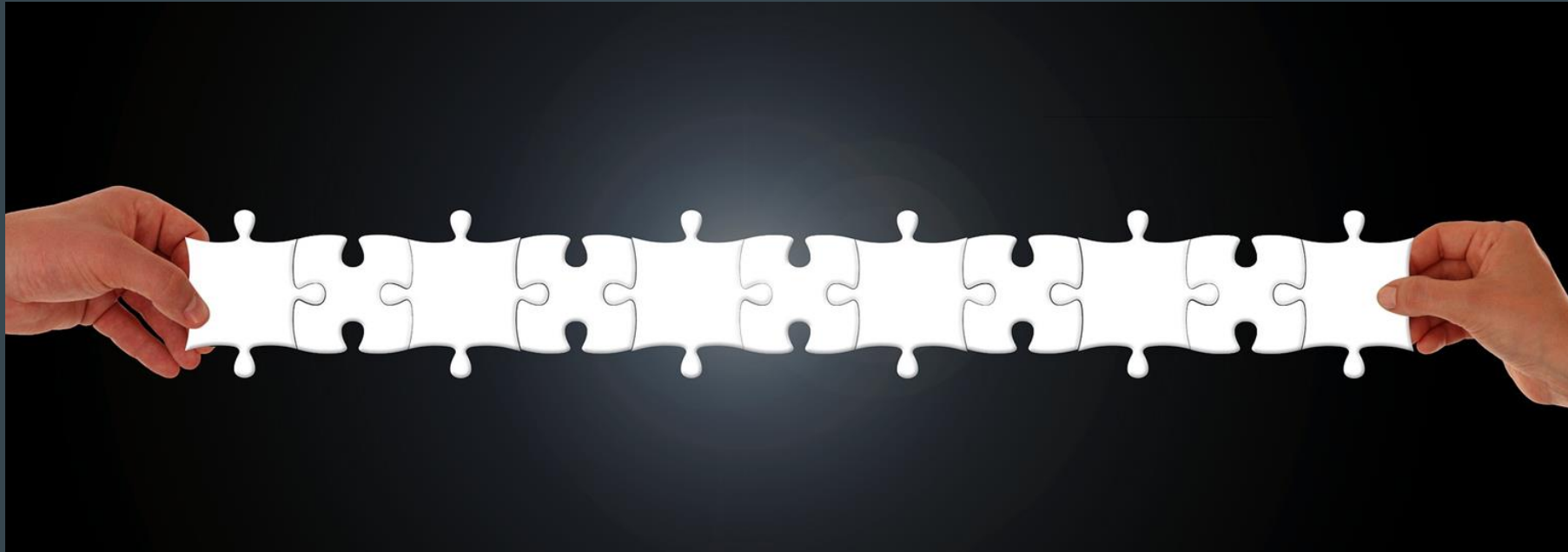
- Lack of design standards
- Courses were inconsistent
- No on-boarding for faculty developers

CHECKLIST

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
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So, why create our own? - BUY IN

- Vice President of Instruction
- Deans
- Faculty
- Fellow Instructional Designers



Why Create Our Own?

- We own it
- Tailored to our courses and faculty



Mobile Compliancy



- In Fall 2017, 40% of WCC students use Mobile Devices to access Blackboard.
- Users are used to scrolling on Social Media, including Facebook, Instagram, etc.
- Manageable chunks.
- Linear Design.

Accessibility

- Fonts
 - Style
 - Size
 - Color
- Files
- ALT Tags
- Contrast
- Closed Captioning
- Alternate Assignments



So, how did we do it?

Starting Point

- Online Learning Advisory Team (OLAT) Course Review Checklist

COURSE REVIEW CHECKLIST				
<p>Achieving excellence in online and blended courses is an ongoing challenge as best practices, technologies, and legal requirements change over time. This checklist reflects current guidelines and best practices, informed by sources such as the Americans with Disabilities Act, Quality Matters, Universal Design guidelines, and WCC's expectations for online and blended courses.</p> <p>The goal of this checklist is to identify strengths and areas for improvement for the course. Strengths help to shape WCC's online and blended standards and areas for improvement are addressed in collaboration with an Instructional Designer.</p>				
	<i>If desired, you can put comments below the prompt.</i>	Yes	Unsure/ Maybe	No
Clarity	The course syllabus contains all the information students need to be successful in the course. (Content and Structure of Course Design)			
Clarity	The requirements and expectations for student interaction are clear and easy to understand. (Community Building)			
Clarity	Course outcomes and objectives are clearly stated in a visible location. (Learning Objectives)			
Clarity	The assessment grading criteria are clearly explained and easy for the student to understand. (Assessment Strategy for Student Performance)			
Clarity	Assignments, activities, and due dates are easy to access and understand. (Content and Structure of Course Design)			
Clarity	Students easily understand how to access all of the course information and materials needed. (Content and Structure of Course Design)			
Rigor	Course learning objectives and outcomes are consistent with the current and approved WCC Master Syllabus. (Learning Objectives)			

Inspiration

- Online Learning Commission's (OLC) Rubric
- Quality Matters (QM)
- ADA/508 Compliance
- Other college's rubric for Online Learning



Process

- Instructional Designers met weekly for a month to work on the rubric.
- Showcased to OLAT who gave suggestions.
- Creative Manager finalized the design standards based on the course review rubric.
- Showcased to Vice President of Instruction



Final Product

Rubric

- 4 Sections
- 15 subsections
- 90 objectives

Section A1: Content Presentation – Part 1		
Does Not Meet	Meets	Exceeds
Learning Outcomes and Master Syllabus		
The learning outcomes stated in the course do not align with those that are stated in the Master Syllabus.	The Learning Outcomes stated in the course align with those that are stated in the Master Syllabus.	The Master Syllabus has been reviewed and updated for relevance.
Learning Outcomes and Unit/Module Level Objectives		
Objectives do not align with the learning outcome stated in the master syllabus.	Objectives align with the learning outcome stated in the master syllabus and are student-centered for clarity.	The module objectives are uniquely written for the learning activities in that specific module.
Placement of Unit/Module Level Objectives		
Objectives are not included in individual learning units/modules within the LMS.	Objectives are included in individual learning units/modules within the LMS.	Objectives are included in assessments within the LMS.
Clarity of Unit/Module Level Objectives		
Objectives do not clearly communicate demonstrable learning activities.	Objectives clearly communicate demonstrable learning activities.	
Alignment of Unit/Module Level Objectives		
According to Bloom's, the content and activities are not aligned to the appropriate level for the objectives.	According to Bloom's, the content and activities are aligned to the appropriate level for the objectives.	According to Bloom's, the assessments are aligned to the appropriate level for the objectives.
Criteria A1 – Part 1 Comments		

Checklist

- Based on the full rubric.
- Focuses on the meets expectations.
- Quick checklist for 100% reviews.

Course:		Review Date:			
Category	Expectation	Yes	No	Unclear	Required Actions
Rigor	Objectives are aligned with the Master Syllabus and are student-centered.				
Rigor	Objectives are listed in individual learning units/modules within the LMS.				
Rigor	Objectives clearly communicate demonstrable learning activities.				
Rigor	Content and activities are aligned to the appropriate Bloom's level for the objectives. Students are assessed on subjects aligned to course learning objectives.				
Rigor	Navigation is simple, intuitive, and consistent, enabling the user to easily locate materials and understand how to progress through the learning.				
Rigor	Content is organized and logically chunked into consumable segments in distinct learning units or modules.				
Rigor	Clear instructions to guide learners are directly embedded with the content, media, activity, and assessments.				
Rigor	Instructions are provided to students for external resources explaining what the product is, how to access and purchase, how the product is used, contact information, and help information/support.				

Design Standards

- Set-up standards
- Created tutorials based on the standards
- Created consistent courses

Content Organization

Course Orientation

The Course Orientation is an introduction to the course (please see Appendix A - Required Practices for the information to be included). In addition to an introduction to the course, the course orientation is also the starting part of the course. The following links must be included in the course orientation to promote student success:

- Course link to Syllabus and Schedule area
- Course link to attendance verification assignment
- Course link to first unit/module

Their link color is changed to #003399.

Learning Units and Modules Standards

Note: The learning units and modules may be different in your course. However, these should adhere to the standard currently defined in our template, unless alterations were made and approved during your development cycle and reviewed while working with a member of the CiTL staff.

Learning Units and Modules are created using the Content Folder. They are named with the Unit/Module Number and the name of the Module. Their link color is changed to #003399.

What have we gained?



- Consistency from course to course.
- Tutorials to make it easier for faculty.
- Start of an on-boarding process for faculty developers.

Leveraging the OLC Scorecard to Evaluate Online Programs



**Baker
College**

Baker College

- Founded in 1911
- Nine campuses throughout Michigan (dedicated Online campus)

The Mission of Baker College is to provide quality higher education and training which enables graduates to be successful throughout challenging and rewarding careers.

- Started offering online courses in 1996.
- Baker College Online Quality Statement:

The College's Online Learning Model ensures that faculty, students, and the institution have rigorous expectations, a high level of engagement, and a strong commitment to success.

What is OLC and Why are We Talking About It?

OLC - Online Learning Consortium

“The Online Learning Consortium (OLC) is the leading professional organization devoted to advancing quality online learning by providing professional development, instruction, best practice publications, and guidance to educators, online learning professionals and organizations around the world.”

www.onlinelearningconsortium.org

Baker College

- Completed OLC Scorecard process. Exemplary rating awarded in 2016 - highest level of endorsement from OLC Quality Scorecard.
- First college to earn this level of endorsement for all online programs, as an institution.

OLC Scorecard / Accreditation

- Accreditation and endorsement for Online learning
- Benchmarking with other Online Institutions
- How to identify strengths and opportunities to drive quality improvement?
 - Baker Online Experience
- Our Online Learning Model helped lead the way
 - Created in 2015 by our Academic Quality Leadership Committee at our Online campus

Online Learning Model



Baker College provides students a quality online education experience. The College's Online Learning Model ensures that faculty, students and the institution have rigorous expectations, a high level of engagement, and a strong commitment to success

OLC Scorecard Process

- Comprehensive
- Aligned with mission and guiding principles of Baker College
- Collaborative partnership of interdepartmental committee members
 - Identify a goal and need of the accreditation process
 - Conduct an internal analysis of the scorecard
 - Conduct internal peer review
 - Submit for review and feedback from OLC



OLC ScoreCard

- Categories
 - Institutional Support
 - Technology Support
 - Course Development/Instructional Design
 - Course Structure
 - Teaching and Learning
 - Social and Student Engagement
 - Faculty Support
 - Student Support
 - Evaluation and Assessment

Quality Scorecard for the Administration of Online Programs		
0 = Deficient 1 = Developing 2 = Accomplished 3 = Exemplary		
INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT (27 POINTS)		
SCORE		
1	The institution has a governance structure to enable clear, effective, and comprehensive decision making related to online education.	
2	The institution has policy and guidelines that confirm a student who registers in an online course or program at the same institution who also fulfills in and completes the course or program and receives academic credit. This is done by working the interests of a student by using methods such as a secure login and password, document authentication, or (2) other technologies and practices that are effective in verifying student identity.	
3	The institution has a policy for intellectual property of course materials, specifically addresses online course materials and its publicly visible online.	
4	The institution has defined the strategic value of online learning to its enterprise and stakeholders.	
5	The organizational structure of the online program supports the institution's mission, vision, and strategic plan.	
6	The online program's strategic plan is reviewed for its learning objectives, and periodically updated and updated.	
7	The institution has a process for planning and allocating resources for the online program, including financial resources, in accordance with strategic planning.	
8	The institution demonstrates sufficient resource allocation, including financial resources, in order to effectively support the mission of online education.	
9	The institution has a governance structure to enable systematic and consistent improvement related to the administration of online education.	
TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT (21 POINTS)		
SCORE		
1	A documented technology plan that includes electronic security, disaster prep., password protection, encryption, secure online or proctored exams, etc. is in place and operational to ensure quality, in accordance with established standards and regulatory requirements.*	

Note: The order of quality indicators within each category does not signify rank of importance. They are provided in random order.

OLC Online Learning Consortium

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OLC Scorecard Categories

- **Institutional Support**: Governance structure, policies, resource support, strategy related to OL learning
- **Technology Support**: Technology plan, delivery systems, technology infrastructure, training for technology
- **Course Development/Instructional Design**: Processes and quality assurance measures from initial development through to evaluation of course, policies and practices related to course development.

OLC Scorecard Categories

- **Course Structure**: Includes specific items, resources, and access to promote student success, clear expectations, technical support, clear guidelines and expectations
- **Teaching and Learning**: Student-faculty interaction, feedback, teaching strategies, instructor presence
- **Social and Student Engagement**: Student interaction with other students in online community

OLC Scorecard Categories

- **Faculty Support**: Clear standards and guidelines, technical assistance, access to resources, training and professional development
- **Student Support**: Engagement of students, advising, focus on student success, clear transfer of information to students, access to resources, disability services
- **Evaluation and Assessment**: Assessment of programs, learning outcomes, support services, retention, recruitment, assessability, and more including continuous improvement strategies

Continuous Improvement

- Goal
- Evidence
- Identified gaps
- Initial submission
- Feedback
- Final Submission
- Exemplary outcomes



What have we gained

- Analysis of existing practices
 - Culture of quality
 - Value of data collection
 - Effective communication practices
- Opportunities to improve
 - Feedback that is put in action
 - Feedback that does not lead to action
- Validation of reliable quality measure that is being used

What can you gain

- Institutional initiative that leads to quality improvement
- Clear identification of strengths and opportunities
- Opportunity to allocate resources with data driven feedback
- Validation of what you have to offer to the stakeholders.

Choices and Lessons Learned

- Using a single instrument to evaluate course quality vs. using multiple best practice sources and authorities to create an internal quality review instrument
- Important to assess quality of courses first
- Many options in benchmarking with external sources in the field - (OLC, USDLA, Quality Matters, etc.)
 - Identify the institution's goals for this process.
 - Review and select the organization that relates to your goals, courses, programs, stakeholders

Questions & Contact Information



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