

Applying Quality Matters Standards to Blended & Online Courses - A Case Study

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Overview of this Presentation

- Introduction to Case Study
- Definition of Terms: Online & Blended
- Overview of Quality Matters Standards
- Adoption of QA Standards at NLU
- Implementation of the QM Program
- Current Status of NLU's Online & Blended courses

Case Study

- Overview of National Louis University
- Online Enrollment: increased 235% over 10 years
- Current Online Enrollment: 10% of all enrollment
- CMB and Templates - 2008
- Senate Academic & Technology Committee – 11/12
- Online Course Development Policy – 2012
- Application to become a QM Institution - 2013
- Implementation of Quality Matters standards - ongoing

Online Course Development Policy

- National Louis University's Online Course Development Policy is part of a comprehensive academic system dedicated to supporting and sustaining excellence and continuous improvement of NLU's offerings in online and blended courses.
- This policy structures and guides NLU's institutional efforts in online course development, redevelopment, course assessment, and course certification using an external continuous improvement program to set quality standards.
- Through a faculty consensus-building process and with approval of the NLU Faculty Senate, NLU has selected the Quality Matters Program as its external frame of reference for assuring quality in online and blended courses.

Quality Matters

Quality Matters (QM) is a nationally recognized, faculty-centered, peer review process designed to certify the quality of online courses and online components.

Colleges and universities across the country use the tools in developing, maintaining and reviewing their online courses and in training their faculty.

Principles of the Quality Matters Rubric & Process

- Continuous
 - The process is designed to ensure that all reviewed courses will eventually meet expectations.
 - The rubric-based review is integral to a continuous quality improvement process
- Centered
 - On research - The development of the rubric is based in national standards of best practice, the research literature and instructional design principles
 - On student learning - The rubric and process are designed to promote student learning
 - On quality - The review sets a quality goal at about the 85% level or better

Quality Matters Rubric & Process- continued

- Collegial
 - A Quality Matters review is part of a faculty-driven, peer review process
 - The review process is intended to be diagnostic and collegial, not evaluative and judgmental
- Collaborative
 - The review is based on collaboratively identified evidence found in the course rather than the personal preference of an individual reviewer
 - The review is flexible and not prescriptive (many ways to meet each standard)
 - The review team consists of three experienced online instructors
 - as reviewers along with the course faculty developer

Quality Matters – Eight General Standards

1. Course Overview & Introduction
2. Learning Objectives - Competencies
3. Assessment & Measurement
4. Instructional Materials
5. Course Activities & Learner Interaction
6. Course Technology
7. Learner Support
8. Accessibility & Usability

1: Course Overview & Introduction

- General Standard 1 –
 - The overall design of the course is made clear to the learner at the beginning of the course.
- Overview statement –
 - The course overview and introduction set the tone for the course, let learners know what to expect, and provide guidance to ensure learners get off to a good start.

2: Learning Objectives - Competencies

- General Standard 2 –
 - Learning objectives or competencies describe what learners will be able to do upon completion of the course.
- Overview statement –
 - The learning objectives or competencies establish a foundation upon which the rest of the course is based.

3: Assessment & Measurement

- General Standard 3 -
 - Assessments are integral to the learning process and are designed to evaluate learner progress in achieving the stated learning objectives or mastering the competencies.
- Overview statement –
 - Assessment is implemented in a manner that corresponds to the course learning objectives or competencies and not only allows the instructor a broad perspective on the learners' mastery of content but also allows learners to track their learning progress throughout the course.

4: Instructional Materials

- General Standard 4 –
 - Instructional materials enable learners to achieve stated learning objectives or competencies.
- Overview statement –
 - The focus of this standard is on supporting the course objectives and competencies, rather than on qualitative judgments about the instructional materials.

5: Course Activities & Learner Interaction

- General Standard 5 –
 - Course activities facilitate and support learner interaction and engagement.
- Overview statement –
 - Course components that promote active learning contribute to the learning process and to learner persistence.

6: Course Technology

- General Standard 6 –
 - Course technologies support learners' achievement of course objectives or competencies.
- Overview statement –
 - The technology enabling the various course components facilitates rather than impedes the learning process.

7: Learner Support

- General Standard 7 –
 - The course facilitates learner access to institutional support services essential to learner success.
- Overview statement –
- It is important to ensure online learners know they have access to and are encouraged to use the services that support learners at the institution. Four different kinds of support services are addressed: technical support, accessibility support, academic services support, & student services support.

8: Accessibility & Usability

- General Standard 8 -
 - The course design reflects a commitment to accessibility and usability for all learners.
- Overview statement –
 - The course design reflects a commitment to accessibility, so that all learners can access all course content and activities, and to usability, so that all learners can easily navigate and interact with course components.

The Value of a University-Wide Course Template

- Easily recognized & navigated course for students – across colleges
- Easily recognized & navigated course for faculty – across colleges – including adjuncts
- A single repository for all course related material

Summary

- QM Course Templates Benefit the Students
- QM Course Templates Benefit the Faculty
- QM Course Templates Benefit the University

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