Can Existing Quality Guidelines Inform Faculty Participation in Online Course Design?

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Importance of Quality

• According to the Babson Survey Research Group's 2012 survey of more than 2800 academic leaders, "the proportion of [those] who say online learning is critical to their long-term strategy is at a new high of 69.1%." 

• As higher education institutions increase their online learning offerings, the process of creating an online course can be underestimated.
Familiar Scenarios?

- Instructional design teams working with faculty member subject-matter-experts
- Faculty development groups creating “training” for faculty members who are required to teach their courses online
- Faculty members without institutional support who want/need to create online courses
- Creating a standard course format for a range of disciplines, students, degree levels ...
Familiar Restrictions & Challenges?

• We need it now, or next week at the latest, last week would have been better.
• We don’t have a budget for this.
• Students are already enrolled!?
• Resistance to online delivery.
• Unfamiliar with instructional design process.
• Standardized course design process and products.
• Faculty members “on staff” vs. contracted “from the outside.”
How do YOU define and measure *quality* in online course design?
• “The goal of accreditation is to ensure that education provided by institutions of higher education meets acceptable levels of quality.” – U.S. Dept. of Education

• Observations from around the Web ... quality metrics as:
  – “Common sense checklists”
  – Overemphasis on what can be easily documented and observed
  – A general starting point, a framework
  – Needing benchmark data – online and on-campus sections
How do others define and measure *quality* in online course design?

**Subjective or Objective**

**Informal or Formal**

*In-house standards, policies, reviews*

And ...
How do others define and measure *quality* in online course design?

**Established criteria:**

- Quality Matters Rubric
- Quality Scorecard
- Cal State – Chico’s Rubric for Online Instruction
  [http://www.csuchico.edu/roi/](http://www.csuchico.edu/roi/)
- iNACOL Quality Standards (K-12)
Quality Matters (QM) Rubric
https://www.qualitymatters.org/rubric

- 8 General Standards / 41 Specific Standards
- Focus on COURSE-level decisions, evaluation
- Concept of alignment
- Teams of reviewers
Quality Scorecard (QS)

http://sloanconsortium.org/quality_scorecard_online_program

• 9 categories, 70 indicators
• Focus on PROGRAM-level decisions, evaluation
• Designed with online administrators in mind
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Implementing Quality Measures in Online Course Design
Are faculty involved in discussions and decisions about quality?
“The greatest concerns about e-learning are the adequacy of staff and the technological know-how of faculty.” – *EDUCAUSE: ECAR State of E-Learning in Higher Education, June 2013*

“Faculty Concerns in Adopting Online Teaching” include Professional Development, Workload, Recognition, Change, Support from Department. – *Hwu and Talab, April 2013*
Implementing Quality Measures in Online Course Design - Faculty Participation

Knowledge areas:

- Whole program curriculum: Provide access to other courses, sequence (QS)
- Outline set of tasks, requirements, and deadlines for course project (QM)
  - Tech required to complete their part of the process (Word, Google Drive, Skype ...)
  - Single point of contact for questions about process and quality standards

What quality standards/framework used by school/program? Set expectations for use in design process.
Implementing Quality Measures in Online Course Design - Faculty Participation

Strategies:
- Present QM and QS as third-party experts in the process
  - Research-based instruments
  - Testimonials, mentorship from in-house faculty members, other schools using the standards
- Invite to participate as part of a lean team with a project management approach
- Encourage experimental atmosphere within chosen quality framework
- Provide SME/Faculty Designer/Instructor training resources, incentives
How can we (will you) move forward?

• Common concerns
  – Time, Buy-in, ...
• Need to stay flexible – keep context in mind
• Who is leading your online quality?
• Who should be involved in your online quality effort?
References

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• Concurrent Instructional Design: How to Produce Online Courses Using a Lean Team Approach
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