Designing Engaging Online/Blended Courses

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Technology and Distance Learning Symposium 2019
Agenda

• Persistence in an Online and Blended Learning Environments
• Importance of Course Quality
• Course Quality Indicators
• Course Design and Layout
• Designing for Engagement
• Course Engagement Indicators
Top 5 Key Factors to Success in an Online Course

• Satisfaction with online learning
• A sense of belonging to a learning community
• Support
• Time management skills
• Quality of interactions and feedback
Common Barriers to Persistence

• Auditory learning style
• Lack of digital literacy
• Difficulty in accessing resources
• Isolation and Decreased Engagement
• Lack of computer access
• Personal life barriers
• Poor communication
Importance of Assuring Course Design Quality

• Good design solves a problem and communicates a message: every eLearning design project has a definite purpose (or should)

• First Impression is almost always the last impression: first impressions of online content are 94% design related

• Design is closely connected to engagement

• User experience and usability helps achieve your learning goals

• Good design inspires to take action

• Good design helps learners recall
Course Quality Indicators

• Course overview and information
• Course technology and tools
• Design and Layout
• Content and Activities
• Interaction
• Assessment and Feedback
Course Design and Layout: Application of User-Friendly Technology

How

• **Learning Management Systems (LMS):** Moodle, Canvas, Loud Cloud

• **Webinars:** via Adobe Connect, Zoom, GoToWebinar, etc.

• **Use of Media:** graphics, video streaming, interactive media (apps such as polls, quizzes)

Why

• Structure, consistency, ease of access to course materials (including eBooks, PDF downloads, etc.)

• Interaction, engagement, connect a face to a name, discussion in real-time

• Enhance course text and comprehension, address various learning styles, provide interest, learn technical skills for use outside classroom
Course Design and Layout: Technology Considerations

• Access to computer
• System requirement
• Skills required and support resources provided (orientation, website, software, hardware)
• Ability to easily access all tech tools and apps
Course Design and Layout: Visual Appeal and Consistency

- Structure, organization, consistency ("block" and format text)
- Uncluttered; use of whitespace ("breathing room")
- Color-code; color contrast
- Limit number of fonts (minimum 12-point, sans serif, e.g. Arial, Tahoma)
- Clear instructions
- Linear format preferred; use pre-formatting
• User-friendly, consistent navigation
• Graphics with text descriptions
• Tables have titles, description, row and column headers
• Slideshows have slide title, manual transitions
Course Quality Indicators

Tools for Success: Scorecard and Dashboard

• OQSCR
• Interactive Rubric
• Interactive Dashboard
• Request your own (it’s free!): https://oscqr.org/get-oscqr/
Course Engagement Indicators

- Vision of learning
- Technology
- Instructors Role
- Tasks
- Grouping

- Instructional Model
- Assessment
- Learning Context
- Student Role
Designing for Engagement: Technology

• **Interconnectivity:** allows interaction by communicating in various ways

• **Access to challenging tasks:** offers or allows access to tasks, data, and learning opportunities that stimulate thought and inquiry

• **Enables learning by doing:** offers access to simulations, goals-based learning, and real-world problems and productivity tools

• **Media Use:** provides opportunities to use and create digital media
• Indicators of Engaged Learning Online: http://bit.ly/2DZwhBr

• Faculty Check List: https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11528-017-0239-4/tables/3

• Student Check List : https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11528-017-0239-4/tables/4
Resources


