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Benchmarking Quality in Online Teaching and Learning: A Rubric for Course Construction and Evaluation

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Abstract

Online courses have many components and dimensions. Both the form (structure) and the content (expression) are situated in an overall environment. The sum of these elements results in student outcomes and learning. In order to facilitate construction and evaluate the quality of an online course, a four-part rubric was designed to reflect:

Structure (Context, Organization, and Environment)
Content (Presentation of Information)
Processes (Relationships and Interactions)
Outcomes (Mastery of Content and Course Evaluation)

This rubric was designed to provide quantitative and qualitative standardized evaluation for faculty self-evaluation, peer evaluation, and administrator evaluation. The rubric was piloted at two universities and shown to be highly effective in eliciting effective and usable feedback for course instructors and program directors. It was concluded that a uniform rubric that can be applied to any discipline could facilitate evaluation of all online courses within a program to a set standard that can then be used for course enhancement and improvement with structured comprehensive evaluation from instructors, peers, or program directors. It was found that a well-designed course (structure), with relevant and credible information (content), as well as mechanisms for interaction and collaboration (processes), could result in enhanced student learning (outcomes).

Keywords: Distance Education, Online Learning, Instructional Design

Web-based, or online, teaching is grounded in cyberspace and allows students the flexibility to learn anytime and anyplace, and at a time when they choose to focus on the course content. It gives the student and the teacher time for reflection and a

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means for all to participate and interact. This opportunity eliminates many of the barriers related to traditional classroom learning. A majority of the research related to the effectiveness of online learning demonstrates that there are few differences in outcomes. In fact, it is purported that Web-based learning is "just as good" as traditional, face-to-face instruction (Allen & Seaman, 2006, Armstrong, Gessner, & Cooper, 2000; Herther, 1997).

There are two issues that must be addressed in online courses. The first is the quality of the teaching tool and the second is the quality of the learning that takes place. The quality of learning from online courses is well established (Allen & Seaman, 2006; Buckley, 2003; DeBourgh, 2003) and the benchmarks for quality of the online course are available in a myriad of sources (Billings, 2000; Jairath & Stair, 2004; Phipps & Merisotis, 2000; Richard, Mercer, & Bray, 2005). The rubric instrument developed by the authors and described in this article can be used as an evaluation tool to determine if your course maximizes technology in course construction to enhance quality pedagogy. This rubric is different than those previously developed (Keinath & Blicker, 2003; Wolf & Stevens, 2007) as it can be used to assess both course construction and learning outcomes.

Growth of Online Learning

The growth of online learning has been rapid and phenomenal. From the early correspondence model of distance education provided by the U.S. postal system in the 1800s to today's campus portal access using multimedia, Internet, and computer media communications, distance learning has evolved into a technology-driven, student-demanded market. An estimated
3.2 million students are using online learning technology, substantially increased from the previous year of 2.3 million students; and universities are reporting that online learning is critical to long-term strategies (Allen & Seaman, 2006). Palloff and Pratt (2001) reported that almost 90% of institutions with enrollments of 10,000 or more are offering some form of Web-based education. Hosie and Schibeci (2005) noted that education and global learning is its own "mega trend." Predictions abound regarding the virtual university of the world without any national boundaries (Moe & Blodget, 2000; Taylor, 2001). There should be no doubt that online learning is vital to all disciplines involved in education in the 21st century.

Online Learning in the Health Sciences

A call for the health sciences to use Internet technology as a tool for delivering education has been issued for some time now (Cobb & Baird, 1999; Franck & Langenkamp, 2000; Thurmond, Wambach, Connors, & Frey, 2002). Although one would be hard pressed today to find a medical or nursing program that is not using some type of Web-based education, educators and students have not readily embraced this educational tool (Frase-Blunt, 2000; Monke, 2005/2006; Reynard, 2007; Schmitt, Titler, Herr, & Ardery, 2004; Sit, Chung, Chow, & Wong, 2004).

Research related to online learning is varied and includes comparing learning in the traditional classroom with Web-based education, comparing group discourse in the "wall-less" classroom with cyberspace learning, and evaluating online course development and effectiveness. There is little research related to evaluation tools of course construction to support faculty in effectively conveying content to students online. In a study conducted by Arbaugh in 2000, students involved in Web-based courses actually conversed more than those in a traditional classroom.

Online delivery is a relatively new addition to the educational methods used in schools for health sciences. Although much effort has been directed toward development of methodology, less emphasis has been placed on the evaluation of the strategies used to deliver the content. As programs move to increase the course offerings using online delivery, it is imperative that faculty develop a systematic method of evaluating the online strategies used in course delivery.

Issues in Online Learning

There are many issues swirling around the use of online teaching and learning. Some of these include faculty readiness and willingness, administrative and infrastructure support, accessibility, student success, costs, efficiency and effectiveness issues. Each of these issues is multifaceted and involves the development and implementation of specific policies and procedures. Provision of a framework that will allow for consistent and coherent technology, software, and course design decisions is crucial. For example, can course content be delivered online (no face to face contact with teacher) or through a hybrid/enhanced medium (one that is partially face to face and partially online). In the hybrid course, the online portion must meet "best practices" for online learning, as well as, "best practices" for classroom learning. Hybrid courses can be very enticing to a student who may not have the time or finances to be on site several days a week during a semester but can come at known intervals. The hybrid method may also be appealing to teachers who are new to online teaching and may not yet "trust" this medium as pedagogically capable.

Faculty support and effectiveness of online delivery were two of the major concerns that led to the development of a rubric that can standardize evaluation of an online course. This rubric can be used for course enhancement and improvement with structured comprehensive evaluation by the instructor (self-evaluation), colleagues (peer evaluation), or deans and directors (program evaluation or external evaluation). In this way, faculty can use the rubric to assist with both design and evaluation of a course. Part of advancing faculty development as online course designers and facilitators is to have a conceptualization framework, which allows for a way to visualize the various elements that exist in online teaching. The rubric is a framework that can provide this means of conceptualization.

Rubrics

A rubric is a model or template that can be used as an evaluation instrument for assessment of a body of work aligned with set standards. According to Wolf & Stevens (2007) "rubrics improve teaching, contribute to sound assessment, and are an important source of information for program improvement" (p. 3). A good rubric can facilitate a definition of excellence, communicate exemplary practices, communicate goals or expectations, and allow for accurate and consistent evaluation of a body of work by documenting the procedures used in making judgments. A rubric organizes and clarifies criteria along a continuum in such a way that two individuals who apply the rubric to a body of work will generally arrive at a similar score. The greater the agreement between the scores assigned by two independent assessors is a measure of the reliability and interrater reliability of the rubric as an assessment tool. The rubric developed by the researchers (Figure 1) was designed to be a general rubric instrument using terms that were not discipline-specific. In other words, a conscious effort was made to choose terms that were generic to all online courses.

Development and Testing of the Rubric

An extensive review of the literature indicated that limited strategies exist for evaluation of online course construction and delivery. Keinath and Blicker (2003) developed a rubric to assess readiness of online courses prior to course delivery. This was used to expedite feedback to instructors and ensure consistency of site review, meaning that instructors could use the rubric to review basic elements prior to the start of an online course. The rubric was then further tested to identify the "student-readiness" of a site. Whereas course readiness is evaluated prior to the start date of the course, the rubric described herein expands beyond readiness, to include the concepts of content, interactions and processes, as well as summative evaluation.

The process of development of our rubric was creative, innovative and straightforward. The three developers agreed to the general goal of the creation of a rubric to evaluate overall online course delivery. The first step in the process was an evaluation of the literature, discussions with other faculty and students, and reflection on courses taught via the Internet. The developers then discussed all the information and agreed on a general structure for a rubric with four dimensions: (a) Structure, which encompasses context, organization, and environment; (b) Content, which encompasses the presentation of information; (c) Processes, which encompasses human aspects, relationships, interactions, and quality; and (d) Outcomes, which encompasses student learning and mastery of content, as well as course evaluation. Each of the major dimensions has several components, which can be measured both quantitatively and qualitatively. It was hypothesized that a well-designed course (structure), with relevant and credible information (content), as well as mechanisms for interaction and collaboration (processes), can result in enhanced student learning (outcomes).

In examining each of these four overarching dimensions, various elements and sub-elements emerged. These elements and sub-elements were discussed over a series of teleconferences. As this was a creative process with the developers having a thorough understanding of the literature and a combined over 10 years of online teaching, it was decided that the best way to synthesize our knowledge and experience was to jointly develop the first dimension of "Structure". The initial development of the first dimension involved each developer writing definitions for the elements and compiling the findings. Teleconferences were held to refine and consolidate the definitions for the first dimension. At this point in the development process, the developers individually tested the first dimension, which resulted in further refinements in each of the elements, as well as the definitions related to the presence or absence of certain attributes. The first testing facilitated the development process for the remaining three dimensions. As in any creative process, the development of an instrument is not always linear, and many times during the development of the rubric, elements and sub-elements of other dimensions would emerge from the work. In developing each part of the rubric, data from one dimension would also inform the development of elements in other dimensions. Refinements to the rubric continued over a period of 6 months.

The rubric was pilot tested at two universities with a convenience sample. Six faculty members from different departments who had more than two years of experience in online teaching were recruited to complete the rubrics and offer their comments. Recruitment occurred by the developers asking three faculty members from different departments at each university site to use the rubric to evaluate any online course they were teaching. No formal training on use of the rubric was provided. Data gathered from the pilot was primarily qualitative in nature, with extensive comments written on the rubrics provided by the developers for the pilot testing process. Data were analyzed using a constant comparative method to allow for emergent themes. The developers were all experienced in online course delivery and thus credible and reliable instruments to analyze and interpret the qualitative pilot data. All three developers independently evaluated the comments from the pilot data related to both the scoring process and the open-ended comments sections. The developers then compared the results. Overall the comments reflected that the faculty involved in the pilot test thought that the rubric proved to be highly effective in eliciting valuable and usable feedback for course instructors and program directors related to both course construction and course evaluation. Specific suggestions were made for development of various elements and sub-elements within the rubric. Refinements were then accomplished by the developers based on the evaluation of pilot data.

The next step was to establish content validity. Using the revised rubric, three experts in online teaching, who had greater than five years of experience and were not at the two pilot university sites, were recruited to evaluate the rubric for content validity. These experts were given the rubric, selected literature, and were asked to use their experiential knowledge to ascertain if the rubric was 1) overall a

good measure for course evaluation and 2) if the dimensions, elements and sub-elements were inclusive and valid. Content validity was thus established via this review by three external experts.

At the same time, the developers engaged in a process to determine reliability of the rubric. The three developers tested the rubric on two courses they could access online, for a total of six courses, then retested one to two weeks later, for test-retest reliability. Each developer reported on the overall reliability for both the scoring and qualitative remarks. The instrument was found to be reliable. Minimal adjustments to the rubric were accomplished after the content validity and reliability assessments.

Evaluation Rubric

The four-part rubric is divided into the four major dimensions: Structure, Content, Processes, and Outcomes. After each section, there is a page allocated to comments; and at the end of the rubric, there is a page allocated to comments about the overall course. The rubric is presented in Figure 1.

The most straightforward areas of the rubric with evaluation criteria that is evident and visible to most educators are the first and third sections related to course structure and processes. A more advanced evaluation is needed of the second and last areas, content and outcomes, as these areas require a knowledge of the content, a certain amount of expertise in the subject matter, and the ability to discern what is most important and relevant in learning the material. To effectively evaluate the content presented and student outcomes, the reviewer would need to understand the discipline, the subject, and be knowledgeable of the current state of the science/art and landmarks within the field. To a certain extent this is also true of evaluating the processes and interactions between the faculty and the students, although if faculty and students are engaged in dialogue most educators can determine if learning and effective communications are present. An example of a completed content section of the rubric is presented in Table 1.

A program administrator can use the rubric to review several courses, or the same course over time, with standardized criteria. An example of an instrument grid to facilitate a review of the same course during different semesters is presented in Table 2.

Conclusions

The *Online Course Construction and Evaluation Rubric* serves multiple purposes: it is a mechanism for self-evaluation, peer evaluation, and administrator, program director, and/or dean evaluation; it can be used to design or facilitate an online and hybrid/enhanced course; and it can be used to enhance the creation of a collaborative online learning environment. It was concluded that a uniform rubric that can be applied to any discipline could facilitate evaluation of all online and

hybrid/enhanced courses to a set standard that can then be used by faculty and program directors to promote faculty development and subsequent student learning, as well as course evaluation, course design, and the creation of an online collaborative learning environment. However, as with any tool, there are limitations. Technology and software mediums are rapidly expanding educational boundaries. The use and effectiveness of technology such as live video, Captivate© and WIMBA© are difficult to evaluate. Partnering with technology specialists could provide a fluid framework for the development of essential elements related to technological advances. Additionally, any tool is really only as good as its user. The more skilled and knowledgeable the person using this tool, the more data and better judgments can be elicited. For example, only a person with knowledge and expertise on a particular subject can determine if the content presented is truly an accurate, in-depth, appropriate treatment of the subject matter and if the assignments, interactions, and evaluations are substantive and conducive to learning.

Advances in technology and demands from consumers are driving changes in educational methodologies. Online learning will continue to expand and be recognized as a valuable educational tool. Institutions and educators from all disciplines must keep pace with these changes by providing a learning environment that will meet the demands of consumers and stakeholders. Development of effective methods for evaluation of online courses is an important step in meeting the challenges of online teaching and learning.

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Figure 1:

Online Course Construction and Evaluation Rubric ©

INSTRUCTIONS:

There are four major dimensions to the online course evaluation rubric:

- Structure -- Context/Organization/Environment
- Content -- Presentation of Information
- Processes -- Human Aspects/Relationships/Interactions/Quality
- Outcomes -- Mastery of Content and Course Evaluation

There are both quantitative and qualitative measures. Each element within the overall dimension can be scored with 0 to 3 points, with a numerical total summed for each dimension. Qualitative evaluation can be accomplished via comments on each element, each dimension, or overall course design.

Structure – Context/Organization/Environment

	Element	0	1	2	3	Score	Comments
STRUCTURE	**Course Design Framework**	No framework for guiding student throughout the course, navigation to course areas is not apparent	Limited framework is apparent – the home page includes beginnings of navigation to course areas	The framework for course delivery is apparent and includes limited guidance for navigation throughout the course	Framework for delivery is apparent The home page is designed to ensure ease of navigation throughout the course		
	Course Design – Segmenting of Content, i.e., Learning Units or Learning Modules	No modules/course segments exist for content, only assignments are listed	Several course modules exist, but progression between course modules/ information segments is not apparent	Course modules are self-contained and progression is less apparent and not based on learning objectives	Course modules are self-contained and have varying lengths depending on the learning objectives, with apparent progression to facilitate learning		
	Appearance of Material	Poor color choice – harsh to eyes/difficult to read Icons are "busy" and not uniform in style and appearance	Color scheme minimal Minimal uniformity of icon style	Color scheme is acceptable Icons are acceptable in uniformity of style	Appearance is appealing/ easy to read Appropriate color choice that is easy on the eyes All icons are uniform in style and color		

STRUCTURE	Element	0	1	2	3	Score	Comments
	Scrolling Within the Course or Within Documents	Requires extensive scrolling to find information within frames	Framed information somewhat lengthy, requires more than minimal scrolling	Information is appropriately framed with more than minimal scrolling required	Information is appropriately framed with minimal scrolling required		
	Assignment Navigation	Assignments within the course are difficult to find	Assignments within the course are found with minimal searching	Assignments are easily found within the course	Assignments are easily discernable within the course A site map is available		
	Accessibility	There is no evidence that students with disabilities are accommodated in this course	Minimal efforts are obvious related to accommodation of students with disabilities	Limited accommodations are evident with some obvious alternative delivery methods	Accommodations to students with disabilities are evident and alternative delivery methods are available		
	Variety of Assessments **- Assignments** **- Discussions** **- Quizzes** **- Surveys**	No variety in assessments is evident Instructions for assessments are minimal and unclear	At least two types of assessments are evident Instructions are provided, but are confusing	At least two types of assessments are evident Instructions are provided but are limited	At least three types of assessments are evident Clear and concise instructions are provided		

STRUCTURE	Element	0	1	2	3	Score	Comments
	Use of Online Gradebook	Online gradebook is not used	Partial use of online gradebook; only some of the assessments are reflected in the gradebook	All assessments are reflected in the gradebook, but only some grades are posted	Online gradebook is fully used All of the assessments are reflected in the gradebook and all grades are posted		
	Learning Resources	No learning resources are posted	Learning resources are minimal	Learning resources exist in different areas but are not clearly articulated and links may or may not be active	Learning resources and links are comprehensive, clearly articulated, and current/active		
	Appearance of Learner Support/ Feedback **- Feedback Methods**	Communication methods with the students are not evident	Communication methods exist but are not well used	Communication methods with the students exist and are used more than 50% of the time	Communication methods with the students are comprehensive via accessibility to email and discussions		
	Context for Learning Community where students interact with one another and the instructor **- Discussions** **- Chat Rooms** **- Virtual Classes**	No evidence of the establishment of a learning community	Learning community is established via at least two discussions	Learning community is established via at least three discussions	Learning community is established via regular discussions and virtual classes/chats		

	Element	0	1	2	3	Score	Comments
STRUCTURE	**Use of Technology/ Course Tools,** (i.e., Email, Asynchronous Discussions, Synchronous Chat Rooms/ Virtual Classes, Calendar, Gradebook, External Links, Quizzes/Surveys, Group Areas, Student Home Pages and Presentations, etc.)	Only one to two course tools are used in course delivery	Only three course tools are used in course delivery	Only four or five course tools are used in course delivery	More than five course tools are used in course delivery		
	Use of Instructional Media (i.e. Media Presentations, Animated/ Voiceover Presentations, Learning Modules, Notes, Streaming Video, Internet Links, Case Studies, etc.)	Only one to two varieties of instructional media are used in course delivery	Only three varieties of instructional media are used in course delivery	Only four or five varieties of instructional media are used in course delivery	More than five varieties of instructional media are used in course delivery		

Structure – Context/Organization/Environment
Comments related to structure and the development of a collaborative learning environment:

Content – Presentation of Information

	Element	0	1	2	3	Score	Comments
CONTENT	**Content of Learning Modules or Content of Learning Segments**	No learning modules/units in course	Content in modules/units is inconsistent Lacks relevant material related to learning objectives and material is not current (resources used > 5 years) Does not have an introduction or a summary/ conclusion	Limited consistency from module to module Resources current and information relevant to learning objectives Only an introduction or summary/ conclusion is included	Modules/units are designed and presented in a uniform and consistent manner Resources are current (< 5 years) and information is relevant to learning objectives Information presented is manageable with both an introduction and a conclusion		
	Discussions - **Synchronous** - **Asynchronous**	No new information is presented or ideas previously stated are not reinforced in either asynchronous or synchronous discussions/ interactions	Faculty reinforces student ideas and student-presented information during asynchronous or synchronous discussions/ interactions	Faculty adds limited new information during asynchronous and/or synchronous discussions or interactions with students	Faculty adds to the body of knowledge and information presented during asynchronous and/or synchronous discussions or interactions with students		
	Links	No links to Web-based information are added to the learning modules or to the course	Minimal links are apparent in either the learning modules/units or the course; some are irrelevant	An appropriate number of relevant links add to the learning experience	An appropriate number of credible and relevant selected links add to the learning experience		

CONTENT	Element	0	1	2	3	Score	Comments
	Course and Unit Learning Objectives	Learning objectives/goals are not identified	Learning objectives/goals are identified but are not always measurable, behavioral, or appropriate in number for the content and time of the course	Measurable, behavioral learning objectives/goals or unit objectives are identified for the course, and at least one learning objective engages the learner in activities of analysis and synthesis	Measurable, behavioral learning objectives/goals or unit objectives are identified in the introduction to the course and the number is appropriate for the content and time for the course More than one learning objective engage the learner in activities of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation		
	Course Assignments, Readings, Activities and/or Projects	Assignments, activities, readings, and/or projects within the course are not related to learning objectives	Assignments, activities, readings, and/or projects within the course can be related to the learning objectives	Assignments, activities, readings, and/or projects within the course have a discussion of the purpose of the assignment related to learning objectives	Assignments, activities, readings, and/or projects within the course have a discussion of the purpose of the assignment related to learning objectives and are appropriate and manageable		
	Writing Style (Syntax, Grammar, Punctuation & Flow)	Course contains grammatical and sentence structural errors Numerous typing errors are present	Basic principles of grammar and sentence structure are present Numerous typing errors are present	Information within the course follows principles of grammar and sentence structure, and has few typing errors	Information within the course follows principles of grammar and sentence structure, and is without typing errors		

CONTENT	Element	0	1	2	3	Score	Comments
	Multimedia (Photos, Images, Video, Audio, etc.) and Metaphors Within the Context of the Content and Learning Experience	Multimedia and metaphor not used in the presentation of course content	Minimal use of multimedia and metaphor in the presentation of course content	Multimedia used throughout the course with limited use of metaphor OR A progressive metaphor was developed throughout the course, with a limited use of multimedia to illustrate course content	Multimedia used throughout the course along with a developed metaphor that reflects a progression of course content		
	Knowledge	Limited expertise evident in presentation of content	Inconsistent expertise in content area evident in presentation of knowledge	Expertise in content area evident in presentation of knowledge throughout the course	Expertise in content area evident in presentation of knowledge and in interactions with students		

Content – Presentation of Information
Comments related to content and the development of a collaborative learning environment:

Processes – Human Aspects, Relationships, Interactions, and Quality

	Element	0	1	2	3	Score	Comments
PROCESSES	**Interpersonal Interactions Faculty–Student Student–Student**	No evidence of interactions student-to-student and student-to-faculty	Minimal interactions are evident in either student-to-student or student-to-faculty exchanges	Both student-to-student and student-to-faculty interactions are present, but exchange of information and generation of ideas are superficial	Dynamic and thoughtful interactions are evident in student-to-student and student-to-faculty interactions, adding to a quality learning experience		
	Access to Faculty (Office Hours)	No office hours are posted	Office hours are posted	Office hours are posted for both phone, face-to-face, and virtual times Times vary to accommodate a variety of work schedules	Office hours are posted for both phone, face-to-face, and virtual times Times vary to accommodate a variety of work schedules Schedule of office hours increases frequency prior to due dates of major course requirements		

	Element	0	1	2	3	Score	Comments
PROCESSES	**Assessment of Learning Styles**	No assessment of learning styles is available	Some information is provided about skills and personality required for online learning	Specific information is provided about skills and personality required for successful course completion	Specific information about skills and personality required for completion of the course is presented Self-assessment tools are available for the learner, and feedback information regarding potential success with online courses is provided		
	Instructor and Learner Responsibilities & Guidelines for Online Learning	No guidelines are established for the learner related to learner and instructor responsibilities	Only guidelines related to learner and instructor responsibilities are evident	Some guidelines exist that establish learner and instructor responsibilities, online communication, and/or techniques to support the online learner; but guidelines are confusing	Clear guidelines are established for the learner that include learner and instructor responsibilities, online communication/ netiquette, and techniques to support the online learner		

Processes – Human Aspects, Relationships, Interactions, and Quality
Comments related to processes and the development of a collaborative learning environment:

Outcomes - Mastery of Content and Course Evaluation

Element		0	1	2	3	Score	Comments
OUTCOMES	**Student Work Reflects Mastery of Course Objectives**	Student work reflects basic achievement of course objectives	Student work reflects average understanding and achievement of course objectives	Student work demonstrates above average understanding and achievement of course objectives	Student work demonstrates mastery of course content and course objectives		
	Student Work Reflects Analysis, Synthesis, and Evaluation	Student work reflects basic knowledge, identification, or understanding	Student work reflects knowledge and some work reflects analysis of information	Student work demonstrates complexity with the majority of assignments below analysis, synthesis, or evaluation	Student work demonstrates progression of complexity from knowledge to the level of analysis, synthesis, or evaluation for major assignments		
	Online Course Evaluations	No student evaluation is requested for the course	Student online evaluation input is requested at the end of the course	Student online evaluation input is requested at the midpoint and end of the course	Student online evaluation input is requested at the midpoint, end of the course, and after major assignments are turned in		
	Learner satisfaction with the online learning experience	No rating scale for learner satisfaction	Majority of the learners rate the learning experience as not very satisfying	Majority of the learners rate the learning experience as satisfying	Majority of the learners rate the learning experience as highly satisfying		

Outcomes
Comments related to outcomes and the development of a collaborative learning environment:

Overall Course
Comments related to overall course:

Table 1. Example of Content Evaluation

	Element	0	1	2	3	Score	Comments
CONTENT	**Content of Learning Modules or Content of Learning Segments**	No learning modules/units in course	Content in modules/units is inconsistent Lacks relevant material related to learning objectives and material is not current (resources used > 5 years) Does not have an introduction or a summary/ conclusion	Limited consistency from module to module Resources current and information relevant to learning objectives Only an introduction or summary/ conclusion is included	Modules/units are designed and presented in a uniform and consistent manner Resources are current (< 5 years) and information is relevant to learning objectives Information presented is manageable with both an introduction and a conclusion	2	Although modules were used in the course, there was no consistency within the modules. For example, two of the modules had learner outcomes and 4 did not. It was also noted that 3 of the modules referenced material that was 8 years old. The references were articles related to research
	Discussions **- Synchronous** **- Asynchronous**	No new information is presented or ideas previously stated are not reinforced in either asynchronous or synchronous discussions/ interactions	Faculty reinforces student ideas and student-presented information during asynchronous or synchronous discussions/ interactions	Faculty adds limited new information during asynchronous and/or synchronous discussions or interactions with students	Faculty adds to the body of knowledge and information presented during asynchronous and/or synchronous discussions or interactions with students	3	Excellent – the course faculty added relevant comments to the asynchronous discussion. For example, at the beginning of each discussion, the faculty posed a number of questions to lead the discussion. At the end of the discussion time, faculty summarized student discussions
	Links	No links to Web-based information are added to the learning modules or to the course	Minimal links are apparent in either the learning modules/units or the course; some are irrelevant	An appropriate number of relevant links add to the learning experience	An appropriate number of credible and relevant selected links add to the learning experience	3	Numerous appropriate and credible links

	Element	0	1	2	3	Score	Comments
CONTENT	**Course and Unit Learning Objectives**	Learning objectives/goals are not identified	Learning objectives/goals are identified but are not always measurable, behavioral, or appropriate in number for the content and time of the course	Measurable, behavioral learning objectives/goals or unit objectives are identified for the course, and at least one learning objective engages the learner in activities of analysis and synthesis	Measurable, behavioral learning objectives/goals or unit objectives are identified in the introduction to the course and the number is appropriate for the content and time for the course More than one learning objective engage the learner in activities of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation	1	The course faculty used learning outcomes but a number of the outcomes were not measurable. For example, "the student will understand the policy process."
	Course Assignments, Readings, Activities and/or Projects	Assignments, activities, readings, and/or projects within the course are not related to learning objectives	Assignments, activities, readings, and/or projects within the course can be related to the learning objectives	Assignments, activities, readings, and/or projects within the course have a discussion of the purpose of the assignment related to learning objectives	Assignments, activities, readings, and/or projects within the course have a discussion of the purpose of the assignment related to learning objectives and are appropriate and manageable	1	None of the assignments/projects presented a purpose
	Writing Style (Syntax, Grammar, Punctuation & Flow)	Course contains grammatical and sentence structural errors Numerous typing errors are present	Basic principles of grammar and sentence structure are present Numerous typing errors are present	Information within the course follows principles of grammar and sentence structure, and has few typing errors	Information within the course follows principles of grammar and sentence structure, and is without typing errors	3	No problems

CONTENT	Element	0	1	2	3	Score	Comments
	Multimedia (Photos, Images, Video, Audio, etc.) and Metaphors Within the Context of the Content and Learning Experience	Multimedia and metaphor not used in the presentation of course content	Minimal use of multimedia and metaphor in the presentation of course content	Multimedia used throughout the course with limited use of metaphor OR A progressive metaphor was developed throughout the course, with a limited use of multimedia to illustrate course content	Multimedia used throughout the course along with a developed metaphor that reflects a progression of course content	3	Excellent use of images, audio and video technology. The faculty uses a metaphor of a journey related to the course. Example, "research journey." This is obvious throughout course in the use of a green car to remind students of the "journey."
	Knowledge	Limited expertise evident in presentation of content	Inconsistent expertise in content area evident in presentation of knowledge	Expertise in content area evident in presentation of knowledge throughout the course	Expertise in content area evident in presentation of knowledge and in interactions with students	3	It is obvious that the faculty has extensive expertise in the subject area. For example, the faculty presents a number of their research reports in the course. Also interesting is a short bio of the faculty on the front page of the syllabus

Content – Presentation of Information
Comments related to content and the development of a collaborative learning environment: **Although there were a few areas of concern (see scores above) the evaluator believes the faculty of record did develop a collaborative learning environment through the use of multimedia, links, and asynchronous discussions.**

Table 2. Program Administrator Tracking of Online Course Evaluations

Class Number:	Semester & Year		Semester & Year	
	Scores	Comments	Scores	Comments
STRUCTURE				
Course Design Framework				
Course Design – Segmenting of Content				
Appearance of Material				
Scrolling within the Course or within Documents				
Assignment Navigation				
Accessibility				
Variety of Assessments				
Use of Online Grade book				
Learning Resources				
Appearance of Learner Support/ Feedback				
Context for Learning Community				
Use of Technology/Course Tools				
Use of Instructional Media				
Overall Scores/Comments				
CONTENT				
Content of Learning Modules				
Discussions				
Links				
Course and Unit Learning Objectives				
Course Assignments, Readings, Activities, and/or Projects				
Writing Style				
Multimedia and Metaphors				
Knowledge				
Overall Scores/Comments				
PROCESSES				
Interpersonal Interactions				
Access to Faculty				
Assessment of Learning Styles				
Instructor and Learner Responsibilities & Guidelines				
Overall Scores/Comments				
OUTCOMES				
Student Work Reflects Mastery of Course Objectives				
Student Work Reflects Analysis, Synthesis and Evaluation				
Online Course Evaluations				
Learner Satisfaction with the Online Learning Experience				
Overall Scores/Comments				