



Effective Practices for Online Teaching Using the Quality Matters Rubric –

The rubric can be found at:

www.ipfw.edu/celt/technology/documents/qualitymatters_rubric.doc

Rubric I

- If you already have an online course, then the rubric will help you determine areas of strengths and weaknesses within your own online courses.
- If you are developing an online course for the first time, then using the rubric as a guide will help you develop a robust online course.

Rubric II

- The quality matters rubric is divided into eight sections.
- 1) Course Overview and Introduction
- 2) Learning Objectives – Competencies
- 3) Assessment and Measurement
- 4) Resource and Materials
- 5) Learner Interaction
- 6) Course Interaction
- 7) Learner Support
- 8) Accessibility

Rubric III

- It takes a commitment of at least several hours to carefully go through the sections of the rubric and see how it compares to your current online course development. Obviously, this would go beyond the scope of this one hour meeting. However, I would like to share a few tips that helped me.
- Please note that some of the changes were quite simple for me to implement and yet they resulted in substantial improvements to my online courses.

Course Overview and Introduction

Section I

- One of the requirements of the rubric:
 - Netiquette expectations with regard to discussions and email communication are clearly stated.
- In my own online courses, I added a discussion post about netiquette expectations. I thought that most of my students would already know this information, but it was an easy change to make and it was a step on the rubric. I was pleasantly surprised by the response from my students.

Course Overview and Introduction II

Section I

- A few sample comments from students:
- “It is important for some of us who are not technical at all (not even a little!) to understand what we are reading. That is why I appreciate so much when someone spells out "later" instead of "L8tr" or whatever. The second, which is horribly massacred English, saves a total of one whole key stroke and confuses the computer illiterate among us.”
- Great rules! I have actually never seen them before this... I like number four.. and with respect to your time and bandwidth lets keep this short and sweet-play nice, be nice and be honest.

Course Overview and Introduction III

Section I

- I noticed that the students did seem to interact more with one another in a more respectful manner. I also noticed that all of the students took the time to write down their entire message and did not use text messaging short cuts.

Learning Objectives – Section 2

- The rubric had the following standard:
 - The learning objectives of the course describe outcomes that are measurable.
 - I had learning objectives, but I wasn't sure if they were entirely measurable. I created a rubric of learning outcomes for my students. Now my students should know exactly what is expected of them.
 - This reduces stress for both the student and the instructor 😊

Assessment and Measurement

Section 3

- The rubric standards for this category included: “Self-check” or practice types of assignments are provided for quick student feedback.
- I did not have any of those, yet they are easy to do. You can type in a few quiz questions and the correct answers before each test. The students can take these quizzes over and over again until they feel comfortable with the material. The computer shows them when they are right or wrong so it provides minimal extra work for the instructor. I am not teaching online this semester, but I have incorporated this strategy into my future online courses.

Resources and Materials

Section 4

- This section of the rubric included the following standard:
 - The instructional materials support the stated learning objectives and have sufficient breadth and depth for the student to learn the subject.
 - Since students learn in a variety of different ways, I try to offer many different types of media. I use a textbook, power point files, discussion boards, reserve express for additional reading, low risk quizzes, and useful web sites.

Learner Interaction- Section 5

- A specific standard in this section proved to be invaluable to me.
 - Clear standards are set for instructor response and availability (turn-around time for email, grade posting, etc.)
 - I used to have students that would e-mail me at 11:35 PM about a question regarding how to take the test that was due by midnight! They sometimes acted surprised when I didn't answer them in time for them to complete the test. I now tell them there is up to a 48 hour wait on e-mails, though I usually answer them within a day. I inform them that I do not check my e-mail every 15 minutes. This has managed student expectations very well.

COURSE TECHNOLOGY

Section 6

- I tend to keep course technology as simple as possible. For example, the rubric suggests that technologies required for the course are either provided or easily downloadable.
 - I try to save files in Word 97-2003, even though I have Word 2007 . Many of my students do not own Word 2007. I also use Adobe Creator a fair amount of the time because Adobe Reader is free and easy to download. I tend not to bother with complicated plug-ins, new software and so forth. It doesn't have to be complicated in order to be effective.

Learner Support

Section 7

- In this section, one of the rubric standards is “The course instructions articulate or link to a clear description of the technical support offered.”
 - I found a terrific link that our distance learning department already created:
 - <http://www.ipfw.edu/dlearning/> There is a link on that page to an online orientation for distance learning students. It has been so much easier to ask students to do the online orientation and then let me know if they have any further questions. I used to literally try to write out directions and documentation for every problem they had. I have found that most of their questions are answered once they go through the orientation. I put a link to it in a file called “Please read on the first day of class.”

Accessibility – Section 8

- Section 8 of the rubric urges us to develop a design that is accessible to all of our students.
- Does the course demonstrates sensitivity to readability issues?
 - Keep it simple. I learned this lesson in technology writing class, too. The less bells and whistles you put on a page, the easier it is for more of your students to follow the substance of the course.

Quality Matters

- I truly suggest looking over the rubric at: www.ipfw.edu/celt/technology/documents/qualitymatters_rubric.doc
- *I just type in “quality matters” “IPFW” into Google.*
 - By making some simple changes, I have been able to manage my online courses much more effectively. The time I spent on this project was time very well spent.
 - If you have any questions, please feel free to send me an e-mail at: caseldij@ipfw.edu
 - Thanks!