Syllabus: Applying the Quality Matters Rubric (APP)

Applying the Quality Matters Rubric (APP) is QM’s flagship workshop on the QM Rubric and its use in reviewing the design of online and blended courses. It is intended for a broad audience, including but not limited to faculty, instructional designers, administrators, and adjunct instructors who wish to understand more about the QM process and perhaps become QM Peer Reviewers.

Participants who successfully complete Applying the QM Rubric may wish to continue on to the Peer Reviewer Course (PRC). The PRC specifically addresses the roles and responsibilities of a QM Peer Reviewer. It is intended for anyone who wants a detailed understanding of the Peer Reviewer’s role during course reviews. This may include those who intend to serve as Facilitators and/or Peer Reviewers on internal course review teams at their own institution or on external reviews.

Workshop Learning Objectives

After completing Applying the QM Rubric (APP), participants will:

1. Identify the underlying principles of QM. (Recognize key QM underlying principles and concepts.)
2. Identify the critical elements of the QM quality assurance program, including the QM Rubric, materials, processes, and administrative components.
3. Apply the QM Rubric, Fifth Edition, 2014 to review online courses.
4. Make decisions on whether the SPCH 1113 course meets selected QM Rubric standards.
5. Apply the concept of alignment.
6. Draft helpful recommendations for course improvement by citing annotations from the QM Rubric and evidence from the course.

Goals

And in addition, we expect that you will:

1. Collaborate and network with colleagues through substantive and timely interactions.
2. Reflect on key QM concepts and whether you wish to serve on a peer review team.
3. Explore the challenges of online teaching by familiarizing yourself with the QM rubric and the SPCH 1113 course.
4. Relate the QM rubric (standards and annotations) to your own course and consider changes that might benefit your online students.
5. Offer constructive feedback to improve the QM APPQMR workshop.

Applying the Quality Matters Rubric Course (APPQMR)

Participants will complete Module 1 through 8 in the APPQMR workshop. These modules are found on the home page of the APPQMR Moodle site and each includes a brief description, module-level learning...
objectives, readings and activities. **NOTE:** Many online students believe they can successfully complete their workshop or course without reading the content (you may have seen this with your own online students). You may be tempted to skip the readings, particularly if you’re already familiar with QM. We urge you to read the APPQMR content...this information is included in the workshop because it’s important and will contribute to your understanding of QM, the QM Rubric, and your effectiveness as a QM Peer Reviewer.

Below is an introduction to each APPQMR module and a list of activities that participants must complete to be successful in this workshop:

**Module 1: QM Overview and Principles:** Quality Matters is dedicated to continuous improvement in an open and collegial environment. Its key components include the QM Rubric, a peer review process, and professional development opportunities.

If you have recently taken a QM workshop, you may already be familiar with the content in this first module. Even if you are familiar with the basic QM content, please review all information and complete all activities contained in this module.

1. Complete the Participant Responsibilities Exercise (must be completed within 3 days of the start of the workshop; if not completed participants will not be marked complete for the workshop)
2. Complete your Moodle Profile and Post to the Something New Forum
3. Read QM Overview and Principles Lesson
4. Complete the Overview and Introduction Quiz

**Module 2: Introducing the QM Rubric and the Alignment Concept:** The QM Rubric is designed to provide a rigorous set of standards that can be consistently applied to online courses as part of a commitment to continuous quality improvement. The QM Rubric, Fifth Edition, 2014 consists of eight (8) General Review Standards and forty-three (43) Specific Review Standards. A distinguishing feature of the QM Rubric is that it embodies the concept of "alignment" by ensuring that key course components support the stated learning objectives.

1. Read the Introducing the QM Rubric, Alignment, and Course Worksheet Lesson
2. Download and Save or Print the QM Rubric Fifth Edition, 2014, NFC
3. Take the QM Rubric Quiz
4. Take the Alignment Quiz
5. Download and Read the Course Worksheet
6. Take the Course Worksheet Quiz

**Module 3: Explore General Standard 1 and Apply the QM Rubric (decision-making):** In Modules 3, 4, and 5 we will look at each of the eight (8) General Standards that comprise the QM Rubric. Our in-depth study of the Rubric begins with Module 3 and General Standard 1: Course Overview and Introduction. You will learn how to apply General Standard 1 specific review standards 1.1 and 1.4, make a decision, and cite the evidence for your decisions.

1. Read the Applying the QM Rubric and Making Good Decisions Lesson
2. Take the Making Good Decisions Quiz
3. Read the GS1 Course Overview and Introduction Lesson
4. Take the Standard 1.1 Survey
5. Post to the Apply Specific Standard 1.4 Forum (Participants must post an initial thread and 1 response before access to the “Before and After” forum is released).
6. Post to the Standard 1.1 and 1.4 Before and After Review Forum

Module 4: Explore General Standard 2 and the Importance of Learning Objectives or Competencies:
General Standard 2: Learning Objectives (Competencies) is the foundation of the QM Rubric and includes the key Standards for alignment; it is the only General Standard in which all Specific Review Standards are essential. Standard 2 acknowledges the use and importance of course learning objectives or competencies and learning objectives or competencies at the module/unit level of a course.

The learning objectives or competencies for the course set the standards and conditions for learning, are critical to a successful outcome, and are the first element of “alignment,” an instructional design concept that ensures the core elements of a course reinforce each other and work together to promote learning.

1. Read the GS2 Learning Objectives & Competencies Lesson
2. Take the Learning Objectives & Competencies Quiz
3. Complete and Submit the Learning Objectives & Competencies Worksheet (Participants must receive a grade on the Learning Objectives & Competencies worksheet before accessing the “Before and After” forum)
4. Post to the Standard 2.2 and 2.4 Before and After Review Forum

Module 5: Practice Alignment using Standards 2 - 6: Our in-depth study of the Rubric continues in Module 5 with a systematic review of the alignment in the SPCH 1113 course. You will apply the alignment standards and collect evidence to determine if the SPCH 1113 course is in alignment. You will analyze evidence and provide a rationale to support your decision.

1. Read the GS 3-6: Assessment, Materials, Course Activities, & Technology Lesson
2. Take the General Standard 3-6 Quiz
3. Read the More about Alignment Lesson
4. Complete and Submit your Alignment Worksheet
5. Post to the Alignment – Putting it All Together Forum

Module 6: Write Helpful Recommendations and Apply GS 7 and 8: Our in-depth study of the Rubric continues in Module 6. You will learn how to draft helpful recommendations (in QM terms) and apply your understanding to specific standards in General Standards 7 and 8.

1. Read the Write Helpful Recommendations Lesson
2. Create and Post an Illustration of the Components of a Helpful Recommendation
3. Take the Improve These Recommendations Quiz
4. Read the GS 7 Learner Support Lesson
5. Post to the Standard 7.2 Forum
6. Read the GS 8 Accessibility Lesson
7. Post to the Standard 8.3 Forum
**Module 7: The Peer Review Process:** Quality Matters is both a process and a rubric. In this module, we will follow the faculty-driven process that uses the QM Rubric for peer course reviews. The peer review process is a key element in the QM Program and includes a number of important components.

1. Read the Peer Review Process Lesson
2. Take the QM Peer Review Process quiz

**Module 8: Reflection and Evaluation:** In Module 8 you will have an opportunity to reflect on what you have learned during the APPQMR workshop, post how QM will influence your work moving forward, and evaluate the workshop.

1. Post to the Reflection Forum
2. Complete the APPQMR Evaluation

**Grading Policy**

Quality Matters does not offer letter grades. However, QM expects each participant to successfully complete all required activities. Successful completion of activities is at the 85% level although some activities are evaluated on a Met/Revise basis. The scores that denote successful completion of the quizzes and assignments is 85%. In some cases, participants will be given an opportunity to redo an activity or quiz until the "successful completion" mark is obtained.

A significant time commitment (approximately 10 - 12 hours per week) is required to complete the activities; participants should schedule their time accordingly. No late work will be accepted after the closing date provided in the “Important Dates” block on the APPQMR workshop home page.

We strongly recommend that you do not wait until the last minute to submit your work. If your work does not meet the criteria given below, you may not have time to improve your submissions prior to the end date of the workshop.

This workshop makes use of discussion board forums, quizzes, and Moodle books. Participants are expected to:

- Read all lessons and documents in the workshop so that you have the necessary information to complete the required activities.
- Post to all required forums with a substantive posting that meets the 85% standard.
- Respond to at least one participant in each of the required forums.
- Complete all the quizzes and assignments at an 85% level.
- Adhere to generally accepted netiquette protocols.

**Discussion Board Postings:**

The following rubric will help you achieve an 85% for your discussion board posts. To be successful you must meet “QM Expectations” for each competency listed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Meets QM Expectations</th>
<th>Does Not Yet Meet QM Expectations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Meets QM Expectations</th>
<th>Does Not Yet Meet QM Expectations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Substantive Thoughts</td>
<td>Grounded in QM Rubric standards and annotations, Information found in the workshop, ideas and positions are clearly explained.</td>
<td>Purely opinion based response without reference to QM Rubric standards or annotations; ideas are not clearly expressed; arguments are not backed up with standards or annotation citations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depth</td>
<td>Posting should be at least 3 to 5 sentences long</td>
<td>Posting is less than 3 sentences;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model Characteristics of</td>
<td>Posting demonstrates constructive, specific, measurable, sensitive, and balanced</td>
<td>Posting does not demonstrate one or more of the characteristics of a useful recommendation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a Useful Recommendation</td>
<td>recommendations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete Post</td>
<td>Addresses all parts of the assignment; all instructions are followed and attended</td>
<td>Some of the assignment is present; some parts of the assignment are not addressed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following example provides additional information to help you meet expectations.

**Standard 8.3 Forum Directions**

Consider the following scenario: In an online Psychology course, the learners are required to watch six videos that illustrate key concepts in child psychology. These videos are not closed-captioned. How would you apply Standard 8.3 and what helpful recommendations would you give the instructor? Post your recommendation. After you have posted, read what your colleagues recommended to the instructor and respond where appropriate.

**Example of a participant posting that meets the 85% standard**

The videos that you posted can be very helpful in presenting the course materials. Including videos demonstrates your willingness to use varied techniques for presentation of the material. However, Standard 8.3 requires equivalent textual representations located or linked within the course. I was unable to locate closed-captioned versions of the videos within the course. Providing alternatives to non-text content ensures all learners have access to equivalent information. It appears that these videos can be very helpful, so it is worth pursuing this recommendation to add closed-captioning to the videos.
**Why this post meets the 85% standard:** The example is substantive (cites the QM Rubric Standard and Annotation), more than three sentences in length, and models the characteristics of a helpful recommendation.

**Example of a participant posting that does not yet meet the 85% standard**

Your videos are not closed-captioned and will be hard for learners with hearing impairments to follow.

**Why this post does not yet meet the 85% standard:** The example is too brief, does not cite the QM Rubric Standard or Annotation, and is not specific, measurable, or constructive.

**Late Work Policy**

Adequate time is allotted in the APPQMR workshop schedule for all work to be completed within the timeframe of the workshop start and end dates. Following the provided schedule is the best way to ensure that you do not have late work. Facilitators provide extensions at their sole discretion. Do not wait until the last minute to get started and then request an extension. Although assignments will not be accepted after the official course end date, the material in the course (including the course evaluation) will be accessible for 7 days after the course end date.

**Academic Integrity Policy**

Plagiarism, falsification, misrepresentation, or any other kind of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Plagiarism includes posting others’ ideas as one’s own and copying and pasting verbiage from QM materials or lessons without citing the source. All work should be that of the participant. Evidence of plagiarism will result in serious consequences, up to and including being expelled from the PRC course and barred from becoming a certified QM Peer Reviewer.

**Schedule**

Check the Important Dates information box on the right side of the APPQMR workshop home page for a list of important dates.

Participants have two weeks to complete the APPQMR workshop. Your facilitators recommend that you work in this workshop regularly and try to pace yourself so you are not rushed at the last minute. You will receive more detailed feedback from colleagues and the facilitators if you submit your work throughout the course. This workshop takes approximately 10-12 hours per week to complete.

Here is a schedule to follow to help you stay on track:

- Complete Modules 1 through 4 within the first 5 working days of the course.
- Complete Module 5 through 8 during the last 5 working days of the course.

**Note:** Be sure to revisit the forums in which you post to answer your colleagues’ and facilitators’ questions.
Communicating with the Facilitator(s)

The facilitators will make every effort to communicate frequently with participants through announcements and postings within the APPQMR Moodle site. Post any questions or comments you have about the workshop content and/or requirements in the Muddiest Point forum.

As a participant, you should expect to receive assignment feedback and responses to postings within 48 hours. Facilitators will post if they will not be available in the Announcements, so be sure to read these every day.

Course Technologies

This course is offered through Moodle. Moodle will work best if you use Firefox or Safari as your browser. If you choose not to use one of these as your browser, you might encounter issues within the Moodle classroom.

If you need help, you will find Moodle navigation tips as a link in the Start area. If you have a serious technical issue, please contact QM’s Technical Support by clicking on the “Need Help?” link located on the navigation bar just under the course banner at the top of the home page.

To access the technologies used in this APPQMR workshop, you will need Adobe Reader and Adobe Flash Player (current version). If your computer doesn’t already have this software and/or are prompted for this download, you can go to the Adobe website (http://www.adobe.com/products) and download this software.

Videos created by Quality Matters in the workshop have been close-captioned. The videos created by subscribers and found in the lessons may have captioning available but some require the participant to turn on this feature. Transcripts of the videos are available by emailing the facilitator(s).

Accommodations

As a non-profit organization, Quality Matters (QM) supports the provisions of Standard 8 - Accessibility in the QM Rubric. Quality Matters does strongly support reasonable accommodation for all participants.

All QM workshops are offered in Moodle. Moodle 2.4 complies with all major international standards in the area of accessibility, including XHTML Strict 1.0. For more information on Moodle and its development, please visit the Moodle Overview webpage (http://docs.moodle.org/dev/Overview).

QM’s courses include the following:

- ALT tags that contain appropriate information about the graphic and/or activity.
- Appropriate color combinations that minimize color blindness effects.
- Appropriate font and font-size combinations to improve readability.
- Links to descriptions of accommodation features for the learning management platform (Moodle) and any additional third party tools, e.g., SoftChalk
- Minimal use of bullets and/or charts that may be confusing to participants who use electronic readers.
- Transcripts for video and/or audio clips.
The above features demonstrate QM’s understanding of the importance of providing a learning environment that supports qualified participants. Participants who require additional accommodations should contact their institution’s local ADA office or Quality Matters as soon as possible after they register for the APPQMR workshop.

**Netiquette**

Netiquette, or Internet etiquette, are guidelines for maintaining civilized, professional and effective communication in online environment and email exchanges. Facilitators and participants will demonstrate appropriate netiquette when interacting with each other. Written communication will be conducted using standard business English. Here are some basic rules:

- Keep your questions and comments relevant to the discussion topic. If another participant posts a comment or question that is off topic, do NOT reply. The facilitator will reply in private to the participant.
- Treat the other participants in the forum in a polite and respectful manner. Model the same standards of behavior online you would follow in a face-to-face discussion.
- Do not use ALL CAPS when posting as this is considered, “Shouting”. Do not “flame” others in the forums. Flaming is the “act of responding in a highly critical, sarcastic, or ridiculing manner”.

**Note:** Quality Matters reserves the right to remove posts that are not collegial in nature and/or do not meet netiquette guidelines.