



INTRODUCTION

Often, an instructor who is new to Quality Matters is also new to online teaching and sometimes even new to Blackboard too. This can create some serious barriers for faculty designing online courses for the first time. One of the best ways that we have found to orient this new online instructor and help her develop a course that is well on its way to meeting QM standards is to provide a template course that offers a framework for organizing course materials as well as scaffolding in the form of examples and “just in time” videos that explain the process from multiple angles.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Quality Matters

QM is...
“Quality Matters (QM) is a leader in quality assurance for online education and has received national recognition for its peer-based approach to continuous improvement in online education and student learning. The program features:”
Our own goal for QM is for all courses to be designed, from the start, with Quality Matters stan-

Blackboard

Blackboard is a learning management system that is used to deliver instructional materials, assessments, and other information to learners regardless of their geographic location. Our campus is currently using Blackboard Learn version 9.1x.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

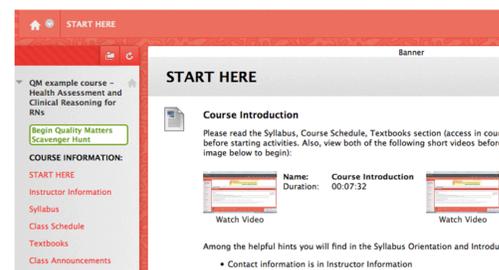
Online Course Development at the UofA

We have devised a multi-phase development process to guide faculty as they develop a new online course. This includes a planning phase where the focus is defining the purpose of the course and developing course objectives in accordance with QM standards. The second phase includes developing the lesson level objectives as well as an assessment plan. The third and final phase encompasses everything else, particularly the development of instructional videos, lectures, and other material essential to good course development. It isn't unusual for instructors to struggle with the preliminary phase as many of them aren't accustomed to think of objectives when planning their courses. The bigger struggle for many long-time faculty is not just in rethinking how their course will be organized and structured. An unfamiliarity with Blackboard makes these instructors even more nervous and dependent on us for effective advice.

METHODS

Step 1

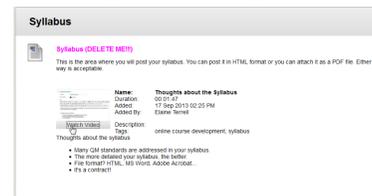
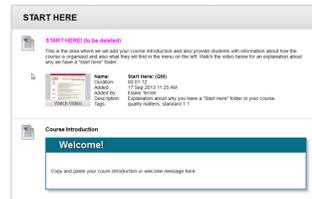
The **first step** in our process was to set up a template that included the information that we want to be standard for all courses. This includes an area for introduction to the course, syllabus, course schedule, etc. This has an additional benefit in that it helps the new instructor but it also helps students who appreciate the consistency and organization.



METHODS

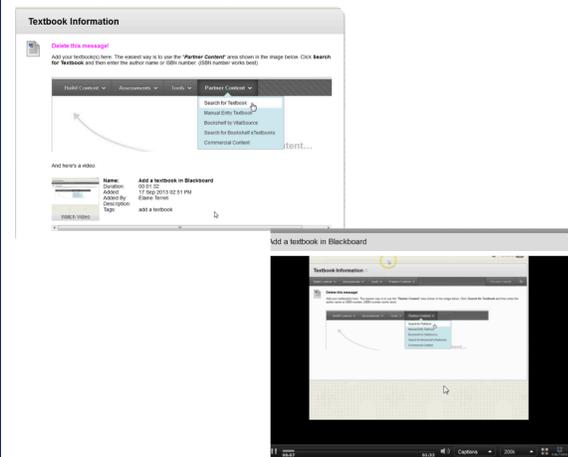
Step 2

The second step in our process is to create videos that we embed in different areas of the course shell. For example, the START HERE area has a short video that explains the idea behind the QM standards and also demonstrates the kind of information that others have used for their courses. The same is true for the syllabus area. The video there explains the importance of the syllabus but it also helps the instructor understand how important the syllabus is for Quality Matters. Because these videos are embedded in the shell, they are ready for any new instructor at any time.



Step 3

The third step in our process is to model behavior we want the faculty to adopt. We try to use the technology in ways that help the instructor to learn and also help the instructor to see how they can also use the technology to teach their subject. In addition to the videos built into the shell, we have a number of others ready to go and these can be shared or forwarded with faculty quickly and easily.



RESULTS

The results have been encouraging. Younger faculty who are already comfortable with a good bit of the technology that we use are able to jump in and put together a course with much less assistance than before. They produce courses that vary because of subject matter but have a consistency in their organization that students seem to appreciate.

The videos are immensely popular with inexperienced faculty who are often so overwhelmed by the technology that they lose sight of their instructional purpose. It saves us time too. In the old model, we scheduled training days where we presented Blackboard topics such as tests and quizzes or the gradebook. Faculty often found it difficult to attend those sessions and those who did usually forgot what we taught them before they ever needed it in Blackboard.

Our only problem now is helping instructors to remember to delete our instructional videos from their course once they aren't needed any longer!

CONTACTS

Elaine Terrell
Global Campus/Curriculum & Instruction
Elaine@uark.edu

Stormy Nolen
Global Campus
sad02@uark.edu