ONLINE INSTRUCTION:
Best Practices & Best Results

PRESENTED AT: CCBA 2012,
PHILADELPHIA, PA

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Our perspectives are from the fully online, asynchronous, post-secondary environment with a larger percentage of non-traditional students.

Other Perspectives:

- Fully online v. hybrid/blended v. web-assisted
- Synchronous v. asynchronous
- K-12 v. traditional v. non-traditional students
WHERE IT BEGINS: THE LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (LMS)

All will have similar features:

• A Landing page for the campus and classroom.
• Announcements
• Syllabus
• Discussion boards, Email, Messaging & Chat
• Lessons (Course Materials/Modules/Units)
• Assignments
• Tests/Quizzes/Assessment
• Gradebook
Online Best Practices for Instructors

1. Students need to know the instructor is a person, not a machine.

2. Clearly set course policies and expectations on Day 1.

3. Use the power of Interaction.

4. Written communication skills are essential!
Students need to know the instructor is a person, not a machine.

- Put your picture in the syllabus along with your contact information.
- Add a personalized introductory video/link. Host the video on YouTube or TeacherTube and embed HTML code in the classroom.
- Include your “virtual” introduction in a week one discussion board topic.
- Include hobbies, along with education, career, community information.
- Empathy goes a long way. “We will get through this together.”
- Share personal experiences, examples, anecdotes in discussions.
- Have a signature tag line – “We are what we repeatedly do...!”

“First impressions do not get second chances.”
LMS Tip: Create a profile. Give your name a face and persona.

Students need to know the instructor is a person, not a machine.
**STUDENTS NEED TO KNOW THE INSTRUCTOR IS A PERSON, NOT A MACHINE.**

**LMS Tip:** Create a Virtual Introduction Discussion topic and make it the first class assignment.

Here is an example of a Virtual Introduction Discussion topic:

**Virtual Introduction**

Tell us about yourself.

Tell us about your educational, career and life experiences:

- If you are in the military, which branch are you in, how long have you served and where are you stationed? That is, unless you’d have to kill us if we knew!

- If you’re not in the military, tell us a little about your current career, where you are originally from and your educational experience. Share any other aspects of your life – family, hobbies, future plans...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forums</th>
<th>Introductions</th>
<th>Write a couple sentences about yourself and why you are taking this class. ...</th>
<th>Users</th>
<th>Approval</th>
<th>Unread</th>
<th>Posts (My)</th>
<th>Replies (My)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introductions</td>
<td>Write a couple sentences about yourself and why you are taking this class. ...</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16(0)</td>
<td>49(16)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Forums**
Clearly set course policies and expectations on Day 1.

Procedural Policies (for instructors)
- Set by Administration
- Classroom readiness
- Class size
- Response times (student inquiries)
- Turnaround time (assignments)
- Feedback on assignments
- Posting of grades
- Proctoring requirements
- Course extensions

Instructional Policies (for students)
- Must be clear to students
- Must be concise
- Office hours
- Methods of preferred contact
- Expectations for participation
- Submission requirements
- Late turn-in procedures
- Netiquette
Clearly set course policies and expectations on Day 1.

LMS Tip: Use Course Announcements to inform students and direct them to resources and assessments.
CLEARLY SET COURSE POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS ON DAY 1.

LMS Tip: Provide your info in the Syllabus
Create an interactive virtual environment in which students, the professor and other community members feel comfortable interacting, sharing and learning. (COI)

Leverage your LMS tools to provide access to help facilitate discussions and provide a rich and diverse selection of resources that students can learn and interact with.

- Forums, Web Resources links, Chat Room, etc
The Power of Interaction

LMS Tip: Use Forum Assignments to promote the discussion of learning objectives.
**THE POWER OF INTERACTION**

**LMS Tip:** Don’t just discuss readings from a book or journal article. Find some relevant videos on the web and embed them into your classroom.

Record, host and embed a video of yourself for a “Video Daily Double”
**THE POWER OF INTERACTION**

**Questions??**

**Welcome** to my "office". Please post your questions concerning the course or course content. I'll visit the office nearly everyday to post answers to your questions. If you need a response concerning a more personal issue, please send me an email using the Email tool - remembering to place the course title in the subject box and to sign your name. If you have a question or need assistance, I will be able to respond so that EVERYONE in the class can see them in this Virtual Office.

**Responses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Date/Time*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schedule of Assignments</td>
<td></td>
<td>1/17/2012 2:58:24 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RE: Schedule of Assignments</td>
<td></td>
<td>1/17/2012 9:33:42 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RE: Schedule of Assignments</td>
<td></td>
<td>1/17/2012 9:55:14 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RE: Schedule of Assignments</td>
<td></td>
<td>1/18/2012 7:21:54 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crossword puzzle unit 1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1/17/2012 1:40:16 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assignments due paper on doc sharing?</td>
<td></td>
<td>1/17/2012 8:24:24 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Work</td>
<td></td>
<td>1/17/2012 9:46:32 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cross word puzzle</td>
<td></td>
<td>1/18/2012 10:18:50 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RE: cross word puzzle</td>
<td></td>
<td>1/22/2012 5:01:20 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debbie Rogers, (Session 1, Section B)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1/19/2012 5:14:58 PM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**The Power of Interaction**

### ITMG381 B002 Win 12

**Messages**

**Compose Message**

**Messages / Received**

- **Search for text:**
  - [Search]

**View**

- **All Messages**

**Check All** | **Subject** | **Authoried By** | **Date** | **Label**
--- | --- | --- | --- | ---
| | Term Paper Outline | | Feb 27, 2012 3:35 AM | Normal |
| | Term Paper | | Feb 24, 2012 3:35 AM | Normal |
| | TurnItIn | | Feb 21, 2012 8:37 PM | Normal |
| | TurnItIn Access Information | | Feb 18, 2012 9:33 PM | Normal |
| | Top Discussion Questions 1 & 2 | | Feb 13, 2012 4:31 PM | Normal |
| | Question about CyberCrime Class | | Feb 13, 2012 2:13 PM | Normal |
| | turnitin course enrollment issues | | Feb 10, 2012 12:19 AM | Normal |
| | HELP!!! | | Feb 1, 2012 8:12 AM | Normal |
WRITTEN COMMUNICATION SKILLS ARE ESSENTIAL!

New, younger and lower level (100 – 200 level) students may need support in regards to both the written communication skills required for academic success. As well as the social skills and netiquette required for civil, sometimes lively, academic debate.

Older generations of students with little exposure to technology will need some hand-holding as well.

*Respond Promptly and speak to the student as an individual. Take time to personalize your communications.*
Three “presences” contribute to the learning experience.

Social Presence
Cognitive Presence
Teaching Presence
COMMUNITY OF INQUIRY (COI)
Social Presence: participants in an online course help establish a community of learning by projecting their personal characteristics into the discussion. In that way they present themselves as “real people”.

Three forms of social presence

• **Affective** - The expression of emotion, feelings, and mood.

• **Interactive** - Evidence of reading, attending, understanding, thinking about others’ responses.

• **Cohesive** - Responses that build and sustain a sense of belonging, group commitment, or common goals and objectives.
**COI: Cognitive Presence**

**Cognitive Presence:** The extent to which the professor and the students are able to construct and confirm meaning through sustained discourse in a community of inquiry.

- Can be demonstrated by introducing factual, conceptual, and theoretical knowledge into the discussions and classroom.

- While the professor may be the primary subject matter expert within the community of inquiry, expert outside resources and contributions of students are to be included.
Teaching Presence: the facilitation and direction of cognitive and social process leading to the mastery of learning outcomes. Two ways that the professor and the students can add teaching presence to a discussion:

- Directing the Instruction
- Facilitating the Instruction

See next slide.
**DIRECTING INSTRUCTION VS FACILITATING DISCUSSION**

**Directing the Instruction**
- Presenting content and questions
- Focusing the discussion
- Confirming understanding
- Diagnosing misperceptions
- Injecting knowledge from diverse sources
- Summarizing the discussion
- Responding to technical concerns

**Facilitating the discussion**
- Identifying areas of agreement and disagreement
- Seeking consensus / understanding
- Encouraging, acknowledging and reinforcing student contributions
- Setting a climate for learning
- Drawing in participants / prompting discussion
- Assessing the efficacy of the process
Quality Matters is a rubric that identifies key areas to consider.

- Course overview and introduction
- Learning objectives
- Measurement and assessment
- Resources and materials
- Learner engagement
- Course technology
- Learner support
- Accessibility

Continual course/program review leads to continual improvement.
# Quality Matters Rubric

For more information visit [www.QMprogram.org](http://www.QMprogram.org) or email [info@qualitymatters.org](mailto:info@qualitymatters.org)

## Quality Matters™ Rubric Standards 2011 - 2013 edition with Assigned Point Values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standards</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Course Overview and Introduction</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Instructions make clear how to get started and where to find various course components.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Students are introduced to the purpose and structure of the course.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Etiquette expectations (sometimes called “netiquette”) for online discussions, email, and other forms of communication are stated clearly.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Course and/or institutional policies with which the student is expected to comply are clearly stated, or a link to current policies is provided.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 Prerequisite knowledge in the discipline and/or any required competencies are clearly stated.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6 Minimum technical skills expected of the student are clearly stated.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7 The self-introduction by the instructor is appropriate and available online.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8 Students are asked to introduce themselves to the class.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Questions???

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**Community of Inquiry:** [http://communitiesofinquiry.com/introduction](http://communitiesofinquiry.com/introduction)
This site documents the work completed during a Canadian Social Sciences and Humanities research funded project entitled "A Study of the Characteristics and Qualities of Text-Based Computer Conferencing for Educational Purposes".

**Quality Matters Program:** [http://www.qmprogram.org/](http://www.qmprogram.org/)
Quality Matters (QM) is a faculty-centered, peer review process that is designed to certify the quality of online and blended courses.

**Quality Matters Rubric:** [http://www.qmprogram.org/rubric](http://www.qmprogram.org/rubric)
Detailed PDF version of the Quality Matters Rubric.

**SLOAN-C:** [http://sloanconsortium.org](http://sloanconsortium.org)
A Consortium of Individuals, Institutions and Organizations Committed to Quality Online Education
Excellent free resources: [http://sloanconsortium.org/publications/freedownloads#EffectivePractices](http://sloanconsortium.org/publications/freedownloads#EffectivePractices)

“Transforming American Education: Learning Powered by Technology”

**Connect Safely:** [http://www.connectsafely.org/](http://www.connectsafely.org/)
Social network safety tips for teens and parents.