Chasing Quality in Online Learning: Strategies That Can Help

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 Remarks Today...

• General observations about the pursuit of quality in online learning
• What is The Sloan Consortium?
• Our Quality Scorecard
  – Helping institutions-Helping You?
• Your Questions

The Online Quality Chase...

• Do we really know what is quality in online learning?
• Heavy focus on traditional criteria--campus-based inputs (time, seat-in-a-seat, things)
• Not enough focus on outputs, but changing
• Very limited tools for institutions to assess the quality of what they do online
• Sloan C’s goal to address that limitation
The Sloan Consortium

- Overall goals of quality, scale and breadth in the mainstreaming of online learning
- Sloan-C is a professional not-for-profit membership organization for both institutions and individuals
- Sloan-C provides professional development to higher education professionals, hosts conferences, publishes materials, conducts research and delivers online workshops.
Elements of Quality - The Sloan-C Pillars

The Need For The Scorecard

- Help institutions assess the quality of their online programming
- Tool for evaluation, benchmarking, and strategic planning.
- Tool for accreditation and authorization
- Research-based and thus replicable
From the Literature...

- Several recommended groups of standards (14 different articles and studies)
- WCET, CHEA, IHEP 24 Quality Standards, Bates’ ACTION model, Sloan Consortium Five Pillars, etc.
- The IHEP 24 standards was highly referenced in the literature and therefore used as a beginning list of indicators.

Methodology

- Delphi Method
  - Structured flow of information using a series of systematic surveys and reciprocal feedback
  - Used to gain consensus from a panel of experts (informed judgments)
    - The experts were widely located throughout the United States
- Results were fed back to the panel of experts in Six surveys rounds--18 weeks (total time used).

Sample (Expert Panel)

- Study Population: Online Education Administrators in Higher Education
- Sampling Frame: Identified experts in the field by the Sloan Consortium (gatekeeper)
  - 76 were invited; 43 participants completed first round
  - 83% of the panel members had nine or more years of experience in the administration of online education
Institutions Represented

- Abilene Christian University
- American Public University System
- Athabasca University
- Bellevue University
- Boston University
- California State University East Bay
- Central Texas College
- City Tech City Tech
- Dallas Baptist University
- Drexel University Online
- East Carolina University
- East Tennessee State University
- Franklin University
- Florida Institute of Technology
- Houston University
- IVCC Illinois Valley Community College
- Kent State University
- Kennesaw State University
- Kutztown University
- Louisiana State University
- Michigan State University
- New Mexico State University
- North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University
- Pace University
- Penn College
- Peirce College
- Pennsylvania State University World Campus
- Regent University
- Rochester Institute of Technology
- Rocky Mountain College of Art and Design
- San Antonio College
- Savannah College of Art and Design
- State University of New York
- Texas A&M University
- Texas A&M University-Kingsville
- Texas A&M University-Commerce
- Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi
- Texas A&M University-McAllen
- Texas Christian University
- Texas Christian University-Arlington
- Texas Tech University
- Texas Woman's University
- The George Washington University
- The University of Texas at Dallas
- Universidad National de la Frontera
- University of Buenos Aires
- University of Connecticut
- University of Kentucky
- University of Maastricht
- University of Nebraska-Lincoln
- University of North Carolina
- University of Phoenix
- University of South Florida
- University of Wisconsin-Madison
- University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
- University of Washington
- Washington State University
- Wayne State University
- Western Governors University
- West Virginia University

Sample Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutional Classification</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public (4 year)</td>
<td>Non-profit</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Community College (2 year)</td>
<td>Non-profit</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private (4 year)</td>
<td>Non-profit</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private (4 year)</td>
<td>For-profit</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Faith-Based (4 year)</td>
<td>Non-profit</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public (4 year)</td>
<td>Non-profit</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private (4 year)</td>
<td>Non-profit</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Faith-based (4 year)</td>
<td>Non-profit</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public (4 year)</td>
<td>Non-profit</td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private (4 year)</td>
<td>Non-profit</td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Questions

1. Are the standards identified in the IHEP/NEA study in 2000 still relevant today for indicating quality in online education programs in higher education?
2. What additional standards should be included that address the current industry in 2010?
3. If additional standards are suggested, will they fall into the already identified themes or will new themes emerge?
Research Questions

4. What values will be assigned to the recommended standards that will ultimately yield a numeric scorecard for measuring quality online education programs from an online education administrator's perspective that could also support strategic planning and program improvements?

Results

• Are the standards identified in the IHEP/NEA study in 2000 still relevant in 2010 for indicating quality in online education programs in higher education?
  - A form of all 24 indicators were included in the quality scorecard (23 relevant, 1 completely revised)
  - 22 of the 24 indicators were revised.

• 45 quality indicators were approved and included in the scorecard.

• Adding these 45 indicators to the 25 indicators stemming from the IHEP study yielded a total of 70 quality indicators in 9 categories.
### Indicators by Category and Consensus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Total Number of Suggested Quality Indicators</th>
<th>Total Number Approved by the Panel of Experts</th>
<th>Percent Achieving Consensus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Support</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology Support</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Development and Instructional Design</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching and Learning</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Structure</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Support</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Support</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation and Assessment</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social and Student Engagement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Results

- Values were assigned to the recommended standards that will ultimately yield a numeric score for measuring quality online education.

### Guidelines for Scoring

- **0 points = Not Observed.** The administrator does not observe any indications of the quality standard in place.
- **1 point = Insufficiently Observed.** The administrator has found a slight existence of the quality standard in place. Much improvement is still needed in this area.
- **2 points = Moderate Use.** The administrator has found there to be moderate use of the quality standard. Some improvement is still needed in this area.
- **3 points = Meets Criteria Completely.** The administrator has found that the quality standard is being fully implemented and there is no need for improvement in this area.
Guidelines for Scoring

• A perfect score = 210 points.
  - 90-99% = 189-209 - Exemplary (little improvement is needed)
  - 80-89% = 168-188 - Acceptable (some improvement is recommended)
  - 70-79% = 147-167 - Marginal (significant improvement is needed in multiple areas)
  - 60-69% = 126-146 - Inadequate (many areas of improvement are needed throughout the program)
  - 59% and below = 125 pts and below - Unacceptable
Interactive Scorecard

- On the Sloan-C website
- Must have an institutional membership
- Artifacts for support
- Justification notes

Value of the Quality Scorecard

- Self-study in quality
  - Could be reviewed by accrediting agencies and state authorization organizations
- Strategic planning
  - Continuous improvement strategies
- Benchmarking
- Can it be of value in state authorization? If so, how?

Quality Scorecard

- The scorecard is free to use.
  - To use the interactive scorecard on the website, you must be a Sloan-C institutional member.
- Free to share/review, the link
  * [http://tinyurl.com/qualitysc](http://tinyurl.com/qualitysc)
Thank You...

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