

Appendix E.

Policy on Distance Education Courses Department of Psychology (Approved: 10/5/05, revised: 5/5/10)

The Psychology Department supports the offering of high quality distance education online courses. In order to ensure that rigorous academic standards are maintained, distance education courses must meet the following requirements:

1. incorporate a systematic forum for weekly interactions, e.g., discussions with classmates and the professor, through the use of a Blackboard site;
2. an assessment activity constituting of a substantial portion of the course grade must require verification of the student's identity;
3. if the course is part of the General Education program, the distance education course syllabus must be consistent with the syllabus that has been submitted for approval by the General Education Committee and include the General Education goals and objectives;
4. if the course is one for which the Department has adopted a common final exam (or any common learning/assessment activity) it must be incorporated into the distance education course.

All instructors in the Department of Psychology who wish to teach online should do the following:

1. Align the course with the selected items from the Quality Matters rubric. (see Appendix A)
2. In the process of developing a course, meet with staff in the Instructional development Center to review the course structure.
3. Read It Works For Me: Online., available in the Teaching and Learning Center.
4. Review suggestions from colleagues in the Psychology Department who have been teaching online. (see Appendix B)

Assessment:

1. All courses in the department will incorporate the questions found in Appendix C into the IDEA instrument.
2. Peer review of online courses will be conducted using the form found in Appendix D.

(Appendix A)

Quality Matters Rubric
Selected Items: Department of Psychology

Instructors of Online Courses in Psychology should ensure that all of the following items are adequately addressed in each online course taught.

- 1.1 Instructions make clear how to get started and where to find various course components.
- 2.1 The course learning objectives describe outcomes that are measurable.
- 2.4 Instructions to students on how to meet the learning objectives are adequate and stated clearly.
- 3.1 The types of assessments selected measure the stated learning objectives and are consistent with course activities and resources.
- 3.2 The course grading policy is stated clearly.
- 3.3 Specific and descriptive criteria are provided for the evaluation of students' work and participation.
- 4.1 The instructional materials contribute to the achievement of the stated course and module/unit learning objectives.
- 5.1 The learning activities promote the achievement of the stated learning objectives.
- 5.2 Learning activities foster instructor-student, content-student, and if appropriate to the course, student-student interaction.
- 6.1 The tools and media support the learning objectives and are appropriately chosen to deliver the content of the course.
- 6.3 Navigation throughout the course is logical, consistent, and efficient.
- 7.1 The course instructions articulate or link to a clear description of the technical support offered.

(Appendix B)
Tips for Teaching Online
Department of Psychology

Course Organization

For short (e.g., 6 week) sessions...I organize blackboard by week...the folders are called "Week One" "Week Two" and so on...with assignments always due on Monday, exams always done on Tuesday, etc. Anything to reduce confusion.

Organizing by Unit: One of the biggest hassles for students is knowing where to find things on the BB site. So based on the advice of the instructional technology people, rather than having the site organized by activity, e.g. assignments, readings, notes, etc., I organized things by Unit. For my Cognitive Course I have 5 Units (so a test for each unit) and I have a button on the left side of the screen (I forget what those are called) for each Unit. When you click on that button you see all assignments, lecture notes, readings etc. for that unit.

Try to make deadlines on the same day from week to week. For my 8 week summer course that I recently taught, students were confused by the fact that my deadlines were inconsistent, e.g. for some units Discussion Board questions were due on a Thursday by noon, for other units, they were due on a Monday.

This did not go well. Things went much better when I followed my earlier procedure of making deadlines the same time every week.

Short videos can be made with Camtasia and Paul Ramsey will put these on the streaming server. These can be used to deliver content and/or to explain course organization or assignments.

Anticipate common problems and address these on your syllabus just as you would in a face-to-face class. E.g., You must have access to basic technology. You need a back-up computer (public libraries or any college/university).

Student Orientation to the Course

An Orientation quiz is a productive way to familiarize students with the course set-up. Make the Orientation quiz available to students prior to the first day of class, and leave it open through the end of the first week of class.

Students can also be oriented to the course with a short video that leads them around and shows them the location of assignments, the syllabus, discussion forums, etc.

Content Delivery

A picture or short movie (you tube or whatever) is very good...especially if linked to the book and assignments. I find movies on Youtube and post them. Anything visual.

Type up one's lecture notes and post...that way they get what you'd have said in class.

Articles that they can find personally relevant (e.g., an article on self stress management or something like that) seem to be well liked by them.

If posting an article to read, pdf format alone won't do. There will be one person who can't open that and another person who can't open versions of MS-Word beyond 2003 or so. Post the reading in multiple formats.

Download Community Clips (Free Download). This is a screen capture add on for all Office products. You can create videos of Powerpoint presentations and record audio on top of the video. Paul Ramsey will put the video on the streaming server and students can link directly to the streaming server.

If you need to write on PowerPoint slides, you can use the Bamboo tool. It is available at the Computer Store for \$55. It plugs into a USB port and will write on the screen. With the Bamboo tool in combination with Community Clips you can videotape how to complete computations and make videos available on the streaming server.

Zamzar (Free Download) will convert videos into an alternative format.

Assignments

For written assignments..if possible, spell out exactly how you want them to provide their answers. In other words, when trying to grade so much, if one person has the questions numbered and another provides a paragraph and another provides an outline, can be a headache.

I don't want an independent course, so I try to have a mixture of questions to answer (on varying levels of thinking), video clips/simulations, and experiential activities.

Be sure to have rubrics for everything.

Put your rubrics into Electronic Forms (can be done in Word or Adobe) for easy rubric completion.

Tests

For blackboard exams, I give them a window of about a day to take it. Their work schedules will be all over the place, and the more narrow the window, the more likely you'll get requests to take the exam before or after.

Really tight test timing can be used to minimize academic dishonesty. You will need to tell students that they will feel pushed during the test.

Test question randomization can be used to minimize academic dishonesty.

Open book questions can also be used to minimize academic dishonesty.

For tests with more than 10 questions, the Bb test generators outlined in the attached handout can save you a lot of time.

Multiple choice tests/quizzes grade automatically.

Teacher-Student Communications

Use Audacity + LAME (both free downloads) to record audio files (MP3 or .wav), and send students audio feedback. These can be sent via e-mail. You can add these directly to content areas by enabling the Podcast Episode tool in the Customization/Tool Availability area.

Use a Blog on to post course questions and answers. Students can more easily see the questions.

Within the Discussion Board I not only have a forum for each unit or topic area, but also have a Forum for all questions about course procedures, due dates etc.

The intention is that students post any question about administrative issues there, and they are not permitted to email about such matters. This limits the amount of emails and makes all the questions and answers available to the rest of the class. Many students will have the same questions.

Spend a lot of time online in the beginning of the course to make sure students understand the course expectations and how to navigate. Once students think the course is complex or unorganized, they tend to think everything about the course is this way.

I used to do chats, but don't do them anymore. Students liked them, to hear other people's opinions or experiences, but too difficult to follow. The more the merrier is NOT the motto with chats.

I use discussion boards a lot and interject comments to keep students going, or thinking about something in a different way. My comments tend to be questions, rather than long explanations – I'd rather the groups brainstorm.

Student-Student Communications

Students can be put into discussion groups of 5 – 8 students.

Tell students a deadline for an initial post as well as the deadline for the final post in a discussion forum. Otherwise, everyone waits until the last minute.

I have seen courses where everyone posts their picture. I am going to try this next time I teach online. This can be done in a discussion forum or on a blog.

Gradebook

If you have discussion groups, Bb will create a gradebook column for each group. At the end of the discussion, have a GA consolidate these columns into one column. Then, make the extra columns unavailable to students to avoid confusion.

As an alternative to consolidating multiple columns, you can Select and Collect in Gradebook and see each individual student's posts.

There tend to be a lot of grades in an online course. At the end of the semester consolidate grades into categories (test total, discussion forum total, quiz total, etc.). Students can then verify the categories. Compute the final grade from the categories.

Common Materials Sites

If you have multiple sections of a course, have a Common Materials site created and merge the sections.

Remember, however, that enrollment and disenrollment is not automatic. Put a note on the first page of the regular web site telling students to e-mail you if they do not see the Common Materials site. You will need to manually enroll them.

More Tips

Make the course available as early as possible (i.e. before the semester, or summer term starts), so they can get familiar with Blackboard and course technical requirements in advance.

Don't make it too complicated.

Deadlines should be frequent and firm.

Put a picture of yourself on your course sites and ask students to tell you hello if they see you. You should do the same.

Refer students to the Bb helpdesk for technical problems. You can tell them that you do not have expertise in this area. The helpdesk works very well.

Empatica is available from the L drive. This software will compress PowerPoint files. Need to access the L Drive, COE, Empatica to get activation code. Then, download Empatica from the website.

Virtual 508 can be used to make Office files accessible.

www.giveawayoftheday.com gives away free software each day. Software available for 24 hours only. Read reviews.

(Appendix C **DRAFT**)

**Proposed Changes to Student Survey Questions
For ALL Courses
Administered with IDEA**

Current Questions (retain)

1. Course difficulty, testing, and grading. (Fair, appropriate to content, etc.)
2. Course content. (Coverage, topic, emphasis, etc.)
3. Effectiveness of the instructor's communication of course material.
4. Professor's strengths
5. Professor's weaknesses
- x. Suggested changes in content, procedures, etc. CHANGED TO #13
- x. Additional comments MOVE TO END

Proposed Additional Items

6. To what extent did each of the following assignments/activities help you understand the course material? Add *Rating scale for each item (not at all helpful—very helpful) (with "did not use" as one option)*

- A. Textbook
- B. Other readings
- C. Homework/assignments
- D. Instructor's lectures
- E. Videos
- F. PowerPoint presentations
- G. Powerpoint handouts
- H. Clickers
- I. Blackboard
- J. Wikis
- K. Blogs
- L. Audio files
- M. Discussion Forums

Other?

7. DELETE THIS ITEM?

To what extent were the readings and assignments spread out evenly across the entire course? *Rating Scale*

If you would like to comment on the item above, please do so here:

8. Did you feel comfortable asking the instructor questions?
Rating Scale (not at all—very comfortable)

If you would like to comment on the item above, please do so here:

9. How would you rate the amount of communication that your instructor had *with you as an individual*? *Rating Scale (Not enough—Too much)*

If you would like to comment on the item above, please do so here:

10. How would you rate the amount of communication that your instructor had *with the class as a whole*? *Rating Scale (Not enough—Too much)*

If you would like to comment on the item above, please do so here:

11. To what extent did your communication *with classmates* help you understand the course material? Please rate each type of communication below. *Rating scale for each item (not at all helpful—very helpful) (with “did not use” as one option).*

- A. In person (out of class)
- B. Discussion Boards
- C. Email
- D. Group projects

E. _____

If you would like to comment on the item above, please do so here:

12. To what extent was the course organized and easy to navigate? *Rating scale (not organized—very organized)*

If you would like to comment on the item above, please do so here:

13. Do you have other suggestions for how to improve student learning in this course? (content, procedures, etc.)

14. Additional comments?

(Appendix D)

Quality Matters Rubric
Department of Psychology

Instructions to Candidate: Please enroll the evaluator in your course for an agreed upon 2 week period. Explain how you address each item in the Instructor Comments areas below.

Instructions to Evaluator: Please provide the Candidate with feedback regarding the quality with which he or she has addressed each item.

1.2 Instructions make clear how to get started and where to find various course components.

Instructor Comments:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Evaluator Response:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

2.1 The course learning objectives describe outcomes that are measurable.

Instructor Comments:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Evaluator Response:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

2.4 Instructions to students on how to meet the learning objectives are adequate and stated clearly.

Instructor Comments:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Evaluator Response:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

3.1 The types of assessments selected measure the stated learning objectives and are consistent with course activities and resources.

Instructor Comments:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Evaluator Response:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

3.2 The course grading policy is stated clearly.

Instructor Comments:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Evaluator Response:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

3.3 Specific and descriptive criteria are provided for the evaluation of students' work and participation.

Instructor Comments:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Evaluator Response:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

4.1 The instructional materials contribute to the achievement of the stated course and module/unit learning objectives.

Instructor Comments:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Evaluator Response:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

5.1 The learning activities promote the achievement of the stated learning objectives.

Instructor Comments:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Evaluator Response:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

5.2 Learning activities foster instructor-student, content-student, and if appropriate to the course, student-student interaction.

Instructor Comments:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Evaluator Response:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

6.1 The tools and media support the learning objectives and are appropriately chosen to deliver the content of the course.

Instructor Comments:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Evaluator Response:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

6.3 Navigation throughout the course is logical, consistent, and efficient.

Instructor Comments:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Evaluator Response:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

7.1 The course instructions articulate or link to a clear description of the technical support offered.

Instructor Comments:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Evaluator Response:

[Click here to enter text.](#)