Course Quality

Course Checklists for New Online Faculty

Use these materials and checklists to guide your online course development.

ALEXANDRA M. PICKETT
Associate Director
SUNY Learning Network
State University Plaza
Albany, NY 12246
T: 1.518.443.5622
alexandra.pickett@sln.suny.edu
http://sln.suny.edu
http://sln.suny.edu/conference
http://www.twitter.com/alexpickett
http://www.slideshare.net/alexandrapickett/slideshows
Alejandra Subagja in Second Life

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Checklist: Do a Module Walk-Through

The items on this checklist represent best practices that can help you define and refine the elements of your online course and learning activities. As you complete the modules in your course, use this checklist to review and then revise each module of your course. To use the checklist, read through a module from the beginning, imagining that you are a student seeing the materials for the first time. You can also give this checklist to an external reviewer. Check the items on the list below. Revise your modules to address items checked. You can also use this checklist as a guide during the development of your modules.

NO? Use this checklist as you go through each of your modules.

Information
☐ From the Module overview do you know what kinds of activities you will be doing?
☐ Do you know what to do first?
☐ Do you know how long the Module should take to complete?
☐ Do you know when your assignments are due?
☐ Are there always clear instructions for every activity?
☐ Do you know how you will be evaluated on those assignments?

Organization
☐ Are the materials logically and sequentially organized?
☐ Do you have a consistent Module framework across modules, sections and documents?
☐ Is the sequence of documents logical and clear?

Presentation
☐ Are the pages hard to read in form or content?
☐ How does the page look when you print out a page?
☐ Do the graphics make the instructional point?

Tone
☐ Is the tone of the course personal, interesting, and inviting?
☐ Is the instructor speaking directly to me?
☐ Do you get the sense that you are in a class community?
☐ Does the instructor seem accessible and interested?
Checklist: Finalize your Modules
The items on this checklist represent best practices that can help you define and refine the elements of your online course and learning activities.

Use this checklist to finalize each of your Modules. Once you have revised a module using Checklist 1, use this checklist as your final step. Revise your modules to address the items checked.

NO? Use this checklist as you go through each of your modules.

Accuracy
☐ Did you proofread each document in the module?
☐ Did you spell check each document?

Consistency
☐ Are the titles of your modules clear, simple, and logical?
☐ Do the sub section titles contribute to the organizational framework of the module in a meaningful or instructional way?
☐ Do your document titles convey instructional or content information?
☐ Did you maintain a consistent voice?
☐ Do you speak directly to one student?
☐ Have you used fonts, font sizes, and color constantly on all documents?
☐ Did you use the same font and size for your body copy?

Page layout
☐ Do you break up and organize long documents?
☐ Too short?
☐ Do you break up longer text with headlines and sub heads to make it visually clearer?
☐ Did you use color and graphics sparingly?

Functionality
☐ Whenever you ask the student to do something do you provide clear and complete instructions?
☐ Did you clearly set up the expectations for participation for each of your types of learning activities?
☐ Do all forms, links, and buttons act as planned?
☐ Test each link from the web. Do all hypertext links work?
Checklist: Walk through your online course as a student and revise

The items on this checklist represent best practices that can help you define and refine the elements of your online course and learning activities. Use the checklist below to do a walk-through of your course from the web. Put yourself in the student's place and read each document in your course. Start at the beginning and work your way sequentially through your course the way a student would. Remember to assume the role and perspective of the student and make note of any changes you would like to make.

For each module check for the following:

General:
NO
☐ Are all instructions clear?

For each assignment or learning activity:
NO
☐ Is it clear when each assignment is due?
☐ Is it clear exactly what the student should do or produce?
☐ Is it clear how to complete and submit assignments?
☐ Is it clear if the completed assignment will be public or private?
☐ Is it clear when and how it will be evaluated?
☐ Are there clear instructions on each document directing the student on what to do, where to go, or what the student should do next or prior to each learning activity?
☐ Are there notes of encouragement or milestones written into the learning activity instructions when appropriate?

Discussions:
NO
☐ Does the initial discussion document adequately set up the topic and expectations for the interaction?
☐ Is the time frame for the discussion clearly communicated?
☐ Are the size and nature of the responses clearly communicated?
☐ Do the instructions state whether the students should respond to the main topic, responses, or both?
☐ Do the students know how their participation in the discussion will be evaluated?
☐ Is the discussion document created with a discussion document type?

Wrap up:
NO
☐ Do students know how and when they will receive their grades?
☐ Do you have a cut-off date for your course, and do your students know that date?

Complete or Revise your course to address the list items checked.

Checklist: Peer Review Your Online Course

Below is a checklist that can be used by an external or peer reviewer to finalize the course before it goes live. Print out the main view of the course.

You should check your course from the perspective of a student. Check for glaring omissions or errors. Be sure to use student level access to be sure you see it from the perspective of the student.

Obviously, please take into consideration the relationship you have with the instructors before actually making changes in courses. Follow up each review with a note to faculty on any changes made or with details on suggestions.
Stuff to check

☐ Verify the instructor's name (spelling), course name, and institution is on course map

Read and Proof Orientation Area and Documents.

☐ Welcome, Contact information, How you will be Evaluated, My Expectations, Course Schedule, Your Next Steps
☐ Check to be sure there are no assignments or discussion in the Orientation area. Assignments should be moved to the first course module. The Orientation area is to present information only.
☐ “Your Next Steps” document: is it clear? Customize it to fit their course by name

Check "Other" Documents:

☐ Does the instructor have a profile
☐ Do they want a picture?
☐ Has the instructor written an intro to the bulletin board
☐ Do they have an announcement/NewsFlash
☐ If they are using shared “References/Resources,” or other functional areas or features in the course, do they have, for example, at least one Reference posted in that area. If not, turn off the feature that is not being used.

Verify the Views of the Course:

☐ Check numbering if any, order, etc.
☐ Does every module and module document in the main view show?
☐ If the instructor is opening and closing course section, make sure that selected modules intended are actual displaying for students.

Documents are Complete

☐ No blank or incomplete documents (especially in the orientation and in modules 1-3)!
☐ Next Steps document is clear and tells where to go

Read through the first 3 Modules

☐ Note glaring errors of spelling or formatting.
☐ Check all URLs and links.
☐ When any element is referred to, can you find it (does the instructor use the exact subject title, link/button name, etc?)
☐ Is it clear on all activities how a student can ask a question about the content or about how to complete a particular assignment?
☐ Check the first discussion item and the first written assignment to see if it all works as intended.

Proof Modules 1-3

☐ Change fonts to standard point sizes for body/heads - 12/14 or 10/12 points
☐ Change any single purple or blue words to another color.
☐ Clean up any glaring spelling or formatting problems.
☐ Check any hotspots/links.

Check First Module

☐ Contains an ice breaking activity. For example a self-test or discussion, or assignment.
   NOTE: If course uses attachments suggest that faculty have students test this out in a trial activity so they can work it out before the activity counts.
☐ Gives an overview of the course.
☐ Clearly tells students what to do/expect, step by step.
First Discussion/Interaction Assignment
- Separate instructions and question into two different documents;
- Instructions first then actual discussion document
- Instruction document has step by step instructions (how to respond)
- Instructions to the assignment presents
- The activity itself goes on the type of document that has the discussion functionality
- Discussion starter activity document tells students when due, what requirements are for responding, specifics about how and what to submit, and how it will be evaluated and when

First Written Assignment
- Separate instructions and assignment document into two different documents;
- Instructions first then actual assignment document
- Instructions document has step by step (how to create assignment)
- Instructions to the assignment go on a "no action" form
- The activity itself goes on the document form which has the radio button for written assignment selected. Or uses other assignment/test forms
- The assignment activity document specifies for students: when due, what requirements are, specifics about how and what to submit, and how it will be evaluated and when.
Checklist: Final Revisions

Use the checklist below to do a final review of your online course. This should be your very last review and revision.

YES? NO?
☐ ☐ Proofread the entire course.
☐ ☐ Verify consistency of font, font size, and color in all documents.
☐ ☐ Spell check every document.
☐ ☐ Print all documents that you have instructed the student to print to make sure they look OK in print.
☐ ☐ Test links to make sure they act as planned.
☐ ☐ Test each written assignment, multi-part assignment, test, or self-test as a student to make sure they work as planned.
☐ ☐ Did you create a profile for yourself?
☐ ☐ Did you create a “welcome” NewsFlash/announcement for your students?
☐ ☐ Did you post something in the Bulletin Board?

Complete or Revise your course to address the list items checked.