

Purpose and Design of the Rapid Online Course Design Course Template

Purpose

The purpose of the course template is to provide instructors a means to rapidly develop an online course by eliminating the need to develop course structure. As Lee, Dickerson, and Winslow (2012) note in their paper titled *An Analysis of Organizational Approaches to Online Course Structures* online course structure is, "Not to be confused with course content selection or instructional decision-making, online course structure refers to the standardized layout, design, arrangement of materials, location of information, and use of communication tools to enhance and facilitate learning and course navigation and ambiance." By providing a "pre-made" course structure, time and effort can be spent on more meaningful tasks to instructors such as creating high quality course content.

Design

The design of the online course structure of the course template is based on institutional best practices derived from current online course development, scholarly research in online course design, and higher education industry best practices outlined in the Quality Matters Rubric. Quality Matters (QM), <http://www.qmprogram.org>, is a faculty-centered, peer review process that is designed to recognize the quality of online and blended courses. QM is the most widely used benchmark of postsecondary online course design in the U.S.

Utilization

The course template is designed to:

- Provide a course structure for rapid development of an online course
- Allow instructors to easily personalize elements individual to each online course within the course structure, i.e. the syllabus, instructor biography, etc.
- Provide consistent and familiar online experience for students when used by instructors in multiple courses/sections or by multiple instructors within a department, school, or college
- Create a baseline of quality for the design of online course structure

The course template is NOT designed to:

- Prescribe the type of course content that should be developed by instructors
- Prescribe the organization of course lesson modules (though an example of organization is provided)
- Provide help with online pedagogy or delivery of online courses
- Guarantee in ANY WAY that a course developed using the course template will be recognized as a QM course