

Creating Exemplary Online Courses

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What makes an online course
“exemplary?”

EPIC Certification at Wake Tech

One piece of the SACS QEP (other being student orientation to online classes)

Faculty-led initiative. Committees composed of mostly faculty, needs sourced from what gaps online instructors noticed in student and instructor preparedness

Three pathways, most common is 30 PD credits worth of training

Topics of the PD: UDL, Accessibility, Student Engagement, LMS Training

The goal of instructor certification was to make online classes at Wake Tech *consistent* and *high quality*.

“High Quality” vs. “Exemplary”

“Exemplary” has more to do with the mindset of the instructor than the content of the course.

EPIC Master Certification

Qualifications:

- EPIC Certified
- 4 Years online teaching experience

Requirements:

- Mentor Training OR Peer Review Training
- Additional Accessibility Training
- Capstone Project - Redesign existing course with instructional designer

The goal of master certification is to equip instructors to make their online classes *exemplary*.

Mindset of Continuous Improvement

A high quality course may be copied and reused by another instructor or in another semester, but it is only exemplary if the instructor adapts and improves it.

An exemplary course is never “finished.”

The very best online course in 2008 would, in many ways, be embarrassing today.

How has the environment changed?

Tools - becoming more sophisticated every year

Population of learners - expectations change, abilities advance

Demand for distance courses - visual showing enrollment growth

Changes We've Made Recently

Community

Community in an Online Course

Community in an online class consists of:

- Building student/instructor relationships
- Facilitating student/student relationships

Building Sense of Instructor Presence

“Presence” is taken for granted in physical interactions, but requires work in online interactions.

- Personable introduction
- Seeing/hearing the instructor
- Quick response time
- Over-the-top kindness
- Invitation to continue conversations

Effective Group Work - Forming Groups

- Instructor- or Student-formed
- Introductions or Survey
- Static or Dynamic
- Needs may change by class, semester, over time, etc.

Student-formed Groups - Introductions

Introduction Prompt:

Take a few moments to introduce yourself.

You don't have to be very personal, but you many want to consider including information about what you are studying, when you like to study or do school work, the general area in which you live, and your "study style" (do you like to get things done early, do you procrastinate, are you very verbal, do you need to see things done, etc.).

Look for others you may want to work with. You will choose groups soon and will be working with your group after Test 1.

Student-formed Groups - Icebreaker

Gee Whiz Facts Prompt:

Post a “trivia fact” about yourself.

Look for 2 or 3 “kindred spirits” and respond to their posts.

Student-formed Groups - Group Selection

Find a Group Prompt:

Find 3 or 4 “kindred spirits” and form a group. Pay careful attention to details like day person vs. night owl and those who like to get assignments done right away vs. those who wait until the deadline approaches. Groups should have 4 or 5 members.

Discuss a name for your group with your group members.

Introduction Survey

Primary:

- Times/days available

Secondary:

- Career/major

Balance, if able:

- Online course experience
- Emotion toward math
- Study habits

Effective Group Work - Student Buy-in

- Expectations that are set by the students
- Interactions that are not connected to assignments
- Ownership, responsibility, interdependence

Multiple Modes of Instruction

Variety of Approaches to the Material

When reasonable, present the same material in a variety of modes

Seeing material multiple times (through multiple modes) helps

Accommodates student preferences and improves accessibility

Consistency and Branding

Consistent Navigation - Institutional

EPIC Standards - one LMS, consistent navigation menu

Limited flexibility in naming, adding items

Goal: all Wake Tech courses follow predictable, patterned layout

Consistent Navigation - Within a Course

How will content be delivered?

When will deadlines fall?

Announcements

Branding

Images, colors, logos in LMS

Intro/outro in instructional videos

Design of notes/slides

Recognizable icons for recurring expectations

Reflecting on Your Course

Developing a Critical Eye

Pull up your current or most recent online course

Look for areas you can improve

Invite someone at your table to see it (don't be embarrassed)

Next Steps

Questions to Consider

- How can improve the student experience in my online class?
- What parts of my class have I copied (without modification) that may need to be refreshed?
- What assumptions can I challenge (group work, collaboration tools, expectations of students)?
- Who can I invite to “observe” my online class?

Making a Plan

Make a plan to improve!

Create two lists:

- Long term goals
 - With infinite time and resources, what would my online class look like?
 - Dream big!
- Small steps
 - What can I do today?
 - What can I change for next semester?

Contact Information

*(These slides are posted in the
conference app)*

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