Online Course Checklist for Instructional Designers and Faculty Developers

The intent of this document is to serve as a tool for instructional designers and faculty developers to use during the course development process. This is not a Blackboard tutorial. Rather, it is a conceptual exercise intended to assist developers in moving through the process of developing a course for online delivery.

<u>Part One</u>

The Center for eLearning recommends developing your course in a specific sequence as follows:

_____ 1) Develop your course syllabus. Your syllabus should align with your department requirements and standards as well as university requirements and standards. Your syllabus should include:

_____ a) Clear contact information – how will the online students contact you?

_____ b) Course-level objectives that are measurable and student-centered.

_____ c) A detailed course schedule that outlines what materials will be covered during what time periods, along with due dates for required activities and assessments (you may wish to complete the following steps and come back to this).

_____ 2) Divide or "chunk" your course into smaller segments or "modules." You may wish to have modules that align with the number of weeks the course runs, or modules that align with specific topics covered in the course.

_____ 3) Once you have determined the structure of your modules, you will have to build out each one. Before you begin, you should create measurable, student-centered learning objectives for each module. These module-level objectives should align with the course-level objectives in your syllabus.

_____ 4) Use one of the Center for eLearning's Blackboard/QM templates to develop your course. Templates contain the overall structure of the course to ensure that you include all materials necessary to effectively deliver the course and set the expectations for the students at the beginning of the course. There are typically 4 sections in a template: Start here, course information, course content and student resources. The course content section is where you will build out your modules. The other sections contain samples of resources and items you will want to include for your students. A request for a QM Template to be added to a course can be found at: https://www.csuohio.edu/center-for-elearning/csu-course-template-shell.

_____ 5) Build out the learning modules making sure that all content (reading materials, presentations,

websites, other references, etc.), activities (discussions, blogs, group activities, etc.) and assessments (assignments, quizzes, tests, papers, etc.) are consistent with the module level objectives. Create a checklist for students of all required activities and assignments for each module that will be used as the opening document of that module.

_____ 6) Determine the technologies and media formats you will use to deliver the items in each module. For example, will you use a video or audio format to deliver a mini-lecture? Will paper submissions require use of SafeAssign or Turnitin? Will you required the use of electronic course reserves or library resources?

_____ 7) Develop grading rubrics for all graded activities. Rubrics should be used and made available to students for all graded activities.

_____ 8) Review each module to ensure active user engagement and interaction. Ideally, each module will involve some level of student-content, student-student, and student-instructor interaction.

_____ 9) Develop a communication plan. How will you interact with students throughout the course, prompt them, remind them and give them general course feedback? Some instructors use announcements or email/messaging to deliver a weekly message. Others use video or audio formats. Which assignments and activities will you give detailed, individualized feedback? The idea here is to create an instructor presence and go the extra mile to assure your students that you are available to them. This goes a long way in an online course.

_____ 10) Develop an evaluation plan. Other than the course evaluation, how will you receive feedback from your students? How will you assess whether or not your students are achieving the learning objectives?

Part Two

Online courses are evaluated primarily by two measures at Cleveland State University: Quality Matters (QM) and the Online Course Assessment Tool (OCAT). QM is a nationally-recognized set of standards that focuses on course design. The OCAT is an online course assessment tool for peer evaluation/assessment. The checklist below has been designed as a tool to use when designing online courses. It is highly recommended that instructional designers and faculty course developers and instructors become familiar with both the QM Rubric and the OCAT in order to gain a deeper understanding of designing and delivering quality, online courses. There is a significant overlap in the two instruments, although they have slightly different purposes.

The Center for eLearning recommends that prior to a course being delivered online, all 3 point criteria from the QM rubric portion of the checklist should be met. In addition, all criteria should be met at the 85% level or above.

FROM THE OCAT:

_____ The course has a syllabus that conforms to CSU and academic department standards.

_____ Contact information for the instructor is easy to find at the beginning of the course.

_____ **3.B.2** The course incorporates strategies that promote the progressive learner construction of knowledge (e.g. use of unit/modules that are thematically connected and have a logical progression.

_____ **4.A.1** The course design prompts the instructor to be present, active and engaged with the students.

FROM THE QM RUBRIC:

1) Course Overview and Introduction

_____ **1.1** Instructions make clear how to get started and where to find various course components (3).

_____ **1.2** Learners are introduced to the purpose and structure of the course (3).

_____ **1.3** Etiquette expectations (sometimes called "netiquette") for online discussions, email and other forms of communication are stated clearly (2).

_____ **1.4** Course and/or institutional policies with which the student is expected to comply are clearly stated, or a link to current policies is provided (2).

_____ **1.5** Minimum technology requirements are clearly stated and instructions for use provided (1).

_____ **1.6** Prerequisite knowledge in the discipline and/or required competencies are clearly stated (1).

_____ **1.7** The self-introduction by the instructor is appropriate and available online (1).

_____ **1.8** Learners are asked to introduce themselves to the class (1).

2) Learning Objectives (Competencies)

_____ **2.1** The course learning objectives, or course/program competencies, describe outcomes that are measurable (3).

_____ **2.2** The module/unit learning objectives or competencies describe outcomes that are measurable and consistent with the course-level objectives or competencies (3).

_____ **2.3** All learning objectives or competencies are stated clearly and written from the learners' perspective (3).

_____ **2.4** The relationship between learning objectives or competencies and course activities is clearly stated (3).

_____ **2.5** The learning objectives or competencies are suited to the level of the course (3).

3) Assessment and Measurement

_____ **3.1** The assessments measure the stated learning objectives or competencies (3).

_____ **3.2** The course grading policy is stated clearly (3).

_____ **3.3** Specific and descriptive criteria are provided for the evaluation of learners' work and are tied to the course grading policy (3).

_____ **3.4** The assessment instruments are sequenced, varied, and suited to the learner work being assessed (2).

_____ **3.5** The course provides learners with multiple opportunities to track their learning progress (2).

4) Instructional Materials

_____ **4.1** The instructional materials contribute to the achievement of the stated course and module/unit learning objectives or competencies (3).

_____ **4.2** Both the purpose of instructional materials and how the materials are to be used for learning activities are clearly explained (3).

_____ **4.3** All instructional materials used in the course are appropriately cited (2).

_____ **4.4** The instructional materials are current (2).

_____ **4.5** A variety of instructional materials is used in the course (2).

_____ **4.6** The distinction between required and optional materials is clearly explained (1).

5) Course Activities and Learner Interaction

_____ **5.1** The learning activities promote the achievement of the stated learning objectives or competencies (3).

_____ **5.2** Learning activities provide opportunities for interaction that support active learning (3).

_____ **5.3** The instructor's plan for classroom response time and feedback on assignments is clearly stated (3).

_____ **5.4** The requirements for learner interaction are clearly stated (2).

6) Course Technology

_____ **6.1** The tools used in the course support the learning objectives and competencies (3).

_____ **6.2** Course tools promote learner engagement and active learning (3).

_____ **6.3** Technologies required in the course are readily obtainable (2).

_____ **6.4** The course technologies are current (1).

_____ **6.5** Links are provided to privacy policies for all external tools required in the course (1).

7) Learner Support

_____ **7.1** The course instructions articulate or link to a clear description of the technical support offered and how to obtain it (3).

_____ **7.2** Course instructions articulate or link to the institution's accessibility policies and services (3).

_____ **7.3** Course instructions articulate or link to an explanation of how the institution's academic support services and resources can help learners succeed in the course and how learners can obtain them (2).

_____ **7.4** Course instructions articulate or link to an explanation of how the institution's student services and resources can help learners succeed and how learners can obtain them (1).

8) Accessibility and Usability

_____ **8.1** Course navigation facilitates ease of use (3).

_____ **8.2** Information is provided about the accessibility of all technologies required in the course (3).

_____ **8.3** The course provides alternative means of access to course materials in formats that meet the needs of diverse learners (2).

_____ **8.4** The course design facilitates readability (2).

_____ **8.5** Course multimedia facilitate ease of use (2).

Note: Transcripts and Closed Captioning of audio-visual material is currently done on an as needed basis at CSU. When faculty are aware that they have a student who will need a transcript and/or closed-captioning, they should contact the office of Disability Services (216.687.2015) and the Center for eLearning (216.687.3960) to initiate and coordinate the process. Audio-video lectures can take 1-2 weeks to close caption and transcribe and involve the services of an outside vendor. Students should use the university procedure for requesting accommodation through the Office of Disability Services.