BUILDING A ROBUST ONLINE LEARNING STRUCTURE ON THE OLC PILLARS OF QUALITY

BY HAP AZIZ, ED.D.
TWITTER: @DIGITALHAP
CONTACT: HAPAZIZ@GMAIL.COM
BLOG: HTTP://HAPAZIZ.WORDPRESS.COM
Session Description

Course quality often can depend on perspective and audience-based criteria.

Criteria may vary, but a standards framework may be applied.

The OLC Five Pillars is one framework; what are components of consistency?

What do we consider as we apply measures of quality?
The Power of Pretend

Narrative is one of the key drivers to the learning experience.

Humans are able to absorb information and internalize new activities and behaviors through the power of storytelling.
The Quality of Learning

“The quality of learning is not strained;
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath. It is twice blest;
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes”

- With apologies to William Shakespeare
OLC’s Five Pillars of Quality

The quality of learning is not strained – The online learning experience should be equivalent to the on-ground experience (Learning Effectiveness)

It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven – The institution is able to provide the best education value to students while supporting appropriate and sustainable enrollment growth (Scale)

Upon the place beneath – Provision of the means for all qualified, motivated students to complete courses, degrees, or programs in their disciplines of choice (Access)

It blesseth him that gives – Instructors find the online teaching experience personally rewarding and professionally beneficial (Faculty Satisfaction)

and him that takes – The perception that all elements of the learning experience were effective in helping advance the student’s academic career (Student Satisfaction)
OLC’s Five Pillars of Quality

- Effectiveness
- Scale
- Access
- Faculty
- Students
Arguably the Worst Institution Ever

Thanks, J.K. Rowling, it’s okay to have a subculture in England that provides only seven years of education, and then releases their children to the world, completely unprepared for critical thinking in any way. Because, don’t worry, they have flying broomsticks, and can cast spells that make cooking easier.

- Samuel Arbesman

“No Wizard Left Behind: The Failure of the Hogarts Educational System”
Learning Effectiveness

Hogwarts does not take advantage of available technology, and where it does, it attempts to replicate “traditional” learning experiences.

There is a complete lack of faculty development and training in effective pedagogy.

Course design is in the model of lecture-read-memorize-test-end.
Scale

Costs are fixed and can be expensive, meaning disadvantaged students fall on the wrong side of the magical divide.

Unreasonable faculty and staff workloads are compensated for by slave labor rather than implementing efficient resource and schedule management practices.

Independent course experiences varied greatly to the point of forcing students to learn multiple instructional and learning systems.
Access

Academic programs begin in the fall and end in the spring.

Little variation in program offerings, and students have little choice in academic paths.

Student support, especially for technology and mental/emotional needs is non-existent, other than occasional faculty meetings regarding academic performance.

Twitter: @digitalhap
Blog: http://hapaziz.wordpress.com
email: hapaziz@gmail.com
Faculty Satisfaction

Faculty has little input as to their own teaching assignments, and they often suffer due to lack of support from administration.

Curriculum decisions are made without faculty input or buy-in.

No training in use of tools and technologies.
Student Satisfaction

Students suffered in courses with disengaged and even incompetent faculty.

Some students were seriously injured and even killed through lack of any safeguards in courses and sporting events.

Some students were able to “game” the system and obtain good grades unfairly in the minds of other students.
What Makes Hogwarts Beloved?

From the reader’s perspective, it is all about the narrative

From the characters’ perspectives, it is all about relationship
Framework-Spanning Criteria

The following criteria assist in building relationship between the student and the institution in the form of trust: Trust that needs are being met, and trust that improvements will be made.

**Ethics** – Involves topics from intellectual property policies and considerations to online harassment and bullying. Do students and faculty feel they are being treated fairly?

**Resources** – Addresses the way in which institutions provision their online operations, hopefully positioning themselves for success. Do students and faculty feel they are being treated well?

**Constituents** – All about audience: who is participating, and what is important to them. Do students and faculty feel their voices are being heard?

**Measurement** – The ever-present need to understand how well we are executing to our goals at every level of the institution from leadership to department to individual instructor. Do students and faculty have confidence that changes are being made?
Relationship as Part of the Framework

- Effectiveness
- Scale
- Access
- Faculty
- Students
- Ethics
- Resources
- Constituents
- Measurement

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email: hapaziz@gmail.com
Other Measures of Quality

Quality Matters – https://www.qualitymatters.org/
   ◦ The QM Rubric and QM Course Certification

ISTE Pedagogical Standards – http://iste.org
   ◦ The ISTE Standards categories and the Seal of Alignment

IMS Global Education Technology Frameworks– http://imsglobal.org
   ◦ Learning Tools Interoperability and Caliper
It’s time to use the Power of Pretend. In each Breakout Session, consider a fictional institution of education (Hogwarts, Xavier’s School for Gifted Children, Startfleet Academy, Ender’s Battleschool, an unnamed small private university, etc. Your task is to imagine how you would offer online programs for the school. Consider the student, faculty, and administrator perspectives.

**Session A**
Framework as a consideration of the quality of technology infrastructure and support across an institution.

**Session B**
Content in terms of the quality of the course design process and how it impacts on the materials that both educators and learners will interact with during the duration of a particular course.