Designing and Developing a Quality Online Course

Faculty Reference Guide

Garrett College
Office of Distance Learning
2010

Teaching Online:
The Tutorial to Designing and Developing a Quality Course

Office of Distance Learning **Fall 2010**
301.387.3155 dlearn@garrettcollege.edu

What do you need to complete this Tutorial?
1. You need to have completed your Basic Blackboard training or have extensive experience in using Blackboard.

2. You need to be enrolled (as instructor) in an online Blackboard course that you are either going to teach or that you could teach in your discipline. You must fill out a shell request form (available online at www.garrettcollege.edu/bb_support/BB_ShellRequest.php and submit it to Jeanne Meyers.

3. The assumption for this tutorial is that you have your course shell opened, and have handy your course materials, including digital course documents, instructional materials, tests, assignments etc. If you do not have access to such a course, request one.

4. Depending on prior experience, you will need several hours to complete the Tutorial.

How to complete this Tutorial?
The Coordinator of Distance Learning and Instructional Design is available to assist you with this tutorial. Please contact the Distance Learning Office to get the assistance you need.

If you have experience teaching in the online classroom, you may want to go through the tutorial by yourself and contact the Coordinator with any questions you may have.

1. If you prefer, you can schedule a session in person or on the phone with the Coordinator to get you started.

2. If you are new to teaching in the Online Classroom, you can schedule an extended session with the Coordinator to guide you through the tutorial.

What will you have accomplished after completing this tutorial?
1. You will have become acquainted with most of the important quality standards for the design of online courses.
2. You will become better acquainted with the Learning Management System (Blackboard)
3. You will have become acquainted with the routines and procedures of successfully teaching an online course at Garrett College. You will have created your course to start teaching online.

How is the Tutorial organized?
Following a general introduction, the Tutorial is divided into two segments:

- Part (1) covers the standards for a quality course design from Quality Matter (QM),
- Part (2) covers the routines and requirements for teaching the course online.

Each part lists a number of items that you can mark, “completed” in the box to the left of the item. Remember, you should have your course website open in Blackboard while working on the Tutorial.

About Quality Matters (QM)

Quality Matters **(QM)** is a nationally recognized Peer Review Protocol with a rubric of some 40 quality standards. Familiarity with those standards is essential to building a quality course for the Online Classroom. For more information on Quality Matters, including the text of the latest edition of the rubric, contact the Coordinator of Distance Learning & Instructional Design.

About Teaching Online

Teaching online comes in two formats:

1. You teach only in one classroom and that is the Online Classroom;

2. You teach in two classrooms, the Online Classroom and the on-campus classroom (Hybrid course).

While this tutorial mainly focuses attention on teaching in the Online Classroom, many of the aspects can be used in creating the online portion of a Hybrid course.

If you don't know it yet, teaching in the Online Classroom is different from the traditional professorial experience: it requires you to organize student learning, and that is a lot more demanding and perhaps more difficult, than writing and delivering an exciting lecture. You will find that it is worth your investment of time and energy. There are notable advantages in using an Online Classroom. For example:

1. **Flexibility**: Online learning includes ample opportunities for students to pursue coursework at any time that fits into their busy lives.

2. **Highly interactive discussions**: In online discussion, every student in the class is expected to respond, respond intelligently, and respond several times. Asynchronous discussions frequently last for a week and can include as many as 100 or more student postings.

3. **Enriched course materials**: For example, well-constructed, creative online courses can take anthropology students to cultures all over the world, archaeology students to active digs, art students to the finest museum collections, and business students to corporations large and small. World-class resources can be accessed, viewed, and studied 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

4. **On-demand interaction and support services**: Help is only a click away in an online course. Online courses can include many types of interactive learning aids such as flash cards, immediate feedback tests, and PowerPoint presentations, contact with the instructor and classmates, e-mail, chat rooms, discussion boards, and 24/7 library research databases.

5. **Immediate feedback**: Online students generally have greater access to instructors. Online tests and quizzes with automatic grading can provide immediate feedback and references to text and class notes with explanations. (credit Mark Kasssop 2003)

Part (1) Course Design

The 23 design components listed in this part of the Tutorial are derived from the QM Rubric and are essential to teaching your course smoothly and successfully. Assuming that you are looking at a Bb course website,

(a) Identify each item,
(b) If it needs change or update, modify it,
(c) If it does not exist, create it

☐ **1. Identify, modify or create 7 basic navigation buttons.**
The course template has include in it: Homepage, Course Information, Course Content, Discussions, Grades/Tools, Groups, Help

You may choose to add other buttons such as: Announcements, Course Units, Faculty Information, Assignments, Communication
The 7 navigation buttons are suggested to assure a family resemblance among Garrett courses. Depending on your particular course, you may end up with more buttons, such as "Course Documents" or "Web Resources", etc. Be sure not to have too many so that your navigation panel does not exceed too far below the height of most computer screens. You may wish to delete the Groups button if your course does not use groups. **Do not remove the Course Information button!**

☐ **2. Select the "Course Information" button to see that GC's Course Information template is loaded.**

The Course Information section should display several content sections, including Course Descriptions and Outcomes, Course Syllabus, Student Support, Academic Support Services, Disability Services, etc. Add any content you would like to this area. You may move the syllabus if you wish, but do not remove the other information from this section.
Note: Those areas that display a double red **!!,** requires information from you.

☐ **3. Check, modify or create a layout of your course that is intuitive and easy to navigate.**

The basic layout of the course should be anchored in the answer to two questions:

(1)What am I supposed to do now? Answer: Look under "Assignments" for each week/unit!

(2) Where do I find information about….? Answer: Look under "Course Information"!

Also, the principle of multiple access points to items makes for good design. Example: you give access to tests in the respective week/unit in which they are taken. In addition, you also create a navigation button called "Assignments" where you give access to all tests taken in this course.

☐ **4. Identify, modify or create instructions that make clear how the student gets started in the course and where to find various course components.**

Instructions provide a general course overview, present the schedule for activities, guide the new student to explore the course website, and indicate what to do first, instead of listing detailed navigational instructions for the whole course.

Instructors may choose to incorporate some of this information in the course syllabus. If so, students should be directed to the syllabus at the beginning of the course. A useful idea is a "Read Me First" or "Start Here" button or icon on the course home page, linking students to start-up information. This button can be made hidden to students later.

Hybrid Courses: Instructions in the online classroom make it apparent to students that this is a hybrid course with both online and face-to-face components and activities. Specific instructions are given that indicate the requirements for participation in both the online and face-to-face portions of the course. The introductory information clearly states when and where students should participate each week, and a structured set of topics and a schedule is provided for each face-to-face meeting.

The first night of class, you may wish to give students a quick course tour of the online classroom, or present a graphical table or diagram that depicts and explains the relationship between the online and face-to-face portions of a hybrid course along with calendar dates.

☐ **5. Identify, modify or create a statement that introduces the student to how learning is organized in this course.**
The instructor's statement gives the new student an idea of how the learning process is structured, including schedule, communications modes, types of activities, and assessments. These features are often found in the course syllabus, but they may also be found in an introductory or welcome document.

Hybrid Courses: Instructors should explain the overall purpose of the online and face-to-face portions of the course, and how they work together and reinforce each other. The instructor indicates how and why both formats are important to the learning, and the value that each format brings to the students' learning experience.

☐ **6. Identify, modify or create a statement that clearly explains etiquette and expectations with regard to discussions, email, and other forms of communication in the class.**
In general terms, a statement of online etiquette is provided as part of the Course Information template. Check the statement to see whether you need more specific instructions for your discussion board. It is a good idea, for example, to require that all student documents be transmitted in a specific format, such as .rtf or doc.

☐ **7. Identify, modify or create a "Who is who" forum in the Discussion Board.**
The student introduction helps to create a supportive learning environment and a sense of community. Students are asked to introduce themselves and given guidance on where and how they should do so. The student introductions themselves are not evaluated. Instructors may ask students to answer specific questions (such as why they are taking the course, what concerns they have, what they expect to learn, etc.) or may choose to let the student decide what to include. Instructors may provide an example of an introduction and/or start the process by introducing themselves.

Hybrid Courses: The opportunity for introductions should be available electronically for students who may have missed the opportunity during early face-to-face meetings.

☐ **8. Identify, modify or create a statement that describes clearly the minimum student skills, and, if applicable, prerequisite knowledge in the discipline.**
You need a statement that articulates the requirements and prerequisite(s) for your course. You can provide this statement in the syllabus.

☐ **9. Identify, modify or create module/unit/chapter learning objectives and make sure that they describe outcomes that are measurable and consistent with the course-level objectives.**
Measurable module or unit-level learning objectives are important. They precisely describe the specific competencies, skills, and knowledge that students should be able to master and demonstrate at regular intervals throughout the course. They provide students with greater focus and clarity of learning expectations and outcomes on a weekly, modular, or unit basis.

Module- or unit-level objectives may be written by the instructor or come from the textbook. ***Regardless of origin, these objectives should be stated within the actual module/unit so that they are accessible to the student.***

Module/unit learning objectives guide instructors to accurately assess student accomplishment. Objectives should describe student performance in specific, observable terms. Note that at some institutions, learning objectives may be referred to as learning outcomes.

The module/unit-level objectives should be consistent with the course-level objectives. The module/unit objectives may either be implicitly or explicitly consistent with the course-level objectives. For example, the module/unit objective "*Students will write sentences that demonstrate correct usage of commas, semicolons, and periods."* is implicitly consistent with the course objective "*Students will demonstrate correct writing skills."*

☐ **10. Identify, modify or create assessments that measure the stated learning outcomes and are consistent with course activities.**
Assessments and learning outcomes/objectives align in a clear and direct way. The assessment formats provide a reasonable way to measure the stated learning outcomes.

<u>Examples of outcome/assessment alignment:</u>

A problem analysis evaluates critical thinking skills.

A multiple choice quiz verifies vocabulary knowledge.

A composition assesses writing skills.

<u>Examples of inconsistent alignment between learning outcomes and assessment</u>:

The outcome is to be able to "write a persuasive essay" but the assessment is a multiple choice test.

The outcome is to "demonstrate discipline-specific information literacy" and the assessment is a rubric-scored term paper, but students are not given any practice with information literacy skills on smaller assignments.

☐ **11. Identify, modify or create the course grading policy and make sure it is stated clearly and all grade items appear in the grade book.**
A clear explanation indicates how the course grades are computed. The points, percentages, and weights for each component of the course grade are clearly stated. The relationship(s) between points, percentages, weights, and letter grades are explained. The instructor's policy on late submissions is clearly stated.

Review the clarity of the explanation and presentation to the student, not the simplicity or complexity of a given grading system itself. A relatively complex grading system can still be unambiguous and easy to understand.

Examples:
A list of all activities, tests, etc. that will affect the students" grade

An explanation of the relationship between the final course letter grade and the student's accumulated points and/or percentages

If points and percentages are used, give an explanation of the relationship between these two.

☐ **12. Identify, modify or create specific and descriptive criteria for the evaluation of students' work and participation.**
This description and/or statement of criteria provide students with clear guidance as to the expectations and required components of work and participation. These criteria give students a clear idea of how to strive for a particular grade on an assignment or activity.

You help the students by showing them your evaluation criteria in advance, but you also save time and make your own life easier when it comes to assessing students' work. For example, create a rubric for grading essay exams. Discussions are notoriously difficult to grade consistently; make a decision now how you will assess participation and save yourself future headaches. (See Appendix D for a sample Discussion Board grading rubrics)

☐ **13. Identify, modify or create "self-check" or practice types of assignments for timely student feedback.**
Remember, both you and the student organize learning. Consequently, both you and the student need to assess what is learned and how it is learned. Practice exercises that the student can repeat to gauge success are a good way of accomplishing that. Students learn more effectively if they receive frequent, meaningful, and timely feedback. As a matter of incentives, you may want to consider awarding credit not for the results but for doing it.

Examples:
Writing assignments that allow for the submission of a draft for instructor comment and suggestions for improvement

Self-mastery tests and quizzes that include informative feedback with each answer choice

Interactive games and simulation that have feedback built in

Practice quizzes

Practice written assignments

Peer reviews

Model papers or essays provided for students' viewing

Sample answers or answer keys provided for students' viewing

☐ **14. Identify, modify or create the instructional materials and explain to the student how they contribute to the achievement of the stated learning objectives and what to do with them.**
Course materials, resources, and learning objectives align in a clear and direct way. The course materials and resources provide a reasonable base to achieve the stated learning objectives. Most courses are based on a text book; some come with study guides, printed or on disks. Some courses use videos. The point is to identify them one by one for you and for the student just to be clear as to how they relate to the chapter/module/unit objectives. For example, you have students watch video segments, explain why they are watching them and what they are to learn in view of the learning objectives.

☐ **15. Check whether the instructional materials have sufficient breadth, depth, and currency to allow the student to learn the subject.**

<u>Breadth</u>: The course materials are robust and create a rich learning environment for students. Instructors should provide meaningful content in a variety of ways, including the textbook, slide presentations, websites, lecture notes, outlines, and multimedia.

<u>Depth</u>: The level of detail in supporting materials is appropriate for the level of the course, and provides sufficient depth for students to achieve the learning objectives. For example, an upper-level capstone course should include significantly deeper materials than those required for an introductory general education course.

<u>Currency</u>: The materials represent up-to-date thinking and practice in the discipline.

Also, when you inherit a course from a previous semester, you want to be sure that the textbook is current; sometimes the video materials are old and need updating; Internet links get corrupted and websites disappear. You want to be sure up-front that everything is working.

☐ **16. Check all resources and materials used in the course and see whether they are appropriately cited.**
Materials from other sources should be distinctly identified. Text, images, graphic materials, tables, videos, audios, websites, and other forms of multimedia are appropriately referenced according to normal copyright standards.

Courses that use an e-pack or course cartridge may provide a blanket statement acknowledging that a significant portion of the course materials came from the publisher rather than include individual citations for each instance of publisher materials. Most supplementary resources come with the textbook and the permission to use them. However, it is good practice to identify the permission of the publisher in conjunction with sets of items such as additional lecture materials, glossaries or the like.

☐ **17. Check the learning activities in your course and consider whether they foster appropriate levels of interactions (student-to-student, student-to-faculty, and student-to-content).**
With few exceptions, in most online courses, the active learner is best fostered when he or she is engaged in an inter-active learning environment. Having students watch a video is one thing, organizing a discussion around a topic related to the video is far more engaging allows students to relate the video to the course information.

☐ **18. Make sure that the tools and media used in your course support the learning objectives, guide the student to become a more active learner, and are appropriately chosen to deliver the content of the course.**

Tools and media used in the course support related learning objectives, and are contextually integrated with texts and lesson assignments. Students know how the tools and media support the assignments and how they support the learning objectives. Technology is not used simply for the sake of using technology. For example, a course might require viewing video materials, but it may not be clear how the video materials illustrate or support any learning objective.

Examples of tools include discussion boards, chat rooms, wikis, grade book, etc.
Examples of media include video, audio, animations, simulations, etc.

Media are not required (but is encouraged) but, *if* media are used they should support the learning objectives and be contextually integrated.

☐ **19. Make sure that technologies required for this course are either provided or easily downloadable.**
The term "technologies" covers a range of plug-ins such as Acrobat Reader, media players, etc. In addition, courses may require special software packages (spreadsheets, math calculators, etc.). Post clear instructions and list the required software and plug-ins, along with instructions for obtaining and installing these items. You can find links to the most popular plugins and downloads at www.garrettcollege.edu/bb_support.

☐ **20. Identify, modify or create instructions that articulate or link to a clear description of the technical support offered for this course.**
As instructor of the course, you are the first-line technical support for students. You are not expected to be a computer expert; however most student problems can be resolved by downloading the needed plug-ins and updates or making the proper settings on their computer. A list of plug-ins and downloads is available on the Garrett College website at: http://www.garrettcollege.edu/BB_Support/

Most student questions will revolve around finding their way through the course design. It is important to explain to the student how to get help with course content, assignments, or academic or student support services.

Make sure that students have access to technical support services from within the course. There should be a clear description of the services, including a link to Bb Student Support website listed above.

☐ **21. Identify, modify or create course pages and course materials to provide equivalent alternatives to auditory and visual content.**
Alternative means of access to course information are provided for the vision- or hearing-impaired student, such as, equivalent textual representations of images, audio, animations, and video in the course website. Presenting information in text format is generally acceptable because screen reader software (used by the vision-impaired) can read text.

This standard applies to the information and content provided *within* the course management system. It does not apply to external web sites to which the course links.

Examples:

- Audio lecture has a text transcript available.
- Video clip, image, or animation is accompanied by a text transcript.
- Video programs are close-captioned

☐ **22. Identify, modify or create course pages that have external links to ensure that they are self-describing and meaningful.**
The Internet links should include useful descriptions of what students will find at those sites. These descriptions enable the vision-impaired student to use screen reader software to understand links. In addition, instructors provide directions that clearly direct students to the appropriate sub-pages within an external web site. Make sure that the links actually work.

Examples:

All file names and web hyperlinks have meaningful names. For instance, the link to take a quiz should say "Take Quiz 1," not "click here."

Icons used as links should also have HTML tags or an accompanying text link.

To facilitate access to Internet sites by screen readers, links are arranged in numeric or alphabetic order, rather than simple bulleted form.

☐ **23. Check course pages for screen readability issues.**
Your course should employ appropriate font, color, and spacing to facilitate readability and minimize distractions for the student.

Examples of practices that facilitate readability and minimize distractions include:

- If using color coding, use additional means to communicate information, such as the additional use of bold or italics in conjunction with color coding.
- Sufficient contrast is used for the font and background colors
- Text size is consistent with typical View/Text Size settings.
- Course pages provide an alternate, non-color-coded format.
- Formatting and color coding are used to serve specific instructional purposes. For example, format and color are used purposefully to communicate key points, group like items, emphasize relevant relationships, etc.

Part (2) Teaching the Course Online

In the previous part of the Tutorial you identified, modified, or created the design components of your course website. This part (2) provides you with a checklist of things to do before, during, and after the semester.

A. To-do list before the semester:

☐ **1. Request a course shell be created**

You must request a course shell for each online, hybrid and web-enhanced course. Fill out the Shell Request Form and forward to Jeanne Meyers in LC 643. A shell will be created by the Coordinator of Distance Learning and you will be notified when it is complete.

☐ **2. Copy the course content from a previous semester.**

After you receive email notification that your course shells for the coming semester have been created, copy the old course into the new course shell. The no-frills basics can be found in APPENDIX C. It you need further assistance.

After you have copied your course:

- On your opening Blackboard screen, identify the new course shell under "My Courses"
- Open the new course.
- Check that all materials, including tests and grade-book items, have been copied;
- Check under Course In formation to see that the link to your syllabus is working;
- If you encounter problems, have your "copy completed" confirmation email ready and contact dlearn@garrettcollege.edu.

☐ **3. Set up your faculty contact and introduce yourself in the Discussion Board.**

The faculty contact includes the essentials, such as the instructor's name, title, field of expertise, email address, office hours and phone number. A photograph should be included. A discussion board for self introduction should be used (Who-is-Who) to help students get to know the instructor and other students and should extend beyond the essentials. It creates a sense of connection between the instructor and the students. It should present the instructor as professional as well as approachable.

It could include:
Information on teaching philosophy
Past experiences with teaching online classes
Personal information such as hobbies, family, travel experiences, etc.

Hybrid Courses: The instructor's self-introduction should be available in Blackboard.

☐ **4. Office Hours: Make sure you have chosen and announced to your students how you plan to conduct your office hours.**

Of course, regular email traffic in an online class is the equivalent to office hours. However, you should be aware Garrett College requests 5 hours a week be available for students through office hours. You must traditionally articulate for f-2-f classes on campus:

1. to give the student reasonable opportunity to consult with the instructor or designee in person
2. to give the Instructor the opportunity to direct student requests to designated blocks of time.
3. to publish these designated times at the beginning of the semester.

You can choose one of three modalities to conduct your Office Hours:
(a) your office hours will be subsumed in the email traffic with your students, no designated times;
(b) you conduct Office Hours at a designated time synchronously in a chat room;

(c) you conduct Office Hours at a designated time asynchronously in a Discussion Board forum.
Make sure that students (upon request) are given the opportunity to meet face-to-face with you or a designated representative (your Program Director or the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, for example).

Any one of these options meets the required number of faculty Office Hours for this course in proportion to your total number of office hours for the current semester.

☐ **5. Weeks and Dates Chronology**

One of the basic design rules for an online class stipulates that there should be no actual dates in the website. The reason is that you don't want to copy dates from any previous semester into your current semester's course shell, this applies particularly to situations when you inherit a course website from someone else. Examples for possible exceptions to this rule are a broadcast schedule for videos or announcements. The internal course chronology (Thursday, Assignment Week 5) can be synchronized with the actual semester dates in a table called "Weeks and Dates". Post the table in your course and also a document that students can print out and keep as a handy reminder or put in a permanent announcement that the student will see each time the website is opened.

☐ **6. Welcome email/Announcement (Appendix A)**

Before or on the day you make the course website available (preferably 1-2 days before the start of the semester) send out a welcome email with all the information that the student needs to get started. This is a balancing act between giving as much detailed information as possible and keeping it as short as possible so students might actually read it. The text should be posted as an Announcement and go out as an email at the same time. Look at the Appendix and get an idea of what might go into your Announcement. Print your BB roster at that time so you can easily identify additional students who may register later and send them a copy of the Welcome email.

☐ **7. Address Academic Honesty**

Academic Honesty in the online environment has been a much debated issue. The dust from the debate seems to settle slowly and three issues emerge clearly; (a) Academic Honesty as an issue of attitude and trust in the instructor-student relationship; (b) Academic Honesty as an issue of which methods and types of assessment are more or are less conducive (c) Academic Honesty is a practical issue of prevention. To begin with, you want to make sure that you and your students work from the same set of expectations. You will find an excerpt of the Student Code of Conduct in the Course Information Section of the course shell. You may also wish to reiterate your expectations of student honesty in your course syllabus. The full Code of Student Conduct can be found in the Student Handbook at www.garrettcollege.edu/student_life/docs/StudentHandbook2009-2010.pdf

☐ **8. Call Attention to the Student's Schedule**

Most students who fail in an Online Course do so because they do not have the time it takes to be successful. Tell your students approximately how many hours a week they will need for your course.

☐ **10. Make all unused folders, communication and tool links unavailable**

There is nothing more annoying than clicking on dead links or opening empty folders on a website. Make sure that all your links work; in your website go to" Manage Course Menu", (a) make all buttons that you don't use unavailable; (b) open any "tool" and "communication" item and make all features that you do not use unavailable.

☐ **11. Make all course content available at the beginning of the semester**

The question whether all course content should be available to student at the beginning of the semester has been debated among practitioners for some time. There is a growing consensus on three points: (a) as a default, having all courses content available at the beginning of the course is considered good practice; (b) there are very legitimate reasons in certain types of classes not to follow the rule; (c) tests that are not made available in advance should appear as "unavailable" in a folder that indicates the nature, scope and deadline for the test. It is up to you to make these decisions about what your students have access to and when.

☐ **12. Make the course available.**
By default, all course shells are created "Unavailable". When you are ready, you must manually change the setting to "Available". There is a conflict of interest between the instructor and the student. The instructor wants as much time as possible to get the course ready before going live; most students, particularly first time online students, would like access to the website before the class starts to get acquainted with navigation and assignments. The best compromise is making the website available 2-4 days before the beginning of the term. Online and Hybrid course shells will be opened 24 hours before the semester start date if you have not opened it already. This ensures students can see their course during the online student orientation and gives them time to resolve registration and log-in issues.

B. To-do List during the semester

☐ **13. Monitor your class roster in BB**
The class roster will be posted in your BB course shell for the current semester automatically about 2 days prior to the start of the course. The roster will be updated once a day. Students who drop the class prior to the end of the late registration period will be removed from the roster. Students who withdraw ("W") from the class after the end of the late registration period will be retained but "x" marked in the subsequent roster update. Please report any discrepancies immediately. Faculty are not to remove students from online and hybrid courses.

☐ **14. Report Class Attendance**
Both State and Federal Government require the College to report attendance for Financial Aid and State funding. During the first weeks of the semester you will receive information from the Dean of Academic Affairs on how to do this.

☐ **15. Ensuring student participation and attendance**
At the end of the first calendar week of class, identify those students who have not logged on or participated in any class activities or are falling behind on their first assignments. Contact each student and identify the basis of your concern, and give any recommended action the student should take.

If a student has still not participated in class activities by the end of the second week, contact the student again and also send the name(s) of those student(s) to the Coordinator of Distance Learning, dlearn@garrettcollege.edu. Complete this process for each course or section you teach.

Non-attendance is defined as never attending, ceasing to attend or failing to comply with a course attendance/non-attendance policy in a face-to-face course or failing to demonstrate participation in an on-line learning course according to the participation policy for the course. Non-attendance does not constitute withdrawal or dropping a course or withdrawal from the college.

There are four attendance check points:

I. First day of class

II. The Official State Reporting Date (approximately three weeks into the semester, 20% of semester/course, published each year in the Academic Year Calendar)

III. Mid-term (approximately 9 weeks into the semester, 60% of semester, published each year in the AYC)

IV. End of the semester (published in the AYC)

☐ **16. Mid-term grade notification requirement**

Instructors must assign a mid-term grade to EACH STUDENT on his/her course roster as a record of a student's performance at the midpoint of the semester. The mid-term reporting date at approximately nine weeks will correspond to the 60% completion date for the semester required to comply with financial aid eligibility requirements. Mid-term grades are not recorded for students enrolled in courses which do not meet for the full semester.

The Office of Records and Registration will email all instructors a notification of Mid-term Grade Entry indicating the opening and closing dates for grade entry. *The computer will NOT allow you to enter grades after the closing date, so please plan accordingly.*

Online instructors who do not have ready access to campus may fax 301-387-3189 or mail (do not email) grades to: Coordinator of Distance Learning, Garrett College, 687 Mosser Road, McHenry, MD 21532

See 'Phase III: Mid-term Grade and Attendance Reporting Section' of the Procedures for Attendance and Grade *Reporting Document distributed by the Office of Records & Registration.*

☐ **17. Establish your weekly contact schedule with students**

Regular and friendly contact with students is the foundation for success in teaching a well designed online class. The instructor must offer a response to normal weekday email inquiries within 24 to 36 hours unless the instructor has announced an exception to that pattern due to illness, travel or the like (adjust to accelerated formats). Generations of online instructors agree on one piece of advice: check your email daily and provide a slot in your daily work schedule to deal with student email in your course or courses. Many instructors have found a weekly "Monday Morning" email to the class helpful as a user-friendly, more personable reminder of what is coming up in the week ahead.

☐ **18. Remind students of the dates for the proctored test components**

Students taking an online class can expect that the majority of tests and exams are taken online in a non-proctored situation. However, some instructors require at least one proctored exam. Faculty who are on or close to campus must proctor their own exams. Faculty who do not reside close to campus may use the Testing Center, testingcenter@garrettcollege.edu or 301-387-3741. Please contact the testing center at the beginning of the semester to let them know the approximate time frame(s) you expect your students to take their exams. The testing Center has limited hours that may change each semester. Preferably the proctored exam should not be scheduled at the end of the semester as space and hours are limited. The date of the proctored component for which the student has to come to the college must be published prominently in the syllabus or any other appropriate location in the course.

☐ **19. Distance Learning Satisfaction Survey**

The Distance Learning Department will ask that you post a link and request that students take the Distance Learning Satisfaction Survey. This survey gathers feedback from students concerning the online instruction format, technical issues and some demographic information. This is NOT the course evaluation.

☐ **20. Mid-Semester Feedback (Appendix B)**

The Distance Learning Department recommends that you ask students for feedback around the midpoint of the semester. Most Online Instructors welcome student's comments and responses to particular questions at that time to get confirmation on what works well and to consider possible adjustments in the course protocol. Create your own survey in the BB Survey Manager. See Appendix D for sample questions.

☐ **21. Inappropriate Student Behavior**

Use common sense to correct inappropriate language or violation of established online etiquette. If the problem persists contact your Program Director or the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs.

C. To-do list for the End of the Semester

☐ **1. Student Evaluations**

Toward the end of the semester you will receive email notification from the Coordinator of Distance Learning with a URL that opens the student evaluation form for your course. Including the link, send an email to the class emphasizing the importance of filling out the evaluation form. Since the online environment does not give you the opportunity to have the form filled out in a classroom setting, you will need to send out 1-3 reminders to the students to achieve a meaningful response rate. You may also wish to add it to your announcements and to the assignments area(s) of your course. Some instructors choose to give bonus points to students who fill out the course evaluation. This is up to the instructor. The instructor is responsible for acquiring an adequate response rate.

☐ **2. Post Grades to Café Web (Appendix C)**

Towards the end of every semester you will receive notification and instructions from the Registrar's Office about the due dates for posting your final grades in Café Web. When you get the notification, give it a quick trial run just to be sure that your password works and all your classes are loaded under your name. Due dates for posting grades MUST be adhered to. If you do not have campus access to Café Web, contact The Associate Dean of Academic Affairs.

☐ **3. Download grades or print a hard copy.**

At the end of each semester you are **required** to keep the record of all grades on file at a location other than Blackboard. You may print off your grades or download them to your U drive on campus. Do not download your grades to your home computer.

☐ **4. Change Grade**

By default, two weeks after the semester end date, your course website will become unavailable to students. If you have an "I" student, you and your student must fill out and sign a "Contract for Grade of Incomplete and submit it to the Registrar's Office and also advise the Coordinator of Distance Learning. If you want to change a student grade for any reason, the registrar's office requires that you complete and sign a form. The form is available from the Registrar.

☐ **5. Course Archiving**

Courses are archived and removed from Blackboard 13 months after the course has been taught. If you wish to reuse a course in the future, you are asked to archive your course on your U drive. You may 'copy' the course elsewhere, but enrollment and student information MUST be removed from any course not stored on Campus servers. Directions for copying and archiving courses may be found in the End of Semester Instructions sent out by the Coordinator of Distance Learning.

Appendix A

Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to welcome you to the X session of class-online. Students have found the website easy to navigate and report that it is as easy/difficult as other classes they have taken on campus. You should be prepared to spend as much time as you have spent on the average in other on-campus classes. You will need something like 6x1 hour a week to deal with the material successfully. If you don't have the time now, consider taking the course next semester.

You must use your Garrett College student email account for all class email correspondence. Please get familiar with all the features of the course website. Introduce yourself in our Who is Who discussion board. Check whether you have the correct text book !!

Organization: The backbone for navigating this class is in 2 buttons located in the navigation panel of our course website:

1. "Assignments": If you want to know what to do next, you go to the # assignment pages (one for each of the # weeks). Organize your work and your schedule week by week accordingly.

2. "Course Information": If you want to find out about something in the course, what something is, where it is, etc you go there.

For now Go to Class Forum / Who is Who and introduce yourself. Familiarize yourself with all the features of the website. If you have any questions, please let me know. Except for grading assignments, I usually respond within 24 hours to email inquiries. !!!!! IMPORTANT-IMPORTANT-IMPORTANT !!!!!!! Every one of your emails to me must have SO101onl1 and your last name in the subject line; without either one of them I will not be able to read your email and respond. All documents attached to your emails to me must be in RTF, or .doc format. Have a good start with our first reading and discussion in the first week of class.

If you need assistance with your course, contact the Coordinator of Distance Learning, dlearn@garrettcollege.edu or 301-387-3155.

Appendix B

Mid-Semester Feedback *(Sample: Copy and Paste what you can use)*

Scale:
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neither Agree nor Disagree / Disagree / Strongly Disagree / Not Applicable

Responding to other students helps me to learn

The pace of the class is NOT too fast

The quality of the contact with the instructor is good

The class discussions put me in touch with other students and I learn from them

The multi-media and videos help me learn better

The instructor responds to my emails in a timely fashion

The number and spacing of tests and exams is appropriate

Reading, learning activities, and assignments fit together

The course website is well organized and navigation is easy

Open-ended Questions

What feature(s) of the course are the most helpful to your ability to learn?

What feature(s) of the course are least helpful to your ability to learn? How could it/they be improved?

What do you like/ don't you like about the textbook?

Appendix C
(Excerpted from the Procedures for Attendance and Grade Reporting)

In order to support an effective retention strategy and to respond to local, state and federal government reporting and enrollment verification regulations it is necessary for the college to have a procedure for verifying enrollment status and grades for all students.

Attendance and Non-attendance
It is the expectation of the college that an enrolled student will attend each class session. Each faculty member defines the attendance/non-attendance policy for his/her course. This policy is to be published in the course syllabus. Non-attendance that exceeds that allowed by the course policy may negatively affect one's grade in the course and can result in failure. It is the responsibility of the student to understand and to follow the policy.

Non-attendance is defined as never attending, ceasing to attend or failing to comply with a course attendance/non-attendance policy in a face-to-face course or failing to demonstrate participation in an on-line learning course according to the participation policy for the course. Non-attendance does not constitute withdrawal or dropping a course or withdrawal from the college.
There are four attendance check points:

I. First day of class

II. The Official State Reporting Date (approximately three weeks into the semester, 20% of semester/course, published each year in the Academic Year Calendar)

III. Mid-term (approximately 9 weeks into the semester, 60% of semester, published each year in the AYC)

IV. End of the semester (published in the AYC)

Failure Due to Poor Attendance
For a student who has exceeded the non-attendance limit for the course and is in a condition of failure due to poor attendance, a final grade of "F" using the F-codes below should be reported. The student should be instructed not to return to class.

The instructor will complete a Failure Due to Poor Attendance form to the Office of Records and Registration. The last date of attendance must be indicated along with the final grade. These grades will show on the unofficial and official transcript as a grade of "F" while the F-codes will be retained in the student record for purposes of retention assessment.
FA - Student attended some classes, but exceeded the course absence policy. The date of last attendance is the date on which the student exceeded the non-attendance limit.
FN - Student attended some classes but stopped attending at some point prior to the attendance check date and will fail the course. The date of last attendance is the date the student last attended the course.
FX - Student never attended the course, but is still on the course roster because he/she did not drop or withdraw from the course or the college.

Appendix D

Sometimes students really need you to spell out the requirements of the discussion board. You might find the sample rubric below to be helpful.

It's a good idea to log in to the course three separate days per week to keep up with the discussion.

DB Participation Tips:

- Participate EARLIER in the WEEK rather than at the last possible moment.
- Reply to others EARLIER in the WEEK rather than at the last possible moment.
- Check in and participate in the discussion three separate days per week.

Simple Grading Rubrics

Discussion Assignments Grading Criteria			
	0-10 points	**11-15 points**	**16-20 points**
Quality of posting	Postings are not relevant to the questions posed.	Postings reflect the reading and some outside source material but outside source material not cited.	Postings reflect the readings and outside information with proper outside source material citation.
Quality of reply	Response not relevant to original posting	Response relevant to posting but fails to support position	Response relevant to posting and supports position with factual information.
Understanding of reading and outside source material	Responds to the question posted but does not mention materials from the readings.	Responds to the question posted and makes reference to readings.	Responds to question posted and demonstrates understanding of material and outside source material and properly cites information.

Rubric provided by: lpc1.clpccd.cc.ca.us/lpc/blackboard/discussions/discuss_rubrics.htm

More complex grading rubric

Your participation in the discussion question is assessed using the rubric shown below:

Points	Exceptional 1.5 points	Average 1 point	Needs Improvement .5 point	Unacceptable 0 points
Content	Content is complete, accurate and offers new ideas. The discussion is well supported with details that explain the participant's conclusions. Content encourages further discussion on topic.	Content is complete and accurate, but lacking in new ideas, or there may be one areas an opinion is presented without supporting facts or references. Content generally doesn't invite further discussion or investigation.	Ideas were incomplete or had inaccuracies, or there are two or more opinions are presented without supporting facts.	Response was not applicable to the discussion or did not follow Netiquette.
Critical Thinking	Clear evidence of critical thinking (application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation). Postings are characterized by originality and relevance to the topic.	Some critical thinking evident, but posting may not directly address the issue.	Lacking critical thinking. Postings tend to address peripheral issues. Generally accurate, but with omissions or clear recitation.	Lacking critical thinking. Postings tend to be inaccurate or unclear.
Timeliness	---	Answer is on or before the due date.	Participant's answer is late but before the end of the week.	Participant did not participate in the discussion.
Involvement and Responsiveness	---	Enters class 3 days per week and responds to other students. Communication encourages further responses, raises questions or politely offers alternative perspectives.	Enters class 2 or fewer days per week and/or fails to responds to others. Interaction is best described as "good idea ..." and of little substance to continue discussion.	Does not enter class during the week and/or fails to respond to others.

Rubric provided by Terry Morris http://teachingcommons.depaul.edu/

For further assistance, contact the Coordinator of Distance Learning
Room LC 630 301.387.3155 dlearn@garrettcollege.edu

Course Essentials Adapted from Quality Matters (QM)

The following rubric includes major areas with essential standards for quality online courses based on the Quality Matters (QM) Rubric.

Each specific standard that is met is worth 1 point, with a total of 25 points total possible.

COURSE INTRODUCTION:

The overall design of the course is made clear to the student at the beginning of the course.

Specific Review Standard	YES	NO	NOTES
1.1 Instructions make clear how to get started and where to find various course components.			
1.2 A statement introduces the student to the purpose of the course and to its components; in the case of a hybrid course, the statement clarifies the relationship between the face-to-face and online components.			
1.3 A self-introduction by the instructor is appropriate and available online.			
1.4 Template information has been customized by instructor.			
Total Points for this standard =			

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Learning objectives are clearly stated and explained. They assist students in focusing their efforts in the course.

Specific Review Standard	YES	NO	NOTES
2.1 The course learning objectives describe outcomes that are measurable.			
2.2 The module/unit learning objectives describe outcomes that are measurable and consistent with the course-level objectives.			
2.3 All learning objectives are stated clearly and written from the students' perspective.			
2.4 Instructions to students on how to meet the learning objectives are adequate and stated clearly.			
Total Points for this standard =			

ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES:

Established methods are used to measure effective learning, evaluate student progress by reference to stated learning objectives, and are designed to be integral to the learning process.

Specific Review Standard	YES	NO	NOTES
3.1 The types of assessments selected measure the stated learning objectives and are consistent with course activities and resources.			
3.2 The course grading policy is stated clearly.			
3.3 Specific and descriptive criteria are provided for the evaluation of students' work and participation.			
3.4 A variety of types of assignments are used to assess student learning (i.e., quizzes, discussion forums, projects, papers, exams, surveys, etc.)			
Total Points for this standard =			

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS:

Instructional materials are sufficiently comprehensive to achieve stated course objectives and learning outcomes and are prepared by qualified persons competent in their fields.

Specific Review Standard	YES	NO	NOTES
4.1 The instructional materials contribute to the achievement of the stated course and module/unit learning objectives.			
4.2 The relationship between the instructional materials and the learning activities is clearly explained to the student.			
Total Points for this standard =			

INTERACTION:

Meaningful interaction between the instructor and students, among students, and between students and course materials is employed to motivate students and foster intellectual commitment and personal development.

Specific Review Standard	YES	NO	NOTES
5.1 The learning activities promote the achievement of the stated learning objectives.			
5.2 Learning activities foster instructor-student, content-student, and if appropriate to the course, student-student interaction.			
5.3 Clear standards are set for instructor responsiveness or availability (turn-around time for email, grade posting, etc.)			
Total Points for this standard =			

COURSE NAVIGATION AND TECHNOLOGY:

Course navigation and the technology employed in the course foster student engagement and ensure access to instructional materials and resources.

Specific Review Standard	YES	NO	NOTES
6.1 The tools and media support the learning objectives, and are appropriately chosen to deliver the content of the course.			
6.2 The tools and media support student engagement and guide the student to become an active learner.			
6.3 Navigation throughout the online components of the course is logical, consistent, and efficient.			
Total Points for this standard =			

STUDENT SUPPORT:

The course facilitates student access to institutional services essential to student success.

Specific Review Standard	YES	NO	NOTES
7.1 The course instructions articulate or link to a clear description of the technical support offered.			
7.2 Course instructions articulate or link to an explanation of how the institution's academic support system can assist the student in effectively using the resources provided			
7.3 Course instructions articulate or link to an explanation of how the institution's student support services can help students reach their educational goals.			
7.4 Course instructions answer basic questions related to research, writing, technology, etc., or link to tutorials or other resources that provide the information.			
Total Points for this standard =			

ACCESSIBILITY:

The face-to-face and online course components are accessible to all students.

Specific Review Standard	YES	NO	NOTES
8.1 The course incorporates ADA standards and reflects conformance with institutional policy regarding accessibility in online and hybrid courses.			
Total Points for this standard =			

Total Score for All Standards =

Note: While you should aim for a perfect score of 25, if your total score for all standards was less than 20, you should identify those areas that need improvement and work toward enhancing the specific standards related to the problem areas.

More About Quality Matters

What is the QM Program?

Quality Matters (QM) is a faculty-centered, peer review process that is designed to certify the quality of online and blended courses. QM is a leader in quality assurance for online education and has received national recognition for its peer-based approach and continuous improvement in online education and student learning. QM subscribers include community and technical colleges, colleges and universities, K-12 schools and systems, and other academic institutions.

To learn more about visit: http://www.qmprogram.org/

Feel free to contact the Office of Distance Learning for assistance with reviewing and revising your Online and Hybrid courses.

Denise Friend, Coordinator of Distance Learning
dlearn@garrettcollege.edu
301-387-3155 Room LC 630

Garrett College Office of Distance Learning
dlearn@garrettcollege.edu
301-387-3155 Room LC 630