National Research Center for Distance Education and Technological Advancements (DETA) at the University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee

Online Course Quality Indicators

Eight indicators

These indicators were developed based on quantitative and qualitative cross-instutitional studies conducted by the DETA Research Center.

Design

- specific and measurable learning objectives
- alignment to assessments and learning activities
- authentic, real-world experiences

Organization

- well-organized course
- easy to navigate
- logical and consistent format
- alignment between topics and subtopics
- manageable sections

Support

- manage students expectations
- provide orientation to the course (purpose, format, and getting started)
- Illustrate alignment of objectives, assessments, and activities
- clear instructions and directions
- description of grading and assessment plan

Clarity

- reduce barriers to learning
- provide clarity in the expectations of student activity (participation and performance)
- include explanations, descriptions, standards, requirements, guidelines, and context

Instructor - interaction

- express interest in student learning
- actively participate in online discussions
- facilitate learning and peer interaction
- expand students' thoughts and knowledge
- provide new prompts and additional content
- provide timely and detailed feedback on assessments and student inquiries

Peer - interaction

- facilitate active learning through frequent and ongoing peer involvement and meaningful collaborative work
- provide opportunities and technologies available for students to learn from each other

Content - interaction

- strategically enhance the student interaction with accessible and interactive content (preferably OER)
- support dialogue, critical reflection and analysis, and real-world applications of the content
- provide materials that are current, rich, and sufficient in breadth and depth
- identify important topics and provide context

Richness

- provide richness in learning materials and activities, support and instructions, instructor interactions, and tools and media

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