

# Formal Evaluation and Subject Matter Expert Summary Report



**Maine is IT!**  
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY  
A CONSORTIUM OF MAINE'S SEVEN COMMUNITY COLLEGES

## ART126

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*Submitted to Maine is IT in fulfillment of the  
TAACCCT grant requirements*

*By  
Emporia State University*

EMPORIA STATE  
UNIVERSITY  
■ INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

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*Developed by Anna J. Catterson, Ph.D., Emporia State University.*

**Course Review for:** Maine is IT  
**Course:** YCCC: ART126 – Foundations of Design  
**Reviewed by:** Anna J. Catterson, Ph.D.  
**Date:** 1/6/17

**Part 1: Course Review**

<b>A. Course Review &amp; Introduction (16 points total)</b>		
1.1 Instructions made clear how to get started and where to find various course components.	3	<b>3</b>
1.2 Learners are introduced to the purpose and structure of the course.	3	<b>3</b>
1.3 Etiquette expectations (sometimes called “netiquette”) for online discussions, email, and other forms of communication are clearly stated.	2	<b>0</b>
1.4 Course and or institutional policies with which the learner is expected to comply are clearly stated, or a link to current policies is provided.	2	<b>1</b>
1.5 Minimum technology requirements are clearly stated and instructions for use provided.	2	<b>0</b>
1.6 Prerequisite knowledge in the discipline and/or any required competencies are clearly stated.	1	<b>0</b>
1.7 Minimum technical skills expected of the learner are clearly stated.	1	<b>0</b>
1.8 The self-introduction by the instructor is appropriate and is available online.	1	<b>0</b>
1.9 Learners are asked to introduce themselves to the class.	1	<b>1</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>8</b>
<p><b>Comments:</b></p> <p><b>1.1:</b> There is a “Getting Started” module in the course, however the module reviews how to critique and how to photograph their own work. There are no instructions provided in the syllabus or through introductory course materials to guide students through the course. As Blackboard may be set up differently by individual instructors, students are helped by being introduced to each course’s navigational flow and where to click for important resources.</p> <p><b>1.2:</b> The purpose of the course is clearly and concisely stated in the syllabus. The weekly breakdown of class topics and activities clearly conveys the course structure. The list of weekly activities are provided, however could include the due date and their association to each learning outcome.</p> <p><b>1.3:</b> A recommendation for all courses is to establish an informal discussion board for students to ask/answer each other’s questions. Etiquette expectations (sometimes called “netiquette”) for online discussions, email, and other forms of communication should be covered. <i>Examples include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be sensitive to the fact that there will be cultural and linguistic backgrounds, as well as different political and religious beliefs, plus other differences in general.</li> <li>• Use good taste when composing your responses in Discussion Forums. Swearing and profanity is also part of being sensitive to your classmates and should be avoided. Also consider that slang can be misunderstood or misinterpreted.</li> <li>• Don’t use all capital letters when composing your responses as this is considered “shouting” on the Internet and is regarded as impolite or aggressive. It can also be stressful on the eye when trying to read your message.</li> <li>• Be respectful of your others’ views and opinions. Avoid “flaming” (publicly attacking or insulting) them as this can cause hurt feelings and decrease the chances of getting all different types of points of view.</li> </ul>		

- Be careful when using acronyms. If you use an acronym it is best to spell out its meaning first, then put the acronym in parentheses afterward, for example: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs). After that you can use the acronym freely throughout your message.
- Use good grammar and spelling, and avoid using text messaging shortcuts.

**1.4:** Many policies, including absences, academic dishonesty, and late work are covered. If additional college-wide information is available, consider adding links to the campus policies. Also links to student support services would also be helpful.

**1.5:** Technology requirements are not provided. Even if technology is not a major component, this is an online course therefore there should be some expectations of the student. Including hardware/software requirements and browser compatibility would be best practice.

**1.6 :** No pre-requisites mentioned.

**1.7:** Minimal skills for students entering the course are not listed.

**1.8:** No introduction to humanize the instructor is given.

**1.9:** An introduction assignment is listed in Week 1, however, the instructions are not clear. Are the students submitting this to the instructor or to a discussion forum? The reviewer did not find any forums created in the course. The instructions should be clear and discussion forums are encouraged. Submitting to the discussion forum would be best practice. The instructor should also complete this assignment and make the initial post to the discussion board.

## B. Learning Objectives & Competencies (15 points total)

2.1 The course learning objectives, or course/program competencies, describe outcomes that are measurable	3	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
2.3 All learning objectives and competencies are stated clearly and written from the learner's perspective.	3	3
2.4 The relationship between learning objectives or competencies and course activities is clearly stated.	3	1
2.5 The learning objectives or competencies are suited to the level of the course.	3	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>12</b>

### Comments:

**2.1:** The course learning objectives could be better defined. The objectives should be measurable. For example:

**Instead of:** *"Utilize the elements and principles of design to communicate a variety of ideas."*

**Try:** *Create a photograph that exhibits line, space and value.*

**2.2:** This is measurable, and more specific. When using the verb "Utilize", it's difficult to measure that. There are different levels of utilization, what you are truly measuring is the students' ability to implement design principles into an art form. Reviewer finds the following outcomes should be revised: 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6. Narrowing the course objectives will help you measure the effectiveness of student learning.

**2.3** Weekly or unit learning objectives or competencies are provided. What students will learn and apply each week is made clear to them.

**2.4** Learning objectives and competencies are clearly stated from a student perspective. While activities do address outcomes, there no information to directly link them. While a student in Week 5 may realize on their own that they are learning Objective #4, this is not stated anywhere. And if students reviewing the course realize that they don't understand Objective #7, there is no guidance to help them find the appropriate course content to study. It is recommended that: 1) Course objectives reference the week(s) in which they are addressed, to help students find resources; and/or 2) Relevant objectives are listed within each weekly set of materials, so students understand what they are expected to learn in each unit. With the detail provided in the current course outcomes, these could easily serve as the unit-level objectives.

**2.5** Objectives are suited to the level of this introductory course.

<b>C. Assessment &amp; Measurement (13 points total)</b>		
3.1 The assessments measure the stated learning objectives or competencies.	3	<b>3</b>
3.2 The course grading policy is stated clearly.	3	<b>3</b>
3.3 Specific and descriptive criteria are provided for the evaluation of learners' work and are tied to the course grading policy.	3	<b>3</b>
3.4 The assessment instruments selected are sequenced, varied, and suited to the learner work being assessed.	2	<b>2</b>
3.5 The course provides learners with multiple opportunities to track their learning progress.	2	<b>2</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>13</b>
<b>Comments:</b> <b>3.1:</b> The homework assignments and quizzes are consistent with the learning objectives. <b>3.2:</b> Course grading policy is somewhat clear; the level of participation and the required activities need better organization. The reviewer did not see any discussions boards for engagement and participation. The critiques that are required all seem to be submitted to the instructor and no engagement is encouraged between the peers. Reviewer recommends including activities related to peer-to-peer interaction. <b>3.3:</b> Yes <b>3.4:</b> Yes <b>3.5:</b> The critiques are a good reflection on student learning; this reviewer recommends adding further opportunities for constrictive criticism through discussion boards.		

**D. Instructional Materials (13 points total)**

4.1 The instructional materials contribute to the achievement of the stated course and module/unit learning objectives or competencies.	3	<b>3</b>
4.2 Both the purpose of instructional materials and how the materials are to be used for learning activities are clearly explained.	3	<b>3</b>
4.3 All instructional materials used in the course are appropriately cited.	2	<b>2</b>
4.4 The instructional materials are current.	2	<b>2</b>
4.5 A variety of instructional materials is used in the course.	2	<b>2</b>
4.6 The distinction between required and optional materials is clearly explained.	1	<b>1</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>13</b>

**Comments:**

**4.1:** Instructional materials align to objectives and activities.

**4.2:** The instructional materials appear to be mostly from Cengage learning through their companion textbook website. There are mentions of discussion threads and participation in them, however, reviewer noted there were none found in Blackboard. The textbook companion site is ADA compliant and there were transcripts to the videos. There were YouTube videos that were not ADA compliant and need a transcript or closed captioning to be accessible.

**4.3:** The textbook is cited in the syllabus by title, author, and ISBN.

**4.4:** Yes

**4.5:** The inclusion of instructor-provided material provides some variety. Multimedia resources are also provided in at least one section.

**4.6:** No distinction between required and optional materials is given, although there do not seem to be any optional activities. If extra activities exist from the textbook or other resources, these could be listed as extension activities for further student practice.

### **E. Course Activities and Learner Interaction (11 points total)**

5.1 The learning activities promote the achievement of the stated learning objectives or competencies.	3	<b>3</b>
5.2 Learning activities provide opportunities for interaction that support active learning.	3	<b>2</b>
5.3 The instructor's plan for classroom response time and feedback on assignments is clearly stated.	3	<b>0</b>
5.4 The requirements for learner interaction are clearly stated.	2	<b>0</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>5</b>

#### **Comments:**

**5.1:** Activities apply a hands-on approach to achieve the objectives.

**5.2:** The discussions have been assigned, however no formal discussion boards have been created.

**5.3:** No plan is provided for classroom response time or assignment feedback.

**5.4:** No requirements are listed for learner interaction.

## F. Course Technology (10 points total)

6.1 The tools used in the course support the learning objectives and competencies.	3	3
6.2 Course tools promote learner engagement and active learning.	3	3
6.3 Technologies required in the course are readily obtainable.	2	0
6.4 The course technologies are current.	1	0
6.5 Links are provided to privacy policies for all external tools required in the course.	1	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>6</b>

### Comments:

**6.1:** The Art Kit, seems to provide all the necessary tools needed.

**6.2:** Based on course activity descriptions, course tools do promote learner engagement and active learning.

**6.3:** No specific technology tools are indicated in the course materials.

**6.4:** Unknown. Even though technology may not be used in the course as a teaching tool, students should know what technology is needed of them to complete the course (access to a computer, internet, speakers, microphone, etc.).

**6.5:** No links are provided in the syllabus. A review of the agreement for each application required in the course will insure that student data required for the use of the software is secure. Linking to the agreements will allow students to easily access the policies.



### G. Learner Support (9 points total)

7.1 The course instructions articulate or link to a clear description of the technical support offered and how to obtain it.	3	0
7.2 Course instructions articulate or link to the institution's accessibility policies and services.	3	2
7.3 Course instructions articulate or link to an explanation of how the institution's <b>academic</b> support services and resources can help learners succeed in the course and how learners can obtain them.	2	0
7.4 Course instructions articulate or link to an explanation of how the institution's <b>student</b> support services and resources can help learners succeed in the course and how learners can obtain them.	1	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>2</b>

#### Comments:

**7.1:** No technical support information is provided in the syllabus. The only support listed in the Blackboard course is a side-menu link to Blackboard Help. It is recommended that multiple channels of tech support communication be listed in the syllabus and the course introduction to ensure that no student is put behind due to technical difficulties.

**7.2:** An accommodations statement is made, along with a statement directing any student with special needs to contact the correct YCCC office. To more adequately serve students the syllabus should include contact information for this office, along with a link to their webpage.

**7.3:** No academic resources are listed. If tutoring, advising, or other student services are available to support academic success, these should be listed along with links or contact information.

**7.4:** No student support services or resources are listed. If there are services to support student life resources, such as counseling or student wellness, these should be listed along with links or contact information. There is usually a statement made regarding how students can seek help if they feel discriminated against.

## H. Accessibility and Usability (12 points total)

8.1 Course navigation facilitates ease of use.	3	0
8.2 Information is provided about the accessibility of all technologies required in the course.	3	0
8.3 The course provides alternative means of access to course materials in formats that meet the needs of diverse learners.	2	0
8.4 The course design facilitates readability.	2	1
8.5 Course multimedia facilitate ease of use.	2	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>2</b>

### Comments:

**8.1:** While course navigation requires only 2 clicks to access each week's material, it would also be helpful if each weekly folder was titled with the topics included, rather than the week number.

The big hurdle to this course's navigation is the need to download every single content item as a Word document instead of simply seeing it as a page within Blackboard. It is EXTREMELY tedious to access multiple content pages in one sitting. If a student is searching for a particular for particular information in a document but is not sure which document to open, he/she may be deterred by the need to repeatedly navigate, download, open, close, and re-navigate until the right one is found. It is strongly recommended that **content be copied from these Word documents into HTML pages in Blackboard** to aid navigation. If students benefit from being able to download the files, providing a download link on the content page, as was done for the course syllabus, would allow content to be more easily viewed by students, while still allowing them a way to download the file. This is also best practice for ADA compliance. Since Blackboard is ADA compliance, screen readers have the ability of reading content pages. If a student with a vision disability were to download a document, it may not read the material back to them as it doesn't recognize bold or italics. It's best to place all content pages in Blackboard and eliminate additional downloads which is very, very tedious to access.

**8.2:** Since technology was not mentioned, this is unknown. However, reviewer does recommend placing content on what requirements there are as an online student.

**8.3:** No accommodations for providing content to students with disabilities was evident. In addition to varying the modality of content through text, audio, and video instruction, the Americans with Disabilities Act requires institutions to make accommodations for student who identify as having a disability. Work closely with your institution's office for disability services to identify resources to assist in making your course ADA compliant. When using a video, a transcript file or the selection of videos that are captioned is required as an effective means of communication.

**8.4:** Documents included in the course followed standard text formatting, with not extra colors or other characteristics that could cause problems for visibility. Check with your office of disability services before changing the appearance of your course.

**8.5:** When possible, embedding multimedia within the course LMS ensures ease of access and limits student issues that may arise when leaving the LMS to access outside resources. As all materials required students to open Word, and from there, access any multimedia (YouTube, etc.) the usability of these features is too removed from the core of the course.

### **Part III: Creative Commons**

Items Reviewed include:

- All course materials presented in Creative Commons?
- Creative Common license (including graphic) is represented on course materials.

#### **Findings include:**

All course content provided for review includes Creative Commons license information and the corresponding CC graphic.

## Part IV: Subject Matter Expert (SME) Findings & Review

**Course:** YCCC: ART126  
**Course Name:** Foundations of Design  
**Reviewed by:** Anna J. Catterson, Ph.D.  
**Date:** January 4, 2017

### Background

Funded by a \$13 million grant from the U.S. Department of Labor, *Maine is IT!* is building new educational and career pathways in information technology at all seven of Maine's community colleges. The programs funded by the grant are designed to support Maine workers eligible for the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program, un/underemployed adults, and workforce needs in Maine's growing IT sector. They have been built to serve individuals with a range of experience, from those interested in gaining basic IT skills to IT professionals looking to advance their careers through new industry certifications.

*No SME for ART126; this course was included based on equipment purchases that effected this course. No formal SME or Job Review was completed.*