

Formal Evaluation Summary Report



Maine is IT!

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
A CONSORTIUM OF MAINE'S SEVEN COMMUNITY COLLEGES

ENG108

*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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Course Review for: Maine is IT
Course: KVCC: ENG108 – Technical Writing
Reviewed by: Joseph Kern
Date: 3/9/17 -- Addendum attached 4/14/17

This review is based on the ENG108 syllabus, course overview, and the provided lessons plans for each session. A Blackboard course has been created, but it has no content.

The attached addendum addresses any changes in the review based on the addition of course content to the Blackboard platform.

Part 1: Course Review

A. Course Review & Introduction (16 points total)		
1.1 Instructions made clear how to get started and where to find various course components.	3	0
1.2 Learners are introduced to the purpose and structure of the course.	3	2
1.3 Etiquette expectations (sometimes called “netiquette”) for online discussions, email, and other forms of communication are clearly stated.	2	0
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	1
1.5 Minimum technology requirements are clearly stated and instructions for use provided.	2	0
1.6 Prerequisite knowledge in the discipline and/or any required competencies are clearly stated.	1	1
1.7 Minimum technical skills expected of the learner are clearly stated.	1	1
1.8 The self-introduction by the instructor is appropriate and is available online.	1	0
1.9 Learners are asked to introduce themselves to the class.	1	0
Total		5
<p>Comments:</p> <p>1.1: No reference or link to the Blackboard course is provided in the syllabus. No guidance, including day, time, or location of the course is provided to help students begin the course with an understanding of what is initially required and what resources and materials are available.</p> <p>1.2: The purpose of the course is clearly and succinctly stated. An outline of course activities and description of how the course is conducted would give students an idea of its structure and the types of activities involved.</p> <p>1.3: None present. 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"> • 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. • 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. • 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. • 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.

- 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: Course and institutional policies cover attendance, but nothing is included about academic dishonesty, late work, or other common issues. It is also helpful to refer students to and provide a hyperlink to the Student Code of Conduct for the college so that policies can be seen in their entirety.

1.5: No specific list of minimum computer capabilities or minimum specs is provided. Simply saying that students will require the latest version of Microsoft Word and an internet connection capable of streaming videos, for example, may suffice.

1.6: Prerequisites are addressed, consisting of keyboarding skills and a minimum Accuplacer Writing score.

1.7: Technical skills required for this course are no different than the prerequisite keyboarding skills, so this item is not entirely applicable.

1.8: No introduction for the instructor or link to an online introduction is given. Name and contact information is all that will be provided in the syllabus.

1.9: Nothing indicates that students will be asked to introduce themselves, which could significantly help this course start and run smoothly, as so much of the learning will take place through discussions. As Appendix A will take place on the first day of class, before pairing students and asking them to engage in content discussions, starting with introductions would break the ice and may help students form more functional pairings.

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	1
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	2
2.5 The learning objectives or competencies are suited to the level of the course.	3	3
Total		12

Comments:

2.1: Course outcomes are specific and measurable.

2.2: Daily outcomes are listed in the Overview document. It may be helpful to include these outcomes in each appendix as well. These outcomes align to the course outcomes, but they are less measurable because of differences in their verbs. Beginning with "Understand" is a red flag, because it does not address how the understanding will be shown. For Day 1, rather than "Understand the importance of audience-awareness," an outcome that includes an inherent task, like, "Identify the audience and their needs" would provide something that can be measured, based on how accurate students' audience-awareness is. Or simply "State the importance of audience-awareness," would provide an action verb. "Develop" is another questionable word, if there is no indication of how these developments will be shown and assessed.

2.3 : Objectives are written from student perspectives.

2.4: When cross-referencing course-level and unit-level outcomes, it is evident that they align. To make this connection stronger and more explicit, each unit-level outcome could reference a course outcome by number.

2.5: Objectives are appropriate for the course level.

C. Assessment & Measurement (13 points total)

3.1 The assessments measure the stated learning objectives or competencies.	3	3
3.2 The course grading policy is stated clearly.	3	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
3.4 The assessment instruments selected are sequenced, varied, and suited to the learner work being assessed.	2	2
3.5 The course provides learners with multiple opportunities to track their learning progress.	2	2
Total		13

Comments:

3.1: Assessments within each unit align with course outcomes, and the rubric language guiding how the assessments will be graded aligns with the outcomes.

3.2: Course grading policy is clear and succinct.

3.3: Criteria for all assignments is clearly stated and connected to the overall course grade.

3.4: Types of assessments possible for a writing course are understandably limited, but there is variety in the methodology and scope of each assignment, creating an adequate variety that builds skills throughout the course.

3.5: Students engage in many activities and discussions throughout the course, in which they can gauge their learning.

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	3
4.2 Both the purpose of instructional materials and how the materials are to be used for learning activities are clearly explained.	3	1
4.3 All instructional materials used in the course are appropriately cited.	2	2
4.4 The instructional materials are current.	2	2
4.5 A variety of instructional materials is used in the course.	2	2
4.6 The distinction between required and optional materials is clearly explained.	1	1
Total		11
Comments: 4.1: Materials address multiple aspects of each content topic. 4.2: The lesson plans include at least one assigned reading before most classes. These include textbook chapters and supplemental documents. No explicit instructions or guidance is given regarding how students will utilize each reading. Including a simple statement about how the students will be expected to use each reading would be helpful. Connecting the readings to the unit outcomes would provide a stronger motivation for students to take the time to read and prepare for class. 4.3: The required course textbook is cited properly. 4.4: Materials are current. The textbook was published in 2013. 4.5: An adequate variety is provided by supplementing the textbook with other readings. Each daily lesson plan includes a statement inviting students to contact the instructor to discuss alternative methods of learning, which is a unique teaching strategy. 4.6: The lesson plans indicate no optional reading items, so it can be inferred that there are none.		

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	3
5.2 Learning activities provide opportunities for interaction that support active learning.	3	3
5.3 The instructor's plan for classroom response time and feedback on assignments is clearly stated.	3	0
5.4 The requirements for learner interaction are clearly stated.	2	0
Total		6
Comments: 5.1: The activities directly address their intended outcomes, usually as students discuss specific aspects of writings and develop outcome-based skills and knowledge. 5.2: Students frequently engage in class discussions about topics and are asked to engage directly with resources. 5.3: No plan is provided for classroom response time or assignment feedback. 5.4: Student participation is not part of the final grade, and no general guidelines are provided to help them interact in meaningful ways. Some daily instructions include prompts to encourage students to discuss concepts with each other, but without clear grading guidelines, it is unclear whether these interactions are required or merely suggested.		

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	2
6.4 The course technologies are current.	1	1
6.5 Links are provided to privacy policies for all external tools required in the course.	1	1
Total		10

Comments:

6.1: The tools in the course, mostly online materials and discussion boards, support the outcomes.

6.2: The discussions promote engagement and active learning.

6.3: Discussion tools and word processing programs are readily available.

6.4: Course technologies are current.

6.5: No external tools are included that would require this information

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	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	0
7.4 Course instructions articulate or link to an explanation of how the institution's student support services and resources can help learners succeed in the course and how learners can obtain them.	1	0
Total		3

Comments:

7.1: No technical support information is provided in the syllabus. It is recommended that multiple channels of tech support communication be listed in the syllabus to ensure that no student is put behind due to technical difficulties.

7.2: Steps are listed for students needing disability accommodations, along with contact information for the Dean of Students. It is recommended that a hyperlink to the office be included as well.

7.3: No information or link is provided to help students access academic services at KVCC.

7.4: Other than what is listed for disability services, no information or link is provided to help students access academic services at KVCC.

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	1
8.4 The course design facilitates readability.	2	2
8.5 Course multimedia facilitate ease of use.	2	2
Total		5

Comments:

8.1: This item is unable to be fully reviewed, as the course Blackboard page has no contents.

8.2: Information regarding the accessibility of technologies is not provided. This may include information about whether students can expect pdf documents to be readable on screen readers.

8.3: No alternate methods for accessing course materials are listed, but students are invited to ask the instructor about “alternative methods of learning.” 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. For videos, a transcript or videos that are captioned are required as an effective means of communication.

8.4: Unable to fully review this item without seeing the content layout in the Blackboard course, but the use of different headings and body styles, font colors, and white space all result in very readable classroom materials. Most learning management systems have a default appearance that is ADA compliant, but instructors must pay special attention to fonts, text color, and background color. Also, be aware that screen reader software will not recognize bold or italicized fonts. Check with your office of disability services before changing the appearance of your course.

8.5: The depth of multimedia appears to include documents and slide presentations, which are both easy to use. 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.

Part III: Creative Commons

Items Reviewed include:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All course materials presented in Creative Commons?• Creative Common license (including graphic) is represented on course materials.	
Findings include:	
Each document and slide presentation provided for review includes a statement that it is shared with a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 license.	

Review Addendum for: Maine is IT
Course: KVCC: ENG108 – Technical Writing
Reviewed by: Joseph Kern
Addendum Date: 4/14/17

After the initial review of course materials (3/9/17), a Blackboard platform was utilized by the instructor to present the materials to the class. Changes to the original review are listed below.

A. Course Review & Instruction: 5 original points + 1 = 6 total

- **1.8** – An Instructor Bio page is included within the Course Information section, and instructor information is shared regarding educational background and courses taught. Additional space is provided for a picture and contact information. +1/1

H. Accessibility and Usability: 5 original points + 2 = 7 total

- **8.1** – Blackboard navigation allows users to reach all materials except for the Instructor Bio in 2 or fewer clicks, which is good. The structure of creating sub-assignments within the broader Resume and Report assignments creates a logical grouping. When instructions within an assignment require students to navigate to another part of the course, such as “Go to the Discussion Forum entitled: XXXX...”, it would be very helpful to include hyperlinks that take students directly there, rather than having them navigate through the course’s menu to arrive there. +2/3
- **8.4** – The original review reported that the readability of the course was not able to be fully reviewed without seeing it within the Blackboard platform, but this criterion was given 2/2 points for the appropriate use of fonts, colors, white space, etc. that contributed to readable documents. No significant changes were made when embedding materials within Blackboard, so the 2/2 rating remains.