Course Evaluation Proposal

Teaching Online Certification

University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

Center for Online Learning & Teaching Technology

Prepared by:

Dymphna Canales

Evangelina Guillen

Laura Hayward

Bobbie Myatt

Paul Pérez-Jiménez

EDTC-8373

March 2016

Introduction

Engaging learners and creating community through social presence is associated with the success of online course effectiveness of instruction (Gunawardena, 1995), depth of learning (Picciano, 2002) and learner satisfaction (Gunawardena & Zittle, 1997). Through this faculty professional training instructors will be provided the tools necessary to incorporate and create presence in their online environments. The current online teaching certification offered at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV) is facilitated utilizing the widely known Quality Matters Rubric (QM), developed out of the University of Maryland. QM provides a full overview of standards, however due to the impact of social presence in online programs and courses, it is imperative that this topic be given an extended training period. Improving upon the current training offered is actually the fundamental premise in which QM is rooted. Thus, it is a natural progression to begin the process of personalizing the QM model to reflect the mission and values of UTRGV. This is a great opportunity for UTRGV. to take the lead in constructing faculty training certifications that are specific to the unique makeup of the institution. As other UT Systems schools are actively experimenting in different Learning Management Systems (LMS) and applied pedagogues, it is important that UTRGV takes its rightful place as leaders in effective, innovative online teaching and learning.

Evaluation Purpose and Subject

The continued increase of online course and program offerings at UTRGV are on the rise as the increase in student population and the launching of the medical school brings more applicants from all over the country. It is anticipated that an additional ten new online programs will be offered by Fall 2016. The capacity for the institution to manage these programs requires an increase of 10-15% more faculty achieve the Teaching Online certification. Maintaining a

rigorous curriculum will support the institution's goal of becoming a Tier I university. The

current model is effective and completion rates are moderate, however, the need to have a

definitive increase of qualified, certified instructors for online education is at the threshold. The

goal of the course evaluation is to increase the achievement rate by 15% in order to keep up with

the demand of course offerings in hybrid and wholly online delivery.   To that end, the subject of

this evaluation will be social presence. As mentioned in the introduction, a social presence is an

important component of effective instruction, quality of learning and satisfaction of the client

(the students) in an online learning environment.

Evaluation Framework

Kirkpatrick's Four Levels of Evaluation will be used for evaluating the objectives of this

online learning model. This model was selected because it can help us objectively analyze the

effectiveness and impact of the training so that it can be improved in the future. We have chosen

this model because it can be applied and analyzed objectively unlike Brinkerhoff's Success Case

Method, which focuses on case studies of most successful and least successful participants. We

want to know how the majority of the participants viewed the training. This model is also better

than implementing Phillip's Return on Investment approach because it would be difficult to place

a monetary value on the cost of the training and the returns from the delivery of the training.

Evaluation Team

The evaluation will be conducted by the members named in the table below:

Table 1.1. Roles and Responsibilities of the Evaluation Team Members

Individual	Title
Dymphna Canales	Doctoral student UTRGV
Evangelina Guillen	Doctoral student UTRGV

Laura Hayward	Doctoral student UTRGV
Bobbie Myatt	Doctoral student UTRGV
Paul Perez-Jiminez	Doctoral student UTRGV

Stakeholders

The stakeholders, holding various roles and benefiting in a variety of ways from this evaluation include the teaching faculty, the administration, the technology department and the students enrolled at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. The students range from undergraduate to doctoral students. Their categories, interests, and perspective in this evaluation are detailed in the table below:

Table 1.2 Stakeholder Assessment and Engagement Plan

Stakeholder Name	Stakeholder Category	Interest or Perspective
Faculty	*Primary*	Admin
Administration	Primary	Delivery
Technology Department at UTRGV	Primary	**Application**
Students	Secondary	Outcomes

The needs of the UTRGV Online Teaching Department are quality modules that the faculty can go through as part of their training and appropriate surveys so that they can use the feedback to improve the training modules or any other aspect of the training program. Obtaining the online teaching credential is also a need for the university. The needs for the faculty are appropriate training so that they will, in turn, teach a successful online course without any glitches with the presentation or interactive aspect of the course and with a social presence so that online students

are engaged in a robust online learning environment. The needs of the students are tutorial videos

that can help them prepare or improve their navigation skills of the actual program and access to

a help desk or hotline, in case they need further assistance. Students also expect active

engagement in online classes to ensure material presented is understood and they are connected

with students to deepen their learning experience.

Program Data

For this reason, Kirkpatrick's Four Levels of Evaluation was selected as the evaluation

model. The first level, Reaction, will measure how the faculty being trained reacted to the

training. Did they find value in the training? Was their instructor knowledgeable? Will they be

able to implement what they learned throughout the training? The second level, Learning, will

measure what the trainees learned. A list of learning objectives will be the starting point for our

measurement. We can focus on change in knowledge, skill, or attitudes. The third level,

Behavior, will measure how far the trainees have changed their behavior, based on the training

they received. We must remember that behavior can only change if conditions are favorable. In

order for this step to be effective, the trainees must apply the knowledge they have gained from

the training. The fourth level, Results, is what everyone is interested in. At this level, we analyze

the results of our training, which include the desired outcomes (i.e. higher quality ratings and

improved student satisfaction) that the university sees as beneficial for the faculty and students.

The UTRGV Online Teaching Department, presenters and the instructors participating in the

training will read the evaluation report. The department who is funding the project would also

need to read the report.

The goal of the course evaluation is to increase the achievement rate by 15% in order to keep

up with the demand of course offerings in hybrid and wholly online delivery.   The evaluation

team will meet the following objectives in order to supply an informed report for the

stakeholders:

Objective #1 Develop the program evaluation team

- Develop rubrics based upon need

- Assign Roles

- Create Rubric for evaluation

Objective #2 Define program evaluation goals

- Develop an action plan**;** develop a rubric to assist in decisions

- Utilize the existing data to explore the needs

- Define the research-based supports to implement new interventions

Objective #3 Review the course

- Modification of the QM rubric

  o Standards relative to social presence

    ▪ Overall design and navigation

    ▪ Interaction

    ▪ Student support services

Objective #4 Conduct survey questionnaire evaluations

- Create questionnaire

- Disseminate electronically

- Create recommendations based upon data

Data Analysis and Collection

Existent secondary data will be used for evaluation purposes; this will include the demographics, enrollment, frequency of course offered and institutional overarching goals. The course design will be analyzed by the evaluation team using three key standards of quality, as defined by the Quality Matters rubric, specific to social presence. The three standards will be applied to the Teaching Online Certification course. Once evaluated, recommendations will be developed and full quantitative report delivered which will contain an additional section of open-ended responses regarding social presence.

This data will be supportive of the revisions to certification course delivery as well as support the development of courses delivered to the student population that contains the key elements of social presence. This will further the social presence theories of course design using the sociocultural implications of the faculty that will be developing for the student population.

Reference

Guerra-Lopez, I. (2008). Performance evaluation: Proven approaches for improving program and

    organizational performance. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Gunawardena, C. N. (1995). Social presence theory and implications for interaction and

    collaborative learning in computer conferences. *International Journal of Educational*

    Telecommunications, *1*(2/3), 147-166. *doi*:10.2190/7MQV-X9UJ-C7Q3-NRAG

Gunawardena, C. N., & Zittle, F. J. (1997). Social presence as a predictor of satisfaction within

    a computer-mediated conferencing environment. *The American Journal of Distance*

    Education, *11*(3), 8-26. *doi*:10.1080/08923649709526970

Picciano, A. G. (2002). Beyond student perceptions: Issues of interaction, presence, and

    performance in an online course. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks, 6*(1),

    21-40. Retrieved from:

    http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.98.6506&rep=rep1&type=pdf