The background of the slide features a light beige, marbled paper texture. On the left side, a dark brown branch extends vertically, with a single dried, brownish leaf attached. Another similar branch and leaf are visible on the right side, extending horizontally. The overall aesthetic is natural and academic.


Assessing Online Course Quality

North Carolina Agricultural &
Technical State University,
October 2006



Agenda

- Reviews dimensions of “quality” online
- Review QM system
- Examine response to QM review
- Strategize quality assurance approaches




Why Quality?

- Ultimately we care about what learners experience in the educational setting.
- Did they achieve the desired outcome of the educational experience?
- Did they learn?


=====

Faculty: “if it’s not quality I don’t want to be involved”



Dimensions of Quality of the Online Experience

- Audience input



Dimensions of Quality of the Online Experience

- Course/academic content
- Instructional design/pedagogy
- Instruction/teaching
- Learning system (LMS)
- Support services (wrap around)



Warm-Up Activity

- Turn to someone near you and define “quality” in the online learning context
- 1-Minute Drill--Which quality indicators will we use?



Quality Online--defined


- The “system” provides the student a reasonable opportunity for reaching the learning goals

Quality does matters

- Quality does matter to ...
 - students
 - parents
 - faculty
 - administrators
 - institutions
 - consortia
 - accrediting agencies
 - legislators
 - tax-payers

How do we ...

- ❑ Identify & recognize it?
- ❑ Motivate & instill it?
- ❑ Assess & measure I
- ❑ Insure it?
- ❑ Assure it?



Quality Assurance Approaches

- Establish internal quality check points
- Establish our own internal standards
- “Hire out” to evaluation/assessment organizations
- Adopt industry standards



Internal Quality Checkpoints

- Ask peer to review course
- Ask students to review (award participation)
- Submit to awards and recognition programs



Internal Approach

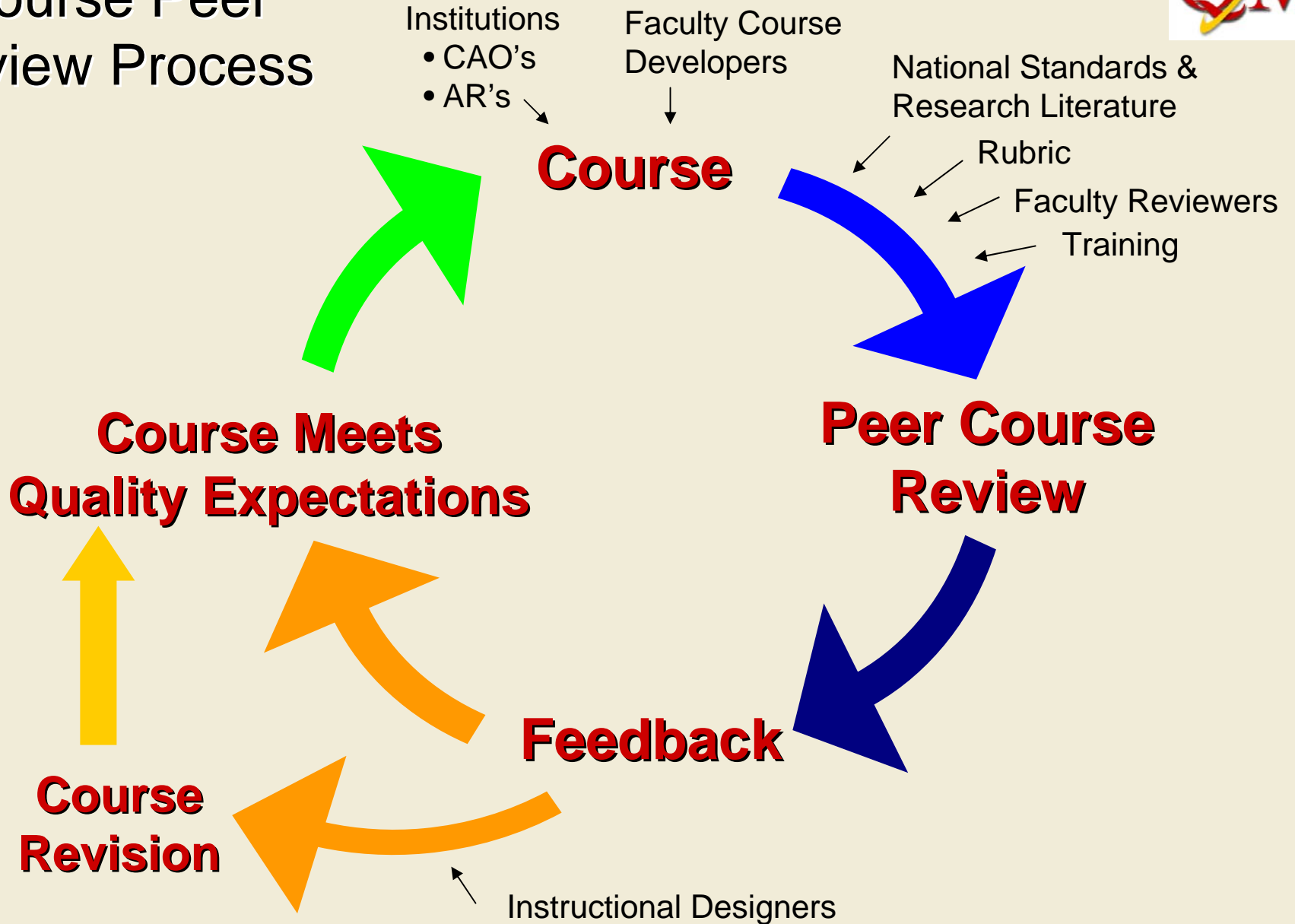
- Established “internal” PSU standards
- “Technical Standards and Pedagogical Guidelines”
- Based on “best practices”
- Politically laden
- Hard to monitor/enforce
- Maintenance required

Quality Matters:

Inter-Institutional Quality Assurance in Online Learning

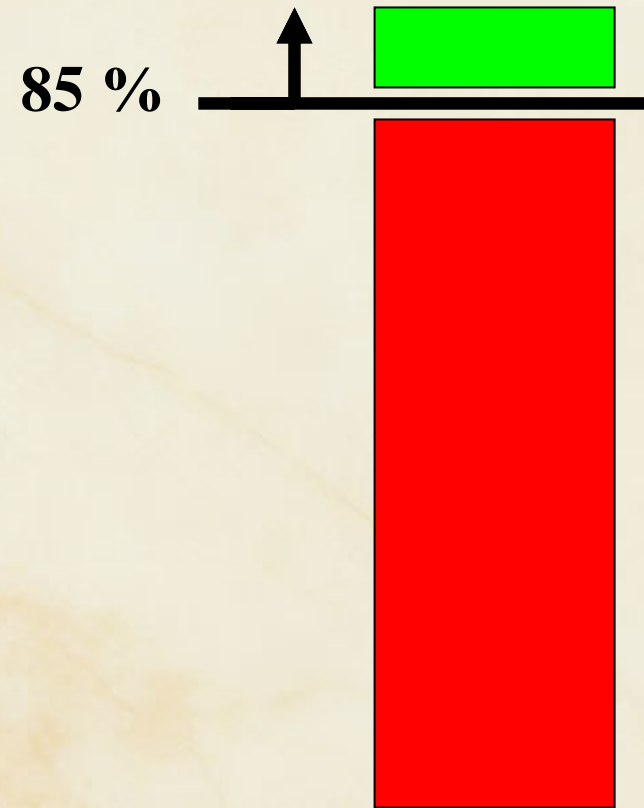
- Grantor: FIPSE
 - Grant period: 9/03 – 8/06
- Grantee: MarylandOnline
 - Statewide consortium: 14 community colleges, 5 senior institutions
- <http://www.QualityMatters.org>

Course Peer Review Process



For QM Purposes, Quality Is...

- More than average; more than “good enough”
- An attempt to capture what’s expected in an effective online course at about an 85% level
- Based on research and widely accepted standards



What this process is NOT

- Not about an individual instructor
(it's about the course design)
- Not about faculty evaluation
(it's about instructional design quality)
- Not a win/lose, pass/fail test
(it's about a continuous improvement process in a supportive environment)

Strengths

- QM is grounded in:
 - ▣ research literature
 - ▣ national standards of best practice
 - ▣ instructional design principles



Weaknesses

- QM does. . .

- Not address delivery
- Not deal with blended models
- Not take into account “course context”
- Involve subjective as well as objective process
- Set-up other courses for perceived “failure”

What's In It For Institutions ...

- Validation by an external process
- Strengthen re-accreditation package
- Raise QA as a priority activity
- Gain access to a sustainable, replicable, scalable QA process
- Inform online course training & practices
- Provide professional development activities
- Increase course & program sharing (MOL)

What's In It For Faculty ...

- Improve your online course
- Gain access to instructional design feedback
- QA validation by external peers
- Expand professional community
- Review other courses & gain new ideas for your own course
- Useful for annual evaluations, promotion applications, professional development plan/requirements

Rubric

- Based in
 - research literature
 - nationally recognized standards of best practice
 - instructional design principles
- Used by review teams to:
 - assess course quality in 8 key areas (40 review elements)
 - provide feedback to faculty course developer
 - provide guidance to instructional design support team

The Rubric

- Eight standards:
 - Course Overview and Introduction
 - Learning Objectives
 - Assessment and Measurement
 - Resources and Materials
 - Learner Interaction
 - Course Technology
 - Learner Support
 - ADA Compliance

**Key components
must align.**

Rubric Features

- Living document
- Web-based
- Automated compiling of team report
- Annotations
- Examples

Rubric Scoring

Standards	Points	Relative Value
14	3	Essential
12	2	Very Important
14	1	Important
TOTALS		
40	80	

- Team of three reviewers
- One score per standard based on majority
- Two criteria to meet quality expectations:
 - “Yes” to all 14 Essential Standards
 - Receive at least a total of 68 points

Review Teams

- 3 Faculty Peer Reviewers:
 - 1 from home institution, 2 from others
 - 1 from same discipline, 2 from others
 - mix of CC & 4 yr schools
 - mix of large & small schools
 - mix of public & private schools

- Faculty Course Developer
 - access to rubric prior to review
 - involved in pre-review discussions
 - consulted during review

Rubric Training

- Focus on:
- Application of rubric to course review
- Interpretation of review elements
- Providing constructive feedback
- Competency-based

Overall Course Review Results

- Upon initial review:
 - 51% meet expectations
 - 19% do not meet expectations - missing at least one essential 3-point element(s)
 - 30% do not meet expectations - missing at least one essential 3 point element(s) and a minimum of 68 points

Common Areas for Improvement

- Instructor self-introduction (I.4) 22%
- Activities that foster interaction (V.2) 22%
- Technology/skills/pre-req knowledge stated (I.6) 24%
- Links to academic support, student services, tutorials/resources (VII.2-VII.4) 24-27%
- Learning objectives at module/unit level (II.5) 27%
- Netiquette expectations (I.3) 32%
- Self-check/practice with quick feedback (III.5) 38%
- B/W alternatives to color content (VIII.4) 54%
- Alternatives to auditory/visual content (VIII.2) 59%

A decorative background featuring a thin, dark brown branch with several dried, brownish leaves. The leaves are positioned on the left and right sides of the page, with one leaf pointing upwards on the left and another pointing downwards on the right. The background is a light, textured beige color with subtle variations in tone and some faint, darker spots, suggesting an aged or natural paper texture.

Team Assignment

1. Refer to QM Rubric
2. Select one category
3. Discuss overall rationale for category and rating criteria (do you agree/disagree)
4. Report out . . .



Review of AEE 413

Process and Outcome



Process

- Submitted a “course information form”
 - October
- Met with Review Team (f-to-f) and talked through the dynamics of the course
 - November
- Provided feedback to Jennifer on as needed basis
- Received feedback
 - February
- Results



Results . . . AEE 413 needed more work

- I received 69 of needed 68 points BUT I missed 1 or more 3 pointers

This course does not meet minimum standards for...

Assessment and Measurement III .2 The grading policy is transparent and easy to understand.	3	0	3	0
Learner Interaction Clear standards are set for instructor response and availability	3	0	3	0



Other feedback . . .

- I.3 Netiquette expectations with regard to discussions and email communication are clearly stated.
 - (2 pts)
- V.4 The requirements for course interaction are clearly articulated.
 - (2 pts)
- VII.3 Course instructions articulate or link to an explanation of how the institution's student support services can assist the student in effectively using the resources provided.
 - (1 pt)



Recommendations and Comments

- *The Review Team recommends:* The instructor provide clearer instructions on how to access resources at a distance. As an aside, the Review Team noticed a missing graphic in Lesson 10.
- *The Review Team celebrates:* Each lesson incorporates different facets of technology and engages the student in an interactive manner. Most notable examples include the VOEs, web links embedded within the course content, the authentic, real life discussion board topics and the self-assessments.



Next Steps

- Make alterations to course based on Review Team feedback.
- Resubmit to Review Team chair
- Highly recommend QM process



QM@PSU

- Ad hoc committee looking at adopting the QM process to PSU
- Set of recommendations being forwarded to PSU Online
- For more info:
- LCR1@PSU.EDU



More Information

www.QualityMatters.org

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