



## E-Learning Evaluation: Standards and Procedures

*“Most institutions...are creating or adopting quality statements, standards, and criteria regarding their niche of the ‘eLearning enterprise.’”*

(Source: Jia Frydenberg, [International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning](#), October 2002)

Formal e-learning assessment/evaluation has come a long way since BEEP first addressed the subject in [Evaluating Quality and Effectiveness of E-Courses](#), Issue 25, October 2002. While most of the sources assembled there are still valid, this issue adds others created and/or discovered since then. Also, don't overlook BEEP's Best Bets at the end – these timely tidbits cover various facets of e-learning.

### General Evaluation

- [Best Practices for Electronically Offered Degree and Certificate Programs](#). 2000 statement of commitment by the eight U. S. regional accrediting commissions to a collection of mutually agreed-upon principles of best practice, with a link to same. These principles have formed the foundation for many of the standards since developed for e-learning evaluation.
- [Five Pillars of Quality Online Education](#). Sloan Consortium Report to the Nation by George Lorenzo and Janet Moore, November 2002. The pillars identified include learning effectiveness, student satisfaction, faculty satisfaction, cost effectiveness, and completely barrier-free access.
- [ODL QC Standards](#). Standards developed by the [Open and Distance Learning Quality Control Council](#) (UK) that cover course objectives, outcomes and content; publicity and recruitment; admission procedures; learning support; accreditation; and more.
- [“Quality Standards in eLearning: A Matrix of Analysis.”](#) Article by Jia Frydenberg, University of California, In *International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning*, October 2002. Summary of published quality standards in the United States, organized into a nine-cell matrix that includes executive commitment; technological infrastructure; student services; design and development; instruction and instructor services; program delivery; financial health; regulatory and legal requirements; and program evaluation.

### Evaluation of Faculty Performance

- [“Best Practices for Administrative Evaluation of Online Faculty.”](#) Article by Thomas J. Tobin, Southern Illinois University, in the *Online Journal of the Distance Learning Association* (7:2), Summer 2004. Ideas on how to evaluate materials and teaching in online courses, including technological considerations and national standards, rubrics and benchmarks. Appendix contains a checklist for online interactive learning (COIL).
- [Course Peer Review Process](#). Weber State University (UT). Explanation of the university's faculty review process by teams that include technical support staff and other online instructors.
- [From the Course Standards Foothills to Peer Review Mountain and Beyond](#). Presentation by Mary Nunaley, Skip Sparkman and David Warner at the Mid-South Instructional Technology Conference, March 30-April 1, 2003. Discussion of a faculty peer review process that affords opportunities for instructional development, since reviews anticipate that faculty learn from evaluation both of and by colleagues. Includes a peer review analysis form.
- [Guiding Principles for Faculty in Distance Learning](#). Indiana Partnership for Statewide Education (IPSE). Principles which define good instructional practice in distance learning and offer a benchmark for designing, developing, delivering and assessing e-courses and programs.
- [Seven Principles of Effective Teaching: A Practical Lens for Evaluating Online Courses](#). Michigan Virtual University. Website that offers a checklist for judging the quality of the instructional piece of online course delivery. Principles include effective student-faculty contact, cooperation among students, active learning, prompt feedback, time on task, high expectations, and respect for diversity in learning styles.

## Course Content Review

- [Online Course Assessment Process](#). Prince Georges Community College (MD). Detailed plan for reviews of two phases, one before the course is first offered, one after two semesters.
- [Online Design Checklist](#). Florida Gulf Coast University. Simple tool that covers five segments for course development: audience analysis; course goals/objectives; instructional activities; student and course evaluation; and teaching strategies.
- [Online Standards for Development](#). Weber State University (UT). Eight standards of evaluation applicable to online and hybrid courses that cover home page, course syllabus, orientation, interactive learning community, timely feedback, appropriate electronic media, course equivalence, and quality product.

## Students' Assessment of Their E-Learning Experiences

- [FAST – Free Assessment Summary Tool](#). Free online survey tool maintained by Mount Royal College (Canada), which allows instructors to develop an anonymous survey that automatically summarizes students' impressions of a course and/or teacher.
- [“Reliability and Validity of a Student Scale for Assessing the Quality of Internet Based Distance Learning.”](#) Article by Craig L. Scanlan, University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, in the *Online Journal of the Distance Learning Association* (6:3), Fall 2003. Example of how one institution developed a student assessment tool by reviewing national benchmarks for e-learning excellence, then translating them into questionnaire statements.
- [Student Assessment of Learning Gains \(SALG\)](#). Free Website funded by Exxon and the National Science Foundation to help college-level instructors use and modify the SALG provided, as well as review and download a statistical analysis of student responses.

## BEEP's Best Bets

### Administration

- [“Online Course Development: What Does It Cost?”](#) Article by Judith Boettcher in *Syllabus* (17:12), July/August 2004, that proposes a few guidelines for predicting the costs involved in the design and development of online courses.
- [Penn State World Campus Faculty Helps Dismantle Barriers to Online Teaching](#). Announcement in *Penn State Live*, July 15, 2004, of award-winning research at the Penn State World Campus which determined, contrary to popular belief, that the time required for teaching an online course is less than that of one in a face-to-face environment.
- [“Universities to Release Free Course-Management Software.”](#) Article by Jeffrey R. Young in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, July 15, 2004, on the release of a free course-management software by the Sakai Project. A joint venture of four major universities, it will include the complete source code, so that institutions can customize and enhance the program.

### Innovative Technologies

- [“Students Boot Up High Tech ‘Tablets.’”](#) Article by David Dodds in the *Grand Forks Herald*, 5/12/04, about the decision of Mayville State University (ND) to equip every full-time student with a new Gateway Tablet PC. Likewise, [Duke University](#) (NC) will give each freshman an iPod.
- [“Virtually Perfect.”](#) Article by Joseph C. Panettieri in *University Business*, June 2004, about innovative new ways to capture, store, and retrieve content for online courses.

### Student Services

- [“Colleges Reach Out Via Instant Messaging.”](#) Article by Jen Haberkorn in *The Washington Times*, June 24, 2004, explaining the policy at Boston University of having its admission counselors communicate via instant messaging with prospective students.
- [Hello, You've Got Laundry](#). Taking online student services to a new level, Carnegie Mellon University (PA) offers a Web-based system that emails dorm students when their laundry is done.

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