



COMMONWEALTH *of* LEARNING

IMPLEMENTING THE UCJ STANDARDS FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION: CASE STUDIES



FACILITATOR'S GUIDE



THE
UNIVERSITY COUNCIL
OF JAMAICA

"Assuring Quality in Higher Education"



IMPLEMENTING THE UCJ STANDARDS FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION: CASE STUDIES

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COMMONWEALTH of LEARNING

The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) is an intergovernmental organization created by Commonwealth Heads of Government to promote the development and sharing of open learning and distance education knowledge, resources, and technologies.

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PREFACE

The landscape of education has undergone a profound transformation with the advent of distance learning, which has now become an indispensable component of our higher education and training framework. As an increasing number of institutions embrace distance education offerings, there arises a pressing demand for training and support mechanisms to ensure the consistent delivery of high-quality programmes in adherence to the Standards for Distance Education published by the University Council of Jamaica (UCJ).

Initially published in 2014 and subsequently revised in April 2022, the Standards for Distance Education were conceived amidst a surge in interest and utilization of distance learning modalities in Jamaica and the wider Caribbean region. This surge was spurred by the imperative to address educational needs during the challenging times of the COVID-19 Pandemic and its aftermath. The Standards serve as comprehensive guidelines designed to steer institutions in the development and execution of their distance education initiatives. Encompassing various facets of the online learning experience, these standards delineate best practices for course design, student engagement, faculty support, course delivery, and student assessment, with a view toward fostering continuous improvement within institutions.

The present training guide, “Implementing the UCJ Standards for Distance: Case Studies,” embodies a collaborative effort between the UCJ and the Commonwealth of Learning. It has been meticulously crafted to complement the second edition of the Standards for Distance Education, furnishing a practical roadmap for institutions to decipher and apply the implications of each standard effectively. Accompanied by a Learner’s Guide, this training resource is geared towards fortifying the capacities of higher education and training institutions, facilitating the seamless adoption of standards across diverse modes of instruction, including face-to-face, online, blended, and professional learning communities. Adopting a case-based pedagogical approach, the guide furnishes real-world scenarios, empowering learners to identify, explore, and address quality assurance issues pertinent to distance education. Such an approach, aligned with active learning strategies, engenders collaboration, autonomy, and the co-creation of knowledge. Trainers, facilitators, and learners are encouraged to harness this guide as a versatile tool, offering a repository of suggested approaches and resources while allowing for flexibility in implementation.

The UCJ is confident that the learning materials presented herein will emerge as invaluable assets for institutions endeavouring to deliver distance education programmes that resonate with the needs and aspirations of contemporary learners. It is our fervent belief that these resources will significantly bolster the quality assurance framework of distance education, nurturing an educational milieu characterized by dynamism and adaptability.

Our heartfelt gratitude extends to all individuals who contributed to the development of the Facilitator’s Guide and the Learner’s Guide, with special appreciation to Dr. Christopher Clarke, Education Consultant, and the 120 higher education practitioners who actively engaged with the case studies during the four pilot workshops held across the island, providing invaluable feedback for refining the cases.

Althea Heron
Executive Director
The University Council of Jamaica



THE
UNIVERSITY COUNCIL
OF JAMAICA

"Assuring Quality in Higher Education"

THE UNIVERSITY COUNCIL OF JAMAICA

The University Council of Jamaica (UCJ) was established in October 1987 by the University Council of Jamaica Act, 1987. It is a statutory body currently under the portfolio of the Minister of Education. The UCJ is the National External Quality Assurance Agency for higher education in Jamaica.

VISION

The UCJ aims to be a Centre of Excellence enabling national, regional and international development through quality assurance in higher education.

MISSION

The mission of the UCJ is to facilitate and oversee the development and maintenance of a robust higher education quality assurance system.

VALUES

The UCJ is committed to...

1. Learning & Development:

The Council facilitates the growth and development of individuals, higher education institutions and communities towards a culture of quality.

2. Integrity & Ethics:

The Council believes in objectivity, honesty, the establishment of trust and confidentiality while consistently operating in an ethical manner.

3. Excellence:

The Council believes in the attainment of high quality standards in all aspects of its work.

4. Transparency:

The Council exhibits openness and fairness in its operations.

5. Service:

The Council provides high quality services to all its stakeholders.

6. Respect:

The Council believes in and values the diversity of its stakeholders.

FUNCTIONS

The UCJ is the External Quality Assurance Agency for higher education in Jamaica. The UCJ also functions as an awards and academic development body for higher education institutions and programmes in Jamaica. The following are the main functions of the UCJ:

1. To provide **accreditation** for programmes as well as for institutions by:
 - a. establishing and applying criteria for the accreditation of higher educational programmes and institutions;
 - b. guiding higher education institutions in the development of their Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) systems;
 - c. assisting higher education institutions in the improvement of their educational offerings; and
 - d. encouraging and facilitating the development and delivery of programmes relevant to national needs.
2. To **grant and confer Degrees, Diplomas, Certificates and other academic awards and distinctions** to and on persons who have pursued programmes of study approved by the Council at associated higher education institutions.
3. To develop, on an on-going basis, **threshold standards** for different levels of qualifications in various disciplines, at the higher education level.
4. To **research issues** pertaining to quality assurance in higher education with a view to maintaining and improving educational outcomes.
5. To assist in the **development of higher education institutions** by providing professional advice and services for the development and improvement of programmes.
6. To assure the quality of **foreign credentials**.
7. To **facilitate the recognition** of cross-border higher education programmes, and those of awarding bodies being offered in Jamaica.
8. To provide **appropriate public information** about the institutions, programmes and awarding bodies recognised and accredited by the Council.
9. To **monitor** and evaluate higher education programmes and institutions on an on-going basis to facilitate continuous improvement.
10. To **facilitate the free movement** of skills and knowledge within the Caribbean Community.

INTRODUCTION

The University Council of Jamaica (UCJ), with the support of the Commonwealth of Learning (COL), has developed this Guide to improve the capacity of higher education and training institutions to implement the Standards for Distance Education for use in face-to-face, online, blended and professional learning communities. The Standards are in their second edition and, while they “retain the central emphasis of the original document on developing and maintaining a robust quality management system to support distance education” (Standards for Distance Education, 2022, p. 2), they also take into account current thinking that highlights the importance of active learning, particularly for distance learning.

The second edition of the Standards for Distance Education came at a time of increased interest in, and use of distance education modalities in Jamaica and across the Caribbean region in a bid to meet educational needs during the challenging period of the COVID-19 pandemic and in its aftermath. The need for flexibility in recognition of the ever-changing profile of learners has also played a role in this increased interest in, and use of distance education modalities. While implementing the distance education modality, however, “some institutions face challenges in assuring quality ... and concerns exist as to whether these programmes are comparable in standards to those offered in the conventional face-to-face setting” (Standards for Distance Education, 2022, p. 2). As such, as a companion to the Standards, the goal of this Guide is to enable institutions to (i) interpret the standards; (ii) understand the implications of each standard; and (iii) assess where their institutions are in relation to each standard with a view to improving how they are applied.

Adults bring their own experiences to any learning event. These experiences must be taken into account in designing and implementing training, if training is to have its desired effect. Thus, the well-known tenets of andragogy as outlined by Malcolm Knowles (1968) are worth recalling. Adult learners:

1. Are autonomous, independent and self- directed
2. Bring their previous experiences to any new learning experience
3. Learn what they consider to be useful to them
4. Learn what is immediately applicable to their situations
5. Are intrinsically motivated rather than extrinsically motivated
6. Need to know why they are learning something

In addition, the design of the materials has taken into account contributions from scholars and educators who have explored the integration of technology and digital learning with adult learning (Anderson and Elloumi, 2004; Kop, 2011; Nolan, 2023; Siemens, 2005). These scholars have examined how online learning platforms, digital resources and the use of technology can enhance adult learning experiences and provide opportunities for self-directed, collaborative and personalised learning.

This Guide adopts a case-based approach, using scenarios that approximate real-world quality assurance issues in distance education contexts. The case-based approach encourages learners to identify and explore issues and to find solutions, thus aligning well with active learning strategies that emphasise collaboration and co-construction of meaning. Active learning is a learner-centred approach, then, in which learners take more responsibility for their learning with facilitators providing guidance. The use of case studies is but one strategy that supports active learning; others include discussion, role play and problem solving. The case studies included in this Guide incorporate the three other strategies just mentioned and are designed to allow learners to exercise independence, analyse and find solutions to quality-related issues, while being guided by an instructor or facilitator. In most applications of cases, there are no right or wrong answers. This is one such application. Contexts and situations differ and what is important is the practicality of the solutions arrived at and their compliance with the Standards for Distance Education.

This Guide is for trainers or facilitators. It provides the facilitator with suggested approaches and resources but does not prescribe. There is a separate guide for learners, which facilitators are encouraged to use when working with workshop participants.

Using the Cases

There are five cases in this Guide. The cases are intended to facilitate capacity-building among instructional and relevant administrative staff in higher education and training institutions that are implementing the Standards and, as such, the Guide is a companion resource to the Standards. The cases are intended to be used in training group settings and are not for independent study.

It is expected that quality assurance officers in institutions will be responsible for conducting training, targeting personnel responsible for either delivering (lecturers, facilitators) or supporting effective delivery (institution leaders, administrative staff, ICT staff) of courses and programmes in face-to-face, blended or online settings.

Suggested Delivery Approaches and Duration

As the training sessions are intended to improve interpretation and implementation of the Standards, it may be useful to incorporate elements of online, synchronous or asynchronous, delivery in the sessions as a way of “practising what you preach”. As you plan for delivery of the workshop, you should bear in mind the following pointers.

- Be as creative as possible in designing your training sessions. For example, you may use technology tools such as Padlet for brainstorming, as well as various tools for group activities.
- As far as instructional methods go, do feel free to use methods that will encourage collaboration and active learning, such as role play. However, above all, select the methods that most suit your participants.
- As facilitator of the training, one of your responsibilities is to encourage participation by everyone pursuing a better understanding of the Standards. As such, you should ensure that each person is part of a group or other formation, is encouraged to be involved and to share ideas and perspectives.
- The duration of your training workshop will depend on your delivery format, target audience and other factors connected to your institutional context. However, a minimum of two hours may be possible and a maximum of four hours with a break of about 15 minutes in between.
- Design your training programme in consultation with all stakeholders in your institution. Consultation is important for buy-in and support.
- Develop and work with a plan of action as part of execution. This is good practice. See the Appendix for a sample, which you may adjust to suit your needs.
- All participants should have a copy of the Learner’s Guide and this should be used by you, the facilitator, in conjunction with this Facilitator’s Guide.

And your next move? You may find that you need to have a follow-up session to check on the progress of application of any recommendations you arrived at. You should be open to and plan for this possibility.



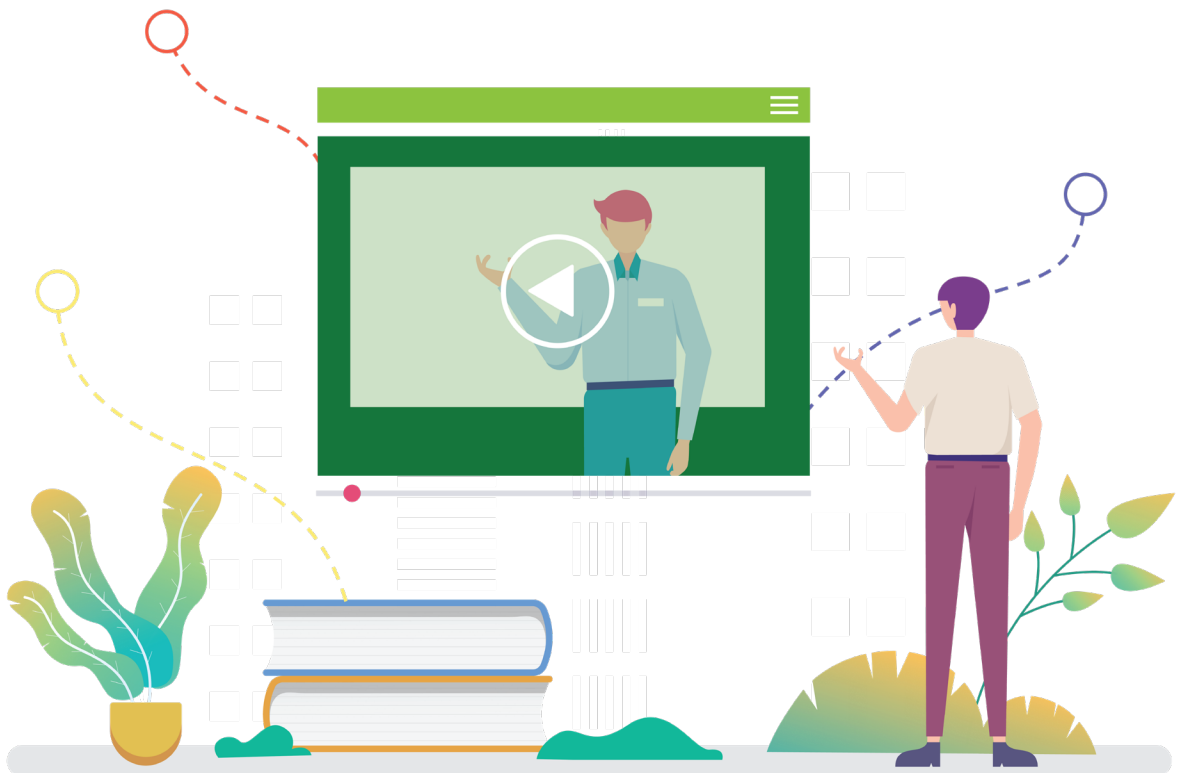
Elements of the Case

Each case presents a problem-based scenario for which a solution is sought. Each has the following features:

1. **Overview:** This is a short preamble to the case intended to contextualise the case and give an idea of what it is about.
2. **Learning Outcomes:** Each case has specific outcomes to be achieved.
3. **Case Narrative:** The full case is presented.
4. **Activities:** Here you will find specific tasks to be done in pursuit of the learning outcomes. Most of the activities are similar across cases. What is implemented will, however, differ.
5. **Linking the Case to the Standards:** A matrix identifies the major quality issues in the case as they relate to the Standards. The list of indicators is not exhaustive, and facilitators and participants are likely to find others. Interrelationship of indicators across criteria will also be evident.
6. **Points to Consider:** Here you will find suggestions and reference sources for you to consider and use as you discuss the cases and the standards with learners; seek to increase active engagement; and address distinctive learning capacities. It is important to encourage learners to reflect on their own contexts and experiences.



THE CASES



CASE STUDY

1

LEADERS MUST LEAD ...



Overview

The Principal of Hillview is “in a spot” as his old ways of operating are being disrupted by the Board of Management. The Board is requiring change, change that is to be led by the Principal. He must be involved in conceptualising and planning for Hillview to become a dual mode institution.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the case analysis, participants will be able to:

1. Describe the problem/s the case presents
2. Identify the salient or primary issues of the case
3. Determine an appropriate course of action to resolve the problem/s
4. Develop an action plan/implementation plan with timelines
5. Apply Criterion 1 of the Standards for Distance Education to improve online delivery of courses and programmes

THE CASE



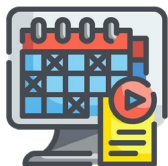
Hillview College was in transition. Its Board of Management had approved an exciting plan that would propel the institution into becoming a dual mode institution catering to both face-to-face and distance learners. The liberal arts college would seek to raise its image and improve its financial standing by attracting students from far and near who saw themselves as future creatives, operating anywhere they decided to be in the global village. As such, a dual mode of delivery was believed to be key to the College's strategic development.

Hillview's Principal had been in charge for 12 years and boasted often that he came from the "old school". He referred to himself as a "dinosaur" when it came to technology and depended on lecturers and administrators for nuggets of information that he believed were sufficient to keep him current as far as technology in education was concerned. Developments in distance and online learning were totally alien to him.

In planning for the future, the Board of Management decreed that all members of staff who would be involved in conceptualising and implementing the changes that would take Hillview to new heights should be involved in updating old policies and drafting new ones related to transforming Hillview into a dual mode institution.

The Board laid out its expectation: Hillview's Principal should lead the process, paying special attention to conceptualising the distance education arm of the institution. Once a draft of the policy documents was completed, an external entity would be contracted to review prior to finalising by the Principal and key personnel.

The Principal was uncomfortable with this task. What should he do? How would he manage this?



Activity – Developing the Action Plan

Participants will work in groups to complete the activity. Each group will analyse the case using the Standards as a guide as well as other resources outlined below or shared by you, the facilitator. The facilitator and participants will decide how presentations will be made – whether one member of each group or participants given specific roles to deliver the presentation.

1. You run a small consulting firm and have been hired to assist the Principal with the process of developing a plan of action. You and your team members are working on this project.
2. Read Criterion 1 of the Standards for Distance Education (Individual Activity), noting or highlighting the relevant points for this case.
3. Allow participants to work in groups and have them discuss the steps to be taken to develop the plan of action to transform Hillview. A collaborative tool such as Padlet (<https://padlet.com/>) or Miro (<https://miro.com/>), or plain old Post-It stickers on a wall may help participants to share their ideas for how to get the job done.
4. Have the groups identify the documentation that will need to be developed to support each step of the plan. Consult the Standards for help with this.
5. In a table or a matrix, complete the action plan, making sure to include the type or types of document that will guide the actions.
6. Draft the concept brief that will accompany the table or matrix, outlining the guiding principles and policies expected to guide Hillview in its next stages.



Linking the Case to the Standards

The matrix below shows the quality issues identified in the case and the related standard indicators for each. This will help to guide the discussion.

Case	Criterion	Issue	Standard Indicators
1	Governance	Vision and Mission	1.1.1, 1.1.2
		Qualifications and Experience	1.3.1, 1.3.2
		Fiduciary Responsibility	1.4.1, 1.4.2, 1.4.3
		Policy Formulation and Exercise of Authority	1.5.1, 1.5.2
		Senior Staff	1.6.1, 1.6.2, 1.6.3
		Institutional Plans	1.7.1, 1.7.2
		Quality Assurance System	1.8.1, 1.8.2, 1.8.3



Points to Consider

1. This case is important because it highlights the need for the leaders of institutions to be as integral to the process of distance and online delivery as they are to face-to-face delivery. This may be a useful resource for ideas on this – Don Olcott, Jr. (2020) “In Search of Leadership: Practical Perspectives on Leading Distance Education Organisations” – <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1285337.pdf>.
2. This is a good opportunity to distinguish the possible modes of course delivery. A good resource to help with this is COL and Asian Development Bank’s (1999) Planning and Management of Open and Distance Learning Training Toolkit: <https://oasis.col.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/add65b37-2027-44b8-badd-b894db0cb11f/content>. Yes – it is an old resource but it covers aspects and issues that are still relevant today. It outlines key features that must be borne in mind.
3. More current resources such as USAID’s (n.d.) “Toolkit for Designing a Comprehensive Distance Learning Strategy”: <https://www.edu-links.org/resources/toolkit-designing-comprehensive-distance-learning-strategy> are also available.
4. The resources at (2) and at (3) outline systems around which distance and online education are conceptualized and built.
5. Facilitators may also identify other resources on their own.
6. Make sure to make the connection between the Standards and the above resources, as well as any other resources used.



CASE STUDY

2

RESET: BACK TO THE DRAWING BOARD AT PTTC – PART I



Overview

As educational institutions returned to normalcy after the COVID-19 Pandemic abated, Premier Teacher Training College decided to take advantage of the obvious affordances of technology-mediated teaching by using a blended mode of delivery. But problems arose in the new semester when students complained that courses and programmes were not meeting their expectations and they outlined a raft of issues related to course delivery to the Principal. Premier had to go back to the drawing board to rectifying the issues reported.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of case analysis, participants will be able to:

1. Describe the problem/s the case presents
2. Identify the salient or primary issues of the case
3. Determine an appropriate course of action to resolve the problem/s
4. Develop an action plan/implementation plan, with timelines
5. Apply relevant sections of Criteria 2 and 4 of the Standards for Distance Education to improve delivery of online courses and programmes

THE CASE



Premier Teacher Training College delivered its programmes using the face-to-face modality until COVID-19 Pandemic forced educational institutions to close their doors and deliver classes online. The staff and learners were caught off guard. However, with the help of the ICT Department, plans were quickly put in place for training of lecturers and learners, provision of online tools and platforms, and the provision of support for all stakeholders.

When COVID-19 Pandemic restrictions were lifted, the Education ministry instructed that face-to-face classes should resume in educational institutions. Recognising the advantages of technology-mediated delivery and noting that lecturers and learners had adjusted reasonably well to the online modality of teaching and learning, the administration decided to go with a blended modality to build flexibility into the structure of their offerings.

In the first semester of the new academic year, the College experienced several challenges with blended learning. Learners began complaining and demanded a meeting with the Principal who invited the Academic Director and Quality Assurance Officer to attend as key members of the academic monitoring team. It became clear to the Principal that the training provided before the start of the semester weighed more heavily towards the use of tools for teaching online than in the direction of the adjustments to be made to methods, materials and resources for blended delivery. She recognised that no standard format was in use for converting courses for blended delivery. In addition:

1. Most courses were being delivered using the course outlines designed for face-to-face delivery,
2. No consideration was given to universal design for learning,

... not to mention assessment, about which the learners also complained,

The Principal advised the students that the delivery issues would be addressed urgently. She asked them to return for another meeting where they could elaborate on the assessment issues; they agreed to do so.

The Quality Assurance (QA) Officer, in the meantime, was tasked with putting together a team to address the issues identified in an effective and expeditious manner.



Activity – Addressing Course Quality Issues

Participants will work in groups to complete this case. Each group will analyse the case using the Standards as a guide as well as other resources outlined below. One person will present each group’s response, with others joining in as discussants.

1. The Principal has asked you, as the QA Officer, to meet with instructors, members of the ICT Department and other relevant stakeholders, to:
 - Distill the issues related to the delivery of blended courses and programmes at the College, referring closely to the UCJ’s Standards for Distance Education.
 - Prepare a detailed report on the issues identified, making sure to include recommendations for addressing them.

2. If you were the Principal, how would you do things differently to ensure compliance with the Standards for Distance Education in the future?



Linking the Case to the Standards

The matrix below shows the quality issues identified in the case and the related standard indicators for each. This will help to guide the discussion.

Case	Criterion	Issue	Standard Indicators
2	Academic Programmes, Curricula and Materials	Programme Alignment	2.1.2
		Programme Learning Outcomes	2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.3
		Curriculum Review	2.3.2, 2.3.3
		Instructional Package	2.5.1, 2.5.2, 2.5.3
		Feedback Mechanism	2.6.1, 2.6.2
		Instructional Templates	2.8.1, 2.8.2, 2.8.3, 2.8.4, 2.8.7
		Learner Engagement, Assessment, Achievement & Satisfaction	Universal Design for Learning



Points to Consider

1. It should be made clear to participants that at the onset of COVID-19 Pandemic and at its peak, emergency remote teaching was the mode of delivery being utilised. This is different from delivering courses using blended and online strategies; that is, intentionally designing a course or programme for delivery using online technologies: “In contrast to experiences that are planned from the beginning and designed to be online, emergency remote teaching (ERT) is a temporary shift of instructional delivery to an alternate delivery mode due to crisis circumstances. It involves the use of fully remote teaching solutions for instruction or education that would otherwise be delivered face-to-face or as blended or hybrid courses and that will return to that format once the crisis or emergency has abated.” Hodges, Moore, Lockee, Trust and Bond (2020), <https://er.educause.edu/articles/2020/3/the-difference-between-emergency-remote-teaching-and-online-learning>.
2. The facilitator should, therefore, ensure that participants are clear on the differences between remote, blended and online learning. The article included at (1) will assist with this.
3. If the institution, in the case, is to successfully deliver courses online or in the blended mode it needs to undertake a thorough review of its policies and procedures, guided by the Standards. This work should be planned and led by the Quality Assurance Officer.
4. Participants in the training session should be made aware of the differences required in the design of instructional materials for face-to-face and online delivery.
5. It may also be useful to remind participants that the profile of online learners may be different and engaging them is important see article: <https://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/online-education/identifying-and-supporting-struggling-students-in-online-courses/>. While the title of the article refers to struggling students, the points made by Revak (2020) are valid for all online learners.
6. Be sure to point out how adhering to Standards facilitates achieving quality in distance education delivery.

CASE STUDY

3

RESET: BACK TO THE DRAWING BOARD AT PTTC – PART II



Overview

As Premier Teacher Training College worked through the challenges raised by its learners, the College tackled the problems related to online assessment. Learners outlined a number of issues which made it clear that a reset in this regard was also in order.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of case analysis, participants will be able to:

1. Describe the problem/s the case presents
2. Identify the salient or primary issues of the case
3. Determine an appropriate course of action to resolve the problem/s
4. Develop an action plan/implementation plan with timelines
5. Apply Criterion 4 of the Standards for Distance Education to improve delivery of online courses and programmes

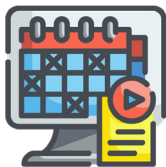
THE CASE



As the reset at Premier Teacher Training College got underway, learners met once again with the Principal, the Academic Director and the Quality Assurance Officer. They continued their discussion, this time on the challenges with assessment for their blended courses. The learners explained that:

1. Assignments were particularly burdensome to complete as they all fell due at the end of each course.
2. As it was in the days of face-to-face delivery, most courses had one major final task, or one in-course task in addition to the final one.
3. The assessments were pretty much all writing tasks, many of which seemed so unrealistic; the students had assumed that since there were various tools available in the learning management system, assignments would be more varied ... less boring, more relevant.
4. Also, they were still required to submit assignments at the department office although they could be submitted via the learning management system. Assignments had been mislaid in the office and students had to make another trip to the campus to resubmit. Was that really necessary?

They wanted to know: Could the whole matter of assessment for the virtual learning environment be thoroughly reviewed? Should things be so burdensome?



Activity – Improving Assessment at Premier Teacher Training College

This task incorporates both individual and group work. Individuals will need to identify their own philosophy of assessment and feedback and discuss this with the group. A major part of the task will be group-based, involving the revision of the assessment policy and role play of its presentation to the College's Board.

As the Quality Assurance Officer, organise and execute the following:

1. Discussion on each participant's feedback and assessment philosophy.
2. Group session/s (face-to-face or online) involving all course facilitators. The focus must be on "Improving Assessment at Premier Teacher Training College: Towards Policy Revision". Key questions: What is effective assessment? What is effective online assessment? What is authentic assessment?

3. Revision of documentation regarding assessment and feedback policies at Premier Teacher Training College. This will incorporate online assessment, paying close attention to the Standards for Distance Education as set out by the University Council of Jamaica.
4. Presentation of the revised documentation to the “Board of Directors” (role play).
5. Incorporation of the comments and recommendations from the “Board” into the revised policy.



Linking the Case to the Standards

The matrix below shows the quality issues identified in the case and the related standard indicators for each. This will help to guide the discussion.

Case	Criterion	Issue	Standard Indicators
3	Learner Engagement, Assessment, Achievement and Satisfaction	Assessment Policy	4.2.2, 4.2.3, 4.2.4
		Assessment Tools and Marking Schemes	4.5.1
		Use of Rubrics and Marking Schemes	4.7.1





Points to Consider

1. It is important for participants to be able to express their own views on what good assessment is, and to appreciate the value of feedback, which goes hand in hand with assessment. The JISC's 2022, "Principles of Good Assessment and Feedback": <https://beta.jisc.ac.uk/guides/principles-of-good-assessment-and-feedback> is a good place to start for a discussion with participants on this topic.
2. The facilitator should engage participants in discussion on the value of authentic assessment in education generally and in distance and online environments specifically. Module 2, "Authentic Assessment", from Rethinking Assessment Strategies for Online Learning (2022) is useful in that regard: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/rethinkingassessment/part/module-2-authentic-assessments/>.
3. A very useful book on assessment is: Dianne Conrad and Jason Openo's (2018) Assessment Strategies for Online Learning: Engagement and Authenticity [https://www.aupress.ca/books/120279-assessment-strategies-for-online-learning/\(https://doi.org/10.15215/aupress/9781771992329.01\)](https://www.aupress.ca/books/120279-assessment-strategies-for-online-learning/(https://doi.org/10.15215/aupress/9781771992329.01)). (A good portion of this book is also available at Google Books.)
4. COL's "Making Digital Assessment Count: Designing for Engagement, Integrity and Authenticity" is also a valuable resource to use: <https://oasis.col.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/f4bb5241-cf70-44de-8d3a-95d82b312ed1/content>.

CASE STUDY 4

MYCLASS IS NOT TOP CLASS



Overview

Students at Renaissance University College were frustrated. They found it difficult to use MyClass, the College's learning management system, as they were unfamiliar with the tools in the system. A visually impaired student was among the students who expressed frustration as he was unable to complete the assignments. The students penned a letter to the College's Academic Director.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of case analysis, participants will be able to:

1. Describe the problem/s the case presents
2. Identify the salient or primary issues of the case
3. Determine an appropriate course of action to resolve the problem/s
4. Develop an action plan/implementation plan with timelines
5. Apply relevant sections of Criteria 2–4 of the Standards for Distance Education to improve delivery of online courses and programmes

THE CASE



Crystal was having a very bad day, which followed a very bad night. She thought of herself as proficient with technology, but she really used her Smartphone for communicating with her friends and family, and used her laptop mainly for surfing the Internet and for word processing. So her distress was palpable as she had struggled all night to complete the first assignment of her first year at Renaissance University College. She was required to use a range of tools in the learning management system, MyClass, to work with her peer group and upload the outcome of that activity for grading. As she pondered her next move, she overheard the following discussion among her classmates:

John-Paul: “Boy, I’m so frustrated! I spent hours trying to figure out how to use the tools in MyClass and I am nowhere nearer to finishing the assignment. How did it go for you, Chris?”

Chris: “If I did not have help from Suzie I don’t know how I would have managed!”

Crystal joined the conversation: “I did not sleep a wink! I did not know what to do at all! No matter how I tried I just couldn’t figure out how to use the tools. Not even Google could help me with this one!”

John-Paul: “I heard some of our other classmates complaining too. This is our first year and our first semester, right? Shouldn’t we have been given some kind of guidance or training on how to use the tools in MyClass? Who can we talk to about this? Troy says he can hardly see anything on the course page in MyClass. He has really poor eyesight and things are worse at night.”

By then, Suzie had joined the conversation: “I think we should write a letter to the Academic Director and explain our challenge. We should ask for support.”

They all agreed to send a letter to the Academic Director.



Activity – Orientation to the Learning Management System

Group work is essential for this case, whether face-to-face or virtual. Each group will analyse the case using the UCJ’s Standards for Distance Education as a guide as well as other resources outlined below. One person will present each group’s response, with others joining in as discussants.

1. The Academic Director and the Quality Assurance Officer are responsible for guiding this activity. As the team responsible for learner support at Renaissance, you are required to investigate the complaints and formulate solutions to the issues raised.

2. Review a checklist such as Online Learning Consortium (OLC) OSCQR's course design scorecard (<https://onlinelearningconsortium.org/consult/oscqr-course-design-review/>). This will show how learning management systems align with established standards, relying on constructivist philosophies.
3. Based on the checklist used and the learners' complaints, identify the "signposts" that are missing from Renaissance's LMS. Signposts help learners to know what to do as they move from task to task and feature to feature on a learning management system.
4. Plan a comprehensive orientation session for learners, incorporating how to use the LMS. This latter aspect of the presentation must "walk" learners through the LMS.
5. Draft a multimedia presentation for learners to accompany the plan, including how to use the tools and resources on the LMS.



Linking the Case to the Standards

The matrix below shows the quality issues identified in the case and the related standard indicators for each. This will help to guide the discussion.

Case	Criterion	Issue	Standard Indicators
4	Academic Programmes, Curricula and Materials		2.10.3, 2.10.4
	Learner Services and Support	Communication and Interaction with and among Students	3.3.1, 3.3.3, 3.3.4
	Learner Engagement, Assessment, Achievement & Satisfaction	Policy to Facilitate Special Needs Students	4.13.1, 4.13.2



Points to Consider

1. The assumption that today's learners are all "tech-savvy" (the digital natives versus digital immigrants argument) and so are able to navigate any technology they encounter is false. This means that institutions must have in place, systems that support learners as they navigate learning technologies in institutions.
2. Loepp (2021) discusses what a simple LMS interface may look like at: <https://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/online-education/online-course-design-and-preparation/what-students-want-a-simple-navigable-lms-course-design/>
3. However, beyond ensuring that the course is designed according to a standard, which can be done using a checklist such as the Online Learning Consortium (OLC) OSCQR's course design scorecard <https://onlinelearningconsortium.org/consult/oscqr-course-design-review/> -- you may download the scorecard), institutions should devise ways of introducing learners to the LMS, such as in an orientation session – Christina Sabo (2021) "Helping Students Navigate the LMS": <https://www.codlearningtech.org/2021/10/19/helping-students-navigate-the-lms/>
4. Encourage participants to review their own institutional LMS while working through the challenges being experiences by Renaissance University College.
5. An orientation session is best planned and carried out by learning support staff in collaboration with course facilitators or the academic director.
6. Consider developing short videos that reinforce how to use the tools in the learning management system.



CASE STUDY

5

INSECURITY AT SUPREME COLLEGE



Overview

Shortcuts taken at Supreme College landed the College in hot water and led to a long process of recovery. Information and communication systems, which were not being managed by trained ICT professionals, were hacked. The police's cybercrimes unit is investigating and asking questions about policies.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of case analysis, participants will be able to:

1. Describe the problem/s the case presents
2. Identify the salient or primary issues of the case
3. Determine an appropriate course of action to resolve the problem/s
4. Develop an action plan/implementation plan, with timelines
5. Apply relevant sections of Criteria 3 and 5 of the Standards for Distance Education to improve delivery of online courses and programmes

THE CASE

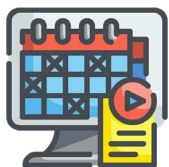


Since Supreme College began offering online courses and programmes two years ago, the IT lecturer had been managing the ICT systems at the College. This was never intended to be a permanent job but he was willing to get things started and he was knowledgeable, so the Principal assigned him the task of getting things up and running. They hired a part-time assistant, a young tech enthusiast in her second year of a degree programme, and both worked well together to keep things going.

It had come to the attention of the newly appointed Quality Assurance Officer that hackers had compromised the communications and learning management system at Supreme College. Now, the police had become involved in the matter as there was concern that students' personal data and other records, as well as records related to their assignments and grades which were stored in the learning management system, could have been compromised.

The police were certainly doing a thorough investigation. The Investigating Officer from the force's Internet and Cyber Crimes Unit (ICCU) asked for the College's cybersecurity policy. There was none. He asked about the records management policy and maintenance arrangements for the learning management system. No documentation could be produced. A significant gap had been revealed.

How would the Quality Assurance Officer address this? How could Supreme College recover?



Activity – Putting ICT and Internet Security Policies in Place

This case may be carried out in pairs or in larger groups. The aim is to arrive at a comprehensive technology management solution and robust cybersecurity policies.

As the Quality Assurance Officer:

1. Arrange a brief talk from an expert in the field of cybersecurity, or an ICT specialist, for some current context on this dynamic field and the threats for higher education institutions.
2. If (1) is not possible, start with a review of literature on the areas of cybersecurity and technology management. Some resources are included in the list of References.

3. Following the talk and/or the review, participants must examine and discuss what should be in place in the institution/s as documentation and as practice. Use a table to do this.
4. In the table, include a column where the main areas or elements to be addressed are clearly identified.
5. Participants will make recommendations for Supreme College as to how it can recover from this problem. Recommendations must be informed by the Standards in Distance Education.



Linking the Case to the Standards

The matrix below shows the quality issues identified in the case and the related standard indicators for each. This will help to guide the discussion.

Case	Criterion	Issue	Standard Indicators
5	Learner Services and Support	Records Management	3.5.1, 3.5.2
	Technology Services	Institutional Technology Policy and Plans	5.1.1, 5.1.2
		Cybersecurity sSystems and Policy	5.2.1, 5.2.2, 5.2.4





Points to Consider

1. Cybersecurity is a dynamic field as it must aim to stay ahead of those who create insecurity in cyberspace. As such, institutions must also aim to stay ahead, though it may be difficult. This resource provides an overview: “Importance of Data Security in Higher Education” <https://www.cyberdb.co/importance-of-data-security-in-higher-education-institutions/>.
2. Trained and skilled professionals are therefore needed in higher education institutions to ensure the security of data across all systems.
3. Where institutions are small, they must consider ways in which they can network to lower costs without compromising security: Wasim Alhamdani and Wendy Dixie (2009), “Information Security Policy in Small Education Organization” <https://dl.acm.org/doi/10.1145/1940976.1940991>.

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APPENDIX ACTION PLAN TEMPLATE

GOAL:										
ACTION DESCRIPTION	PERSON RESPONSIBLE (QA)	TEAM/GROUP RESPONSIBLE	START	END	TASKS	RESOURCES REQUIRED (MATERIALS, FINANCING)	DOCUMENTS TO BE PRODUCED			
Standard/s	Name/Role		MM/DD	MM/DD						
List Standard indicators to be achieved										



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