

How QM Standards Affect Online Students' Learning and Engagement

Description: This session, presented by Daisiane Barreto and Sheri Conklin from the University of North Carolina Wilmington, looked at how Quality Matters (QM) standards impact online students' learning and engagement. They introduced "Sarah," a hypothetical online student, to explore two main questions: How do online students feel QM standards affect their learning, and how do they feel these standards affect their engagement? The study surveyed forty-two graduate students from non-QM certified programs in fields like Nurse Education, Healthcare Administration, and Instructional Technology.

Regarding student perceptions of learning, the results showed that accessibility and usability of course materials were very important. Many students, like the visual learner quoted, appreciated video and audio resources for learning and review. Students also valued assessment and measurement aspects, clear grading policies, and a clear connection between learning objectives and activities/assessments. A clear outline of the course in each module helped students understand what was expected and allowed them to plan ahead.

When it came to student perceptions of engagement, course activities and learner interaction were seen as highly impactful. Students noted the importance of accessibility and usability for their engagement. Open-ended responses indicated that professor engagement and level of care for the course significantly influenced student engagement, with quality feedback playing a crucial role. The session also noted the importance of instructional materials for engagement.

The presenters discussed the implications of these findings for course design, emphasizing the need to create an online experience where students like Sarah can learn and be engaged. Key elements for achieving this include accessibility, clear grading criteria, showcasing alignment between course components, and ensuring alignment between course activities and learning outcomes. It's important to note that the students surveyed were in non-QM certified courses but were exposed to QM-informed practices.

Heather Crofutt's Summary & Reflection: I found this session insightful. It showed how QM standards can positively impact student learning and engagement when applied thoughtfully. The emphasis on accessibility, clear grading criteria, and alignment between course components was particularly valuable. This session provided practical tips and real-world examples that can help anyone involved in course design create more engaging and effective online learning experiences.