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The Agile Process: A Multidiscipline Team Method of Course Development

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A competency based online program was looking for a more efficient method of course development. Course development was typically done with one subject matter expert and an instructional designer in isolation. This often resulted in redundancy of some content while other competencies were under or unrepresented in a process that was laborious and at times, tedious. The Agile Process was a method of software development that allows teams to deal with uncertainty in a process of high quality products by breaking tasks into small incremental pieces as opposed to delivering the entire project at one time. Adopting the Agile Process helped develop a team of subject matter experts, instructional designers, instructional architects, media specialists, editors, and various leadership representatives, and an overall project manager to revise and develop competency based courses for online programs. The story of the decision to adopt the process that no one was familiar with required a leap of faith and as the team worked together, the process was amended and modified to improve quality, speed, and results. As selected courses were developed or revised, the process changes allowed the team to work smarter and not harder. The process involved interviewing, brainstorming, literature review for the best evidence, and frequent meetings of various groups to break up the work into realistic pieces in order to ensure the development of high quality competency based offerings. Everyone on the team knew where each course was in the development process and issues were discussed in daily meetings as needed. While there were occasional disagreements, misunderstandings, and missteps, the team was able to determine when to maintain a process and when to change it. Following course release monitoring by the team the course in real time helped to identify and fix issues for faculty and learners. These just in time changes helped improve learner and faculty satisfaction with the course. In reviewing end of course evaluations by faculty and learners, the process improved the speed of revision as well as the quality of the online competency based courses.

Title:

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References:

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Abstract Summary:

Course development is an involved process, especially in a virtual environment. Adopting the Agile Process,for software development allowed us to create a multidisciplinary team that enabled us to review, revise, and redesign online courses for a competency based program by combining our individual talents to help us work smarter together!

Content Outline:

I. Brief Overview of Course Development Methods

Individual and Group Methods – pros and cons
Working Smarter not Harder

II. Case Study in Course Development

III. The Agile Process

History and Theory

Using each member of the team based on skill sets

Brainstorming, Interviews, and Finding the best evidence

Being nimble and not being married to a single idea or approach

Just in Time Changes

Data Driven Evaluations

IV. Course release and monitoring

V. Wrapping it UP

VI. Questions & Answers

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Author Summary: Marylee has been a nurse since 1979. Her BSN and MSN degrees were from the University of South Alabama College of Nursing and her DNP in Advanced Practice with an Education Concentration from Samford University. She has written online modules for the ENA and ACCN, served as a reviewer for grants and awards, textbooks, articles, and animations.