Promoting Student Engagement: Opportunities within Quercus

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Introduction

- The aim of this project was to redesign a course while leveraging Quercus data to inform and evaluate course design decisions.
- Redesign of a course that has historically been delivered asynchronously online.
- Goal of redesign was to promote student engagement with course content, fellow students and the course instructor.
- Course redesign guided by Wiggins and McTighe's (1998) backwards design, as well as the Community of Inquiry framework (Garrison et al., 2000).

Methods

Course Redesign Methods

- **Learner – content**: eLearning modules / modularized format in Quercus
  - Lecturettes, embedded videos, H5P quizzes and self-reflection
- **Learner – learner**: Collaborative learning activities
  - Collaborations tool – Office365
  - Synchronous collaboration space
- **Learner – instructor**:
  - Weekly 'talking-head' intro videos
  - Synchronous office hours

Data Sources

- Quercus analytics:
  - Page views (weekly & average), participations (weekly & average)
- Surveys using Quercus Quizzes
- Bb Collaborate
- Office365
- Outlook
- MyMedia
- H5P (future)

Results

- Student engagement increased in newly designed course as compared to 2020.
- High level of engagement in synchronous learning activities (97% - 100% participation).
- Page views increased when there were group learning activities and assignments.
- Survey data suggest students appreciated the modularized format and shorter lecturettes versus the traditional format including slides and lectures, as they provided increased flexibility.
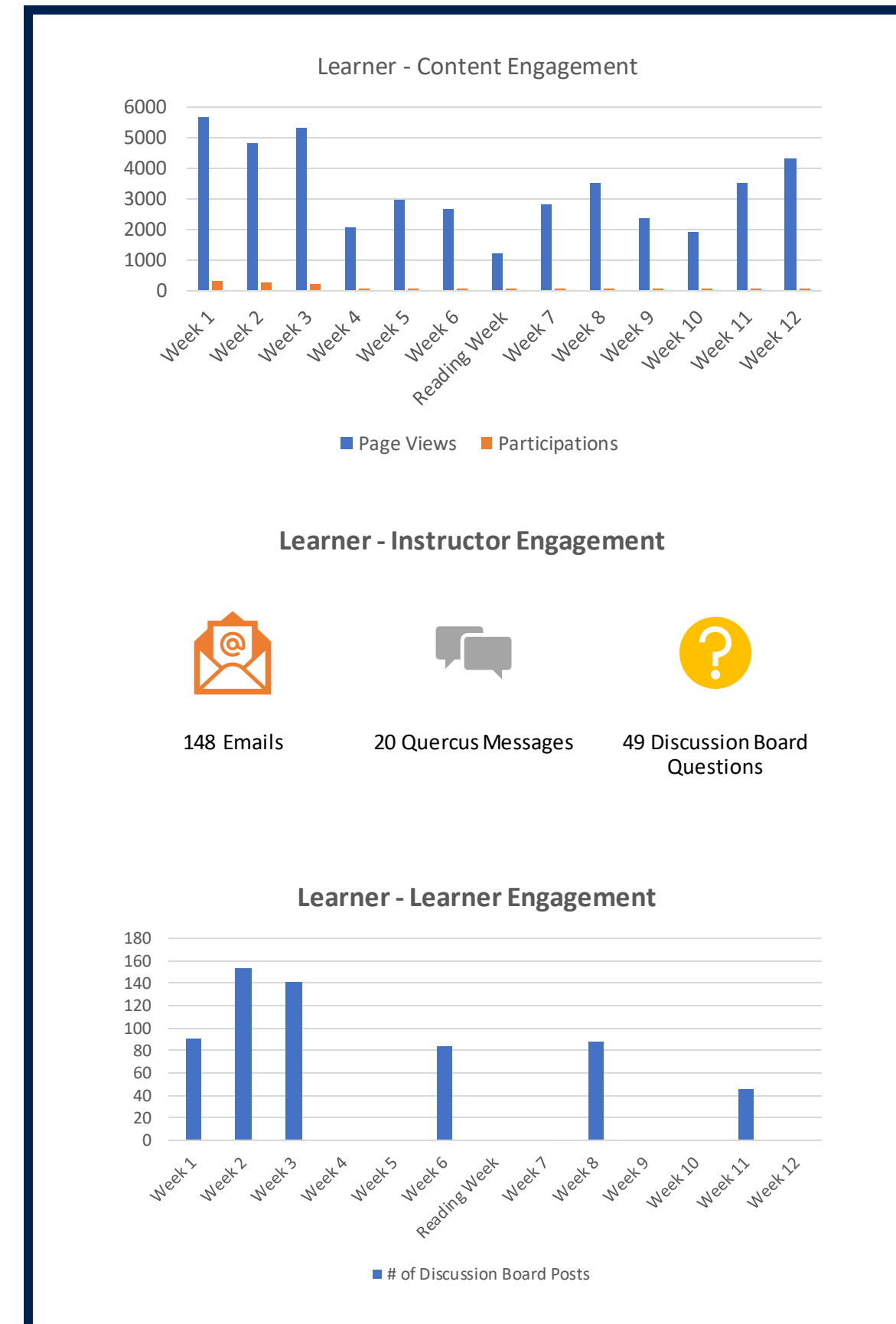- Most students didn't review summaries of weekly discussions.

Figure 1. Sample of data used to inform and evaluate course design.

Discussion

- Results were influenced by COVID-19, making comparisons across years challenging.
- There is value in collecting qualitative and quantitative data from multiple sources including Quercus and other U of T platforms.
- The development of dashboard was instrumental to tracking data from multiple sources. This will also enable tracking over time.
- Data collection highlighted opportunities to improve measurement in future iterations of the course.
- Utility of data would be increased through more frequent monitoring.

References

- Garrison, D. R., et al. (2000). Critical inquiry in a text-based environment: Computer conferencing in higher education. *The Internet and Higher Education, 2*(2–3), 87–105.
- Wiggins, Grant, and McTighe, Jay. (1998). Backward Design. In *Understanding by Design* (pp. 13-34). ASCD.

Acknowledgements & Contact