

January 19, 2018

To Whom It May Concern:

During the spring of 2016, I had the pleasure of co-instructing with Holly Fiock. I am a visiting assistant professor at Purdue University, and Holly assisted me with teaching a new course: Instructional Design Project Management (IDPM). This course is an elective in our Learning Design and Technology (LDT) master's program. Although I have worked with many co-instructors and teaching assistants over the years, Holly stands out, as she was a true partner in the teaching process. Therefore, I enthusiastically write to share my experiences of working and interacting with Holly.

The first implementation of any course comes with some uncertainty and initial challenges. However, with Holly's help, I am certain the course ran more smoothly. Prior to the start of the course, Holly reviewed course materials and offered suggestions for improvement. As the course had many assignments and elements, her detailed review of the course content and structure demonstrates her commitment to the overall course success, her willingness to become very familiar with the course prior to implementation, and her instructional design expertise for improving the course.

Like most of the courses in the online LDT M.S. in Education program, the IDPM course is offered in an intense eight-week format. In this offering of the IDPM course, students were required to complete four group assignments and four individual assignments, as well as participate in weekly online discussions. While this is certainly an intense experience for learners, the format is also demanding for instructors, who must maintain an active presence in the course while providing detailed feedback on student work. Holly split all teaching duties. That is, she was an active facilitator in every discussion and reviewed students' work for every assignment. In this course, we used cases to help students consider complex content. Feedback becomes an important tool to help students in this process. The feedback that Holly provided on student work was well-articulated and prompted them to think more deeply about content. In the course discussions, Holly connected professional experiences with course content to increase student awareness on important topics and asked important questions to lead the conversation in meaningful directions.

To ensure that the program is serving the needs of the learners, LDT faculty and staff constantly review program elements, and when appropriate, updates are made. The development and revision of the IDPM course is an example of how the LDT faculty and staff work towards their goal of continuous improvement, and Holly is a central figure in this process. Following the first implementation of the IDPM course, Holly used her observations from teaching the course paired with student feedback to make sound suggestions for improving the course's effectiveness. After running the course a second time, I can share that Holly's recommended revisions helped the course operate even more successfully.

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From working with Holly, I have also observed that she possesses several admirable attributes. First, she is receptive to feedback. For instance, any time I offered suggestions on her grading or discussion participation, she used my feedback to strengthen her already solid approach. Additionally, she is willing to confidently take the lead on anything that is asked of her. In the IDPM course, if Holly saw that a student had a question or a way that she could help, she did not hesitate to jump in with an answer or solution. With IDPM being an online course, Holly consistently found ways to connect with our students—sharing campus facts, giving a virtual tour of our office, or checking in with a fun story. Finally, Holly agreed to co-instruct voluntarily, was not paid for her efforts, and had other full-time work commitments. This highlights her dedication to improving her instructional design and teaching skills.

Without a doubt, Holly's presence and effort in the IDPM course were truly assets. Our students certainly benefited from her insightful feedback on assignments and her thoughtful ideas in the discussion boards. I think her past performance as a co-instructor is a strong indicator of her future: She will approach any future teaching endeavors with the same commitment and effort and will continue to grow her skills.

Sincerely,



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