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The first e-Learning product I chose to examine is “American Literature 1A: Diversity in American Literature: XRoads” by Class.com, Inc. The main page of the course describes the system requirements and the types of assessments involved (both computer and teacher-graded). The welcome page claims that the course is designed around “content standards and research-based instructional design methodologies,” (“American Literature,” 2004) and the national standards met by the course are provided by the company in both Excel and .PDF formats, making them easy to correlate to my local standards. The course syllabus is available and complete. Activities in the sample unit included text, audio, and graphics, providing some support for varied learning styles. The reading and writing expectations seemed appropriate for the course, and because templates are provided in addition to ample explanations for submission of assignments and taking quizzes, the computational skills required are also appropriate. While I could not access the areas in which to do this in the demo, the company’s website claims that, “teachers can add their own lessons, assignments, or assessments if desired.” (“American Literature,” 2004) I couldn’t find much in the way of how teachers would use the platform to communicate with students and parents, but since the program is designed to be teacher-guided—rather than independent study—it seems that the teacher would see the students in face-to-face communication situations regularly, instead of only virtually. Overall, I’d say this product falls somewhere between a three and four or between a 75% and a 95% when it comes to meeting the criteria devised for online courses by the Maryland State Department of Education.

I also took a look at Magellan University, a provider of online professional development for teachers. The homepage mentions state and national standards and claims curriculum is aligned with ISTE standards, which gives lends some credibility; however, a claim to align with these standards does not equate to actual alignment. There were only two weeks worth of a course available in the demo, so outside the introduction week, there were only two objectives listed—hardly a representative example, but they seemed solid. The site has very little information about assessments and how they are graded or designed; system requirements; prerequisite technology skills; and teacher-student interaction. The course did have a post-and-respond component, allowing for student-student interaction. The demo course had a clear and complete syllabus, but the course itself—being very text-based—did not address learning styles, and the website doesn’t profess to do so. This e-Learning provider lacked the authority of sponsorships or affiliations with professionally recognized institutions. It has won no awards, provides no evidence of reflection or desire to improve, and has little in the way of support for its claim that: “Magellan University's mission is to serve K-12 teacher professional development needs by providing online courses developed by practicing educators and recognized leaders in the teacher development field.” (“Welcome to Magellan,” 2004) Who are these recognized leaders? The instructors listed on the website have degrees from recognizable universities, but there is no indication that they are qualified to provide professional development to other teachers or that they designed the curricula. Overall, Magellan University does not meet the criteria devised for online courses by the Maryland State Department of Education

#### Works Cited

“American Literature 1A: Diversity in American Literature: XRoads” (2004) Class.com, Inc. Retrieved May 19, 2005, from <http://www.class.com/default.asp?sec=7&cnt=amlit1a>

“Welcome to Magellan University” (2004) Magellan University. Retrieved May 19, 2005, from <http://www.magellan.edu/magellan/control/main>