Strategic Planning for Online Learning
Faculty, Administrators and Staff to Ensure Quality Design of Online Courses is Not a Shot In the Dark

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Distance Learning Defined

• Acquisition of knowledge and skills through mediated information and instruction.
  • Learners separated from instructor and peers.
  • Interactive communications systems used to connect instructors, learners, and resources.
## Distance Learning to Distributed Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proportion of Content Delivered Online</th>
<th>Type of Course</th>
<th>Typical Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>No technology is used. Written or oral delivery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 29%</td>
<td>Web Facilitated</td>
<td>Facilitated using web-based technology. May use course or learning management system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 to 79%</td>
<td>Blended/Hybrid</td>
<td>Blends online and f2f delivery. Most of course is online and has less f2f meetings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80+%</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>Most or all of content is delivered online. Typically no f2f meetings.</td>
</tr>
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## Online Enrollment

- 7.1 million students taking at least one online course.
- Annual online enrollment growth rate slowing slightly but much higher than total enrollment growth rate for post-secondary institutions.
  - 16.1% (Online Enrollment, 2002-2012)
  - 2.5% (Total Enrollment, 2002-2012)
Retention in Online Courses

- Online courses have lower completion rates compared to f2f courses.

- Attrition rates can be as much as 10 to 20 percent higher in online courses than f2f courses.

Distance Learning Stakeholders

- Learners
- Faculty
- Instructional Designers
- Technological Resources
- Library
- Student Services
Faculty Readiness

Innovators

Early Adopters

Early Majority

Late Majority

Laggards

Faculty Readiness

• Do you have Technical Skills?
  • Be prepared for rapidly changing technology.
  • Learning Management System
  • Multimedia content generation

• Do you have time?
  • Students expect you to work all hours.
  • Students expect feedback within 12 to 24 hours.
Faculty Readiness (cont)

• Do you have a communication plan?
  • Regular announcements, reminders, emails.
  • Establish online office hours.
  • Define expectations for students’ behavior online (netiquette).
  • How will you report grades securely?

• How will you choose to communicate?
  • Email, Chat, Web Conferencing, Discussion Forums, Wikis, Mobile Texting

Faculty Readiness (cont)

• How do you plan on tracking student progress?
  • Who is struggling?
  • Who is not accessing course materials?

• Are you flexible?
  • Instructional materials or expectations may be revised quickly based on student feedback.
Faculty Readiness (cont)

• How will you handle student submissions?

• How will you handle online testing?

• Can you easily package your materials in alternate formats?

• Have you reviewed FERPA and Copyright Teach Act, ADA related to online environment.

Student Readiness

• Critical to provide students with a way to measure their readiness to take technology rich courses.
  • SmarterMeasure Assessment
    • Life Factors
    • Individual Attributes
    • Learning Styles
    • Reading Rate & Recall
    • Technical Competency
    • Technical Knowledge
    • Typing Speed
Student Readiness

• Communicate habits of successful online learners.
  • Review syllabus for clarity.
  • Develop a study schedule.
  • Login regularly to course sites.
  • Be honest about unfamiliarity with technology, tools or directions.
  • Communicate regularly with instructor and peers.
  • Practice persistence.
  • Student Best Practices.docx

Instructional Designers

• Faculty feel they have to develop online courses on their own.

• Instructional designer recommendations are often not implemented.

• Quality of online courses tend to suffer.

• As a result seeing a growth of master courses.
Why Care About Course Design?

- Instructors have less than two minutes to make an impression.

- Why spend time with your department, college or institution on how your online courses should be designed?
  - Branding
  - Quality control

Organizing Course Content

- Employ learning guides or module planning worksheets.
  - Learning Guide Template Formal.docx

- Minimize clicks and scrolling.

- Organize course logically and consistently by module, unit or week.

- Clearly identify all required and supplementary activities or course materials.
Critical Components of Online Course

- Online syllabus
- Course calendar
  - Course deadlines
- Minimum technology requirements
- Communication feedback policy
- Participation requirements
  - Discussion-rubric.pdf

Designing Effective Online Courses

- Quality Matters rubric
- Blackboard exemplary course rubric
- Institutional policies and procedures
  - Instructor Best Practices.docx
Instructor Presence in Online Courses

- Instructor’s interaction and communication style and the frequency of the instructor’s input into the class discussions and communications.

- A predictor of student motivation in an online course is instructor presence.

Instructor Presence (cont)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High Value</th>
<th>Low Value</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Synchronous communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructor's responsiveness</td>
<td>Face-to-face communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Being able to hear or see the instructor.</td>
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Sheridan & Kelly, 2010
Vetting Process for Piloting and Deploying Online Courses

• Instructional Designers rely on desk side assistance and faculty consulting.

• Work evaluation into professional development activities.

• Model includes regular, prompt, focused peer feedback:
  • Communication, navigation, gradebook, or course orientation.

Technological Resources

• Wearing too many hats already.

• Whose job is it anyway?

• Who trains us how to use academic technologies?

• Who is in charge of our learning management system?
Technological Resources

• Main responsibilities related to providing:
  • Provide reliable timelines to test and prepare for learning management system updates.
  
  • Present opportunities for stakeholders to weigh in on possible platform changes.
  
  • Inform stakeholders of maintenance schedule.

Clearly Define Role

• Work with faculty to ensure students contact the correct personnel.
  
  • Problems with passwords or access to technology.
  
  • Provide contacts for academic technology resources.
Preparing Faculty and Students for Technology Glitches

• Who do faculty contact?

• Who do students contact?

• Train faculty and students to use third-party help desk if available.

• Track work orders to identify gaps on how to handle technology glitches.

Student Verification

• Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008
  • Required accrediting agencies to verify distance education programs have processes in place to verify student identity.

• Test Proctoring and Online Proctoring
  • Require students to have unique IDs and passwords.
  • Used a secure learning management system.
  • Webcams used for monitoring.
  • Digital recording of student exams.
Critical Emerging Technologies

• Constantly evolving.

• What emerging technologies are being used?

• What training is available?

• What technology is being underutilized?
  • I didn’t know it was available.
  • I don’t know what to use it for.

Equitable Services

• How are you ensuring that your online students have services equal to your f2f students?

• How are you evaluating whether needs are being met?
Library

• Need to insure that online students have equitable access to library research resources and databases.

• Your institution probably already has a Lib or Ref Guide on ADA, Copyright, FERPA, etc.

Student Services

• Financial aid counseling

• Advising and career counseling

• Disability resources and services

• Tutoring and academic resources

• Registration and enrollment
  • Is online orientation available.
Disability Services

• Provide faculty with best practices for ensuring online course materials are compatible with assistive technologies.

• 2013 Litigation
  • University of California, Berkeley
  • Louisiana Tech
  • South Carolina Technical College System
  • University of Montana
  • Florida State University (2012)

Universal Design

• Design of learning environment to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.

• Do not wait until you have a student who needs accommodations in order to start developing or creating accessible formats of course materials.
Lessons From Litigation

- Universal design should be priority.
- Accommodations need to be timely.
- Faculty and student training required.
- Provide assistive technology and software.
- Students’ right to know prior to enrollment
  - Technology requirements
  - Modes of delivery
- Students may evaluate services and submit complaints

Distance Learning Stakeholders
Distance Learning Policies and Procedures

• Must have representation from variety of distance learning stakeholders.

• Must reflect institution's needs and priorities related to distance learning.

  • Online Syllabus/Calendar
  • Proctoring
  • Attendance and or participation
  • Intellectual property
  • Universal design practices

Administrator Report Card for Online Programs

• Sloan Consortium developed a quality scorecard for the administration of online programs.

  • Quality_Scorecard_for_the_Administration_of_Online_Programs_A_Handbook.pdf
Online Program Evaluation

- Institution needs to acknowledge and track how many resources/hours are being devoted to online students.
- Identify faculty and student needs.
- Track retention in online courses.

Online Learning Consortiums

- The State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) is designed to safeguard distance-learning students and provide them with greater access to online courses, as well as to protect state and institutional interests.
  - Yearly fee
  - Must provide evidence of academic quality.
  - Minimum financial aid responsibility rating.
  - Evidence of outlined grievance process.
Questions?

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