

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

Denise C. Robledo, M.Ed, Ph.D  
Director of Distance Learning  
South Arkansas Community College

OUHSC Ed Tech Tuesdays Special Session  
May 2, 2014

## 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

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

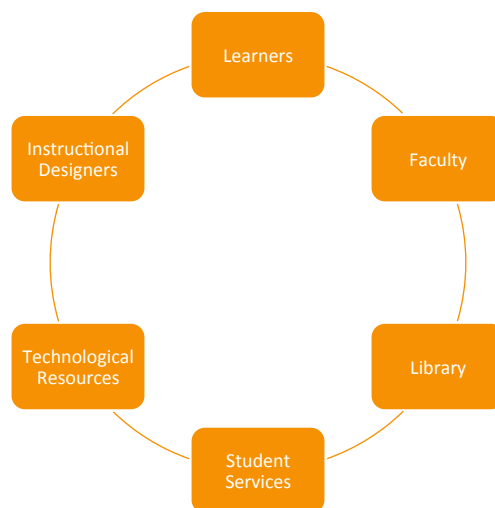
## Online Enrollment

- 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



## 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
  - <http://www.southalabama.edu/irpa/pdf/qualitymattersrubric.pdf>
- 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)

### High Value

- Communication
- Instructor's responsiveness

### Low Value

- Synchronous communication
- Face-to-face communication
- Being able to hear or see the instructor.

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

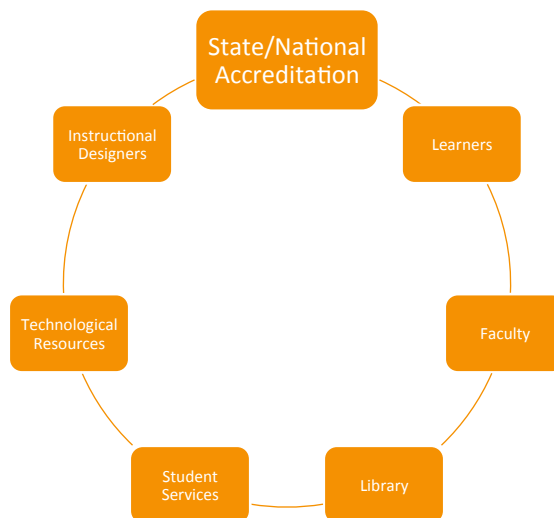
- Design of learning environment to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.
- Do not wait until you have a student who needs accommodations in order to start developing or creating accessible formats of course materials.



## 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 Consortia

- 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?

- Denise Robledo
  - Preferred Contact Information
  - [drobledo@southark.edu](mailto:drobledo@southark.edu)
  - 870-875-7252