Chapter 14

Overcoming Barriers to Instructor Adoption of a Learning Management System:
The Case of Regent University College in Ghana

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following a realization that a Web-based Learning Management System (LMS) deployed by a University in Ghana remained largely unused by instructors, the university's management intervened. The university wishes to expand access to its educational resources through the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). Since instructors play a pivotal role in this direction, all instructors were trained, motivated, and appropriately resourced to enable them to use the LMS effectively to deliver courses. Five years down the line, however, most instructors are still ambivalent towards using the LMS software. This chapter discusses the case extensively and concludes by suggesting that one approach that might help solve the problem will be to engage all instructors in participatory activities aimed at collectively identifying and addressing the issues and challenges.

ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

Regent University College of Science & Technology (RUCST), is a private higher education institution in Ghana. Located in the country's capital city of Accra, Regent University was registered in September 2003 as a company limited by guarantee. It received accreditation to operate as a tertiary institution in 2004, and began operating in January 2005. Regent University has so far graduated over two thousand students. Its website is at http://regentghana.net.

Like any other institution of higher learning, Regent University has a three-fold mission of teaching, research and public engagement, with the overarching objective of contributing positively to the general socio-economic development, both nationally and globally. In addition, Regent University has a vision of becoming not only a world-class university, but also a preeminent center for science and technology innovation and scholarly achievement by 2020.

Administratively, Regent University is headed by a President who is supported by a ten member University council. There are four Schools, namely, Regent School of Business and Economics (SBE), Regent School of Informatics and Engineering (SIE), Regent School of Theology, Ministry and Human Development, and the School of Languages and General Studies. Collectively, these schools have twelve departments that offer degree and non-degree programs in business, engineering, the humanities, computer science and other interdisciplinary program. There are other support service departments such as Information Technology (IT), Business Development, Research Initiatives etc. As at April 2012, the university had a student population of about 1,700 and a faculty/staff strength of about 200.

SETTING THE STAGE

In the present era of globalization, institutions of higher learning need to position themselves in ways that will enable them to adequately prepare the citizenry for meaningful participation in the global information society. This is against the backdrop of many universities, particularly those in the developing world, being caught in an eternal triangle of seeking to improve the quality of education and cutting operational costs, whilst catering for increasing student populations.

In seeking to provide quality, affordable and relevant education under these conditions, Regent University is striving to maintain a healthy balance between the tensions of this triangle (i.e. improve quality, cut costs and serve more and more students) by implementing technology facilitated teaching and learning initiatives. The school has therefore tagged itself as an Information & Communications Technology (ICT)-driven institution of higher learning, and thus pursues an agenda of

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