Chapter 57

E-Learning and Faculty Development in Higher Education:
A Comprehensive Project

Susan Gallagher-Lepak
University of Wisconsin, USA

Christine Vandenhouten
University of Wisconsin, USA

ABSTRACT

Growth of online higher education and advances in technology justify and encourage new models of faculty development related to e-learning. This chapter describes a multi-campus faculty development program using distance technology, a Community Of Practice (COP) model, and an e-learning framework. The Flexible Framework for E-Learning by Khan (2005) guided planning and implementation of the faculty development program. A variety of strategies were used to deliver the faculty development program including use of campus-based site leaders, participating scholars, monthly videoconferences, a faculty development handbook, hands-on use of new e-learning technologies, and a year-end conference. The program also included an evaluation of the interface design of courses used in a collaborative online nursing program with findings reported to faculty. Along with strategies used, barriers and evaluation of the multi-campus faculty development model are presented so that the faculty development model can be replicated across other universities and disciplines.

INTRODUCTION

With the growth of personal computers in the 1980s and the worldwide web in 1990s, then called the "information super highway", online learning became a new possibility. 'Online learning' typically refers to the use of an electronically supported environment which offers a structure for knowledge acquisition by the learner. Online education continues to evolve and numerous new technologies (and new versions)

have come to market in the past decade to improve online learning. New technologies include course management systems (e.g., Moodle, Blackboard, Desire 2 Learn), Twitter, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), Local Open Online Courses (LOOCs), WIKIs, lecture capture, and mobile technology to name just a few. According to the Sloan Foundation 2013 survey, over 7.1 million higher education students in the U.S. were enrolled in at least one online course (OLC, 2013). Growth in online enrollments far exceeds growth rates in the overall population of higher education students. The evolution of distance education technologies has created conditions that require faculty to adapt to a new way of teaching and communicating with their students.

As one of the largest systems of public higher education in the country, the University of Wisconsin (UW) System serves approximately 180,000 students and employs statewide more than 39,000 faculty and staff (UW System, 2015). The UW System consists of 13 four-year universities, 13 two-year Colleges campuses, and a statewide UW-Extension. The UW system has been a major supporter of faculty development in e-learning for many years. With over a hundred years of experience in educational innovation, UW-Madison, the system's flagship university, began offering correspondence courses in 1891. In 1993, the university launched a distance education certificate program for educators at the K-12 through post-secondary systems to help educators launch courses in the World Wide Web (UW-Madison, 2013). Additionally, for over 30 years, UW-Madison has offered a popular, annual conference on distance teaching and learning which brings experts in the field of e-learning to enhance practitioners' knowledge, skill, and credibility in the delivery of online teaching.

Nursing programs in the UW System have been leaders in distance education. A 2002 survey of the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission (NLNAC) found the greatest enrollment in online nursing programs was by far in RN-to-BSN programs (91%), a whole 35 times greater than other nursing programs with enrollment in online Masters of Science in Nursing (MSN) at only four percent (Hodson-Carlton, Siktberg, Flowers, & Scheibel, 2003). An early adopter of online education, the BSN@ Home collaborative RN-to-BSN program in the University of Wisconsin System, began in 1995 using the course management system Blackboard. The BSN@Home program involves each of the nursing campuses in the UW System.

As one of the comprehensive institutions making up the UW System, the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay had a dramatic increase (316%) in the number of students enrolling in distance education courses between 2007 and 2012. This represents a 393% increase in the overall percentage of credits taken online. University leaders recognized the need to have a structure in place to ensure the same quality standards for teaching and learning are in place for the online classroom as well as in the face-to-face classroom. To accomplish this, the university initiated a faculty-centered, continuous improvement model for assuring quality of online courses through peer review using the Quality Matters system (QM, 2014). During the QM peer-review process, faculty apply a rubric to ensure online courses meet the national standards of best practice (QM, 2014). With a goal initiated in 2013 to obtain QM certification for 100 online courses within four years, UW-Green Bay committed to enhance the learning experience for students regardless of the delivery method.

A Multi-Campus Project

This project involved the nursing programs at the UW campuses of Eau Claire, Green Bay, Madison, Milwaukee, and Oshkosh. These nursing campuses collaborate to deliver an innovative distance education program, the BSN@Home program, which enables associate degree prepared Registered Nurses

17 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: www.igi-global.com/chapter/e-learning-and-faculty-development-in-higher-education/203228

Related Content

Structuring Personalized Faculty Development Programming With Autonomy-Support and Microcredentials
Travis N. Thurstonand Kori Schneider (2019). *Handbook of Research on Faculty Development for Digital Teaching and Learning (pp. 140-159).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/structuring-personalized-faculty-development-programming-with-autonomy-support-and-microcredentials/228369

Efficacy of Organizational Learning and Social Capital in Online Communities of Practice: Dualities and Intersections
Serkan Gürsoyand Murat Yücelen (2021). *Research Anthology on Facilitating New Educational Practices Through Communities of Learning (pp. 240-266).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/efficacy-of-organizational-learning-and-social-capital-in-online-communities-of-practice/269251

Challenges to Inclusion
Angela Chen (2021). *Building Integrated Collaborative Relationships for Inclusive Learning Settings (pp. 1-22).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/challenges-to-inclusion/282794

Mental Health Support Workers: An Evolving Workforce
Julia L. Hennessy, Liz Smythe, Max Abbottand Frances A. Hughes (2017). *Workforce Development Theory and Practice in the Mental Health Sector (pp. 200-221).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/mental-health-support-workers/171513

Mapping Mindset and Academic Success Among Black Men at a Predominantly White Institution
Christopher S. Travers (2019). *Overcoming Challenges and Creating Opportunity for African American Male Students (pp. 151-171).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/mapping-mindset-and-academic-success-among-black-men-at-a-predominantly-white-institution/216143