

Chapter X

Achieving University-Wide Instructional Technology Literacy: Examples of Development Programs and Their Effectiveness

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Abstract

This chapter reviews the efforts of a large university located in the East Coast of the United States to support faculty technology literacy through participation in development programs featuring a mix of technology skills and instructional design seminars. The success of these programs is evaluated on a series of criteria: faculty needs and satisfaction, ability to meet faculty learning objectives, and short-term and long-term benefits in terms of new initiatives implementation. Survey protocols and instruments used to evaluate program effectiveness are included to support future

implementations by other institutions. The authors intend to encourage the development of similar programs, and the understanding of current obstacles that hinder a full deployment of technology in the classroom.

Introduction

For universities to effectively educate students in technology management, faculty development, and integration of instructional technology within the traditional curriculum is of primary importance. Faculty development is the key enabling strategy for the successful introduction of technology in the classroom and at a distance (Summers & Vlosky, 2001). There are many drivers that can support this development, and they span from providing instructors with opportunities to learn new technologies, facilities to develop the new skills, skilled professionals to support curriculum innovation, incentive systems that reward these efforts, and involvement in the change management process for the development of technology-rich curricula (White & Myers, 2001). Several universities are investing substantial resources to offer intensive development programs for faculty (Morales & Roig, 2002). Instructors participating in these programs often undertake new projects, and receive incentives and rewards (release time, student assistance, monetary, and resource support).

This chapter presents an example of the efforts of George Washington University—a large university located in Washington, DC—to support faculty development through educational technology seminars offered through winter and summer institutes (three- to five-day workshops). The programs results, evaluated on faculty needs and satisfaction, outcomes, and program benefits, are presented as a learning experiences to evaluate future implementations and as a tool for understanding lasting issues and concerns.

The Faculty Development Program

The instructional technologies development institutes offered at George Washington University (hereon referred to as ‘Institutes’) are part of a program designed to significantly increase proficiency in teaching with advanced technologies, particularly Web-based tools. The Institutes provide faculty with both pedagogical and technical training and development. They also provide yearlong staff support to assist faculty during design and implementation of instructional technology projects. The program was launched in the summer of 1999, and to date, several Institutes have been successfully offered each year reaching over 400 participants.

The Institutes are set up and funded by multiple units within the university, in a partnership model that leverages resources from different media and library services departments. The partners include university teaching centers, libraries, instructional

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