

Chapter 26

Online Learning and Quality Practice With Administrative Support and Collaboration

Deborah G. Wooldridge

Bowling Green State University, USA

Sandra Poirier

Middle Tennessee State University, USA

Julia M. Matuga

Bowling Green State University, USA

ABSTRACT

Higher education institutions must innovate and develop new modes of learning, both formal and informal, that meet the demands of the knowledge-driven economy. There is a growing demand for education and a push for non-traditional ways of delivering knowledge and learning. This chapter begins by identifying the technological changes that are affecting all societies and how these changes will specifically impact postsecondary education. The topic of course delivery is viewed as a cultural issue that permeates processes from the design of an online course to the evaluation of an online course. This chapter will examine and review key components of and tools for designing high impact online courses that support student learning and provide suggestions for faculty teaching online courses to assist in creating high-quality online courses that support teaching and, consequently, facilitate opportunities for student learning.

INTRODUCTION

Higher education institutions are moving away from the traditional education systems alone. Levy (2013) found that institutions are proving more broad-based delivery of programs through technology. Higher education is reinventing itself so that it can serve the world's growing and changing needs. Higher education institutions must innovate and develop new modes of learning, both formal and informal, that

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meet the demands of the knowledge-driven economy. There is a growing demand for education and a push for non-traditional ways of delivering knowledge and learning. This chapter begins by identifying the technological changes that are affecting all societies and how these changes will specifically influence postsecondary education. Viewing course delivery as a cultural issue that permeates processes from the design of an online course to its evaluation is essential. This chapter examines and reviews key components of, and tools for; designing high impact online courses that support student learning. It also provides suggestions for faculty teaching online courses to assist in creating high quality online courses that support teaching and, consequently, facilitates opportunities for student learning. Exploring suggestions for conducting course evaluation and a feedback loop for continual improvement of online learning and teaching ensues.

BACKGROUND

Technology, broadly defined, has been transforming human life in one way or another for thousands of years (Jerald, 2009). However, beginning in the 1990s, technological change has come at an exponentially faster rate due to factors such as increased competition in a global economy, automation, workplace change and policies increasing personal responsibility. As the world's labor markets evolve in the digital economy, we cannot predict what specific jobs will exist in the future. However, what is clear is the shift from print to digital is a profound transition in how human beings learn (Marginson, 2016; Pearson Learning, 2014). According to UNESCO (2017), there are more than 207 million students enrolled in higher education worldwide. UNESCO also reported that the percentage of college age students (ages 19-23) has increased from 19% to 34% between the years 2000 and 2014. Craig (2014) projected that the demand for on-line learning will increase by 2025, and that higher education must plan for this growth.

The advent of the personal computer, the Internet and the electronic delivery of information have transformed the world from a manufacturing, physically based economy to an electronic, knowledge-based economy. Whereas the resources of the physically based economy are coal, oil and steel, resources of the new, knowledge-based economy are brainpower and the ability to acquire, deliver and process information effectively. Craig (2015), in his book titled *College Disrupted: The Great Unbundling of College Education* argues that technology may bring more changes to teaching and learning than college leaders have anticipated. Online learning will center the instruction around students rather than the classroom, tailoring education to the needs and abilities of individual learners, and making life-long learning a practical reality for all (Balanko, 2002).

The global economic crisis and especially youth unemployment have prompted the urgency to develop educational systems aligned with the needs of the society it serves. Statistics from the United Nations indicate that one-half of the global population is currently under the age of 25 years. The Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2012) examined this young population from its 33 member nations and concluded that 39 million or one in four 16-29 year olds were neither employed nor enrolled in some type of education or training program.

Those countries that invest in a 21st century education benefit immediately by transforming an outdated system to a more sustainable approach. Educators worldwide must develop challenging and relevant learning environments to prepare the future workforce. Using digital education to connect students anywhere at any time to educators touts as a viable option especially where access to post-secondary education is limited (Hosie & Schibeci, 2005). The Internet will democratize knowledge, increasing access, lowering

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