

Chapter 6

Faculty Professional Learning: An Examination of Online Development and Assessment Environments

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ABSTRACT

The model Faculty Electronic Professional Learning and Portfolio (FEPLP) is viewed as cyclic with six basic entry points: quality management of academic development, professional development programmes, e-mentoring for new faculty teachers, development teaching and assessment competences in a blended environment, web-supported faculty assessment strategies, and review of an e-portfolio. This computer-mediated model includes a range of multiple representations of teaching competences that seek to provide for different professional development programmes for faculty in higher education, increases e-mentoring interactions, and provides a more closely reflection on campus e-learning experiences. The authors also investigated future staff developments including further competence module and online course development inspired by this model.

INTRODUCTION

We describe a Faculty Electronic Professional Learning and Portfolio model (FEPLP) (see Figure 1). We state that significant changes in quality professional development are likely to take place only after changes in faculty professional learning (FPL) outcomes are evident, that is, once faculty have experienced professional change in academic learning competences. The model is viewed as

cyclic with six basic entry points: quality management of academic development, professional development programs, e-mentoring for new faculty teachers, development teaching and assessment competences in a blended environment, web-supported faculty assessment strategies, and review of an e-portfolio. All these elements ensure quality as the foundation of everything a faculty teacher does. Quality assurance becomes the core of monitoring new faculty personnel, assessing and improving teaching responsibilities. We deal

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-61692-822-3.ch006

Faculty Professional Learning

with the basic elements of quality assurance in this chapter, by focusing on the following:

- a. The university as a learning organization.
- b. The university staff and students as the most essential part of higher education institutions.
- c. The facilities and equipment as a critical component in planning for online teaching and learning.
- d. Policies and procedures as the set of documents providing guidance for fair and consistent staff learning and development.
- e. Process control that deals with mechanisms for controlling learning outcomes of specific teaching processes.
- f. Documents and records, specifically professional electronic records, or digital portfolios, and
- g. Audits and process improvement, or how to enhance the continuous faculty improvement cycle.

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

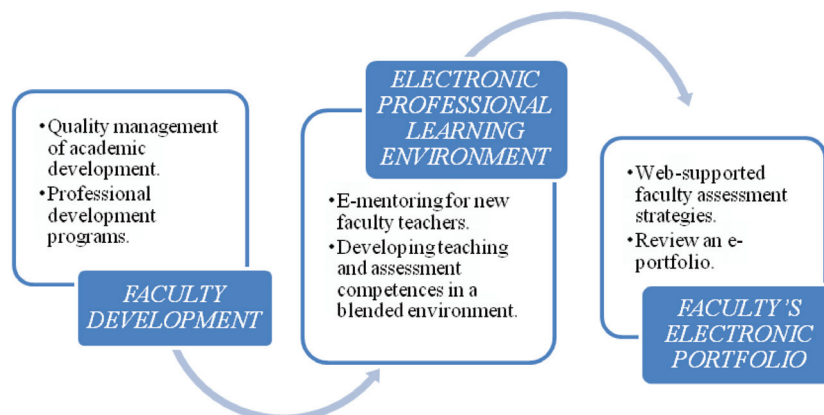
Quality Management of Academic Development

According to the report *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher*

Education Area, released by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Helsinki (2005), faculty are “the single most important learning resource available to most students. It is important that those who teach have a full knowledge and understanding of the subject they are teaching, have the necessary skills and experience to transmit their knowledge and understanding effectively to students in a range of teaching contexts, and can access feedback on their own performance”. University government bodies planning and organizing more flexible learning delivery systems focus their attention, efforts and investments on allocating resources to maintain quality requirements and defining the scope of authority and responsibility of faculty at the university level.

Moreover, policy makers are concerned with developing faculty job descriptions (duties and responsibilities), providing technological training and continuing education programs and assessing teaching competence on each procedure and teaching activity staff teachers perform. Within universities and departments, experienced scholars are increasingly looking to providers of faculty professional learning and development for evidence that activities, specifically workshops about web course designs, contribute to improvements in the performance of students. More particularly, higher education institutions, national ministries,

Figure 1. Faculty e-development and portfolio model



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