

Chapter 9

Supplementing the Learning Management System: Using Web 2.0 for Collaboration, Communication, and Productivity in the Preparation of School Technology Leaders

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ABSTRACT

This chapter describes how and why Web 2.0 tools are being used in a completely online M.Ed. program in Instructional Technology. Examples of specific tools and their implementation are provided along with the theoretical or pragmatic bases for their use. McGee and Diaz's (2007) categories for Web 2.0 tools, documentative, communicative, generative, interactive, and collaborative, are used to structure the examples. A description of the evolution of the M.Ed. program and reasons for supplementing learning management systems with Web 2.0 tools establishes the context of the discussion.

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INTRODUCTION

Online education continues to redefine higher education, impacting colleges and universities worldwide. According to the Sloan Report, “the 17 percent growth rate for online enrollments far exceeds the 1.2 percent growth of the overall higher education student population” (Allen & Seaman, 2010, p. 1). This growth has occurred at Georgia Southern University, a doctoral research university with an enrollment of 20,000 students. The Instructional Technology (ITEC) program in the College of Education was one of the first programs at the university to offer courses in an online format, beginning the migration during the 1990s and becoming fully online by 2007. The ITEC program offers two tracks: one leading to K-12 library media certification and the second designed for students desiring a technology coordinator position in a K-12, business, or industry setting.

The ITEC faculty are committed to providing teachers, school librarians, instructional supervisors, and postsecondary personnel the skills and competence necessary to select and use technology in all its forms and to nurturing the leadership skills they need to succeed. Program faculty have a history of seeking creative ways to use technologies for instruction to meet that goal. This chapter will use case studies to illustrate how the program has used Web 2.0 tools to enhance the learning environment to prepare 21st century technology leaders.

BACKGROUND

The program’s use of distance learning technologies dates to 1992, when the Georgia Statewide Academic & Medical System (GSAMS) network was established. The Instructional Technology program adopted GSAMS to simultaneously offer courses to multiple sites. In 1998, faculty began utilizing the Blackboard course management

system to provide resources such as handouts and lecture notes to students. Eventually Blackboard was used for creating hybrid courses with online course meetings taking the place of some face-to-face classes.

In 2007, the Georgia Board of Regents announced a new initiative; University System of Georgia (USG) programs throughout the state would compete for inclusion in a state supported “online franchise” called Georgia OnMyLINE (GOML). GOML provides students with a single portal that identifies online program and degree options, specifies program and admission requirements, and lists available courses. The ITEC program at Georgia Southern was selected as the GOML Instructional Technology franchise. As a result, the program grew from 65 students with three faculty members in 2008 to a 2010 enrollment of over 280 students and seven full-time, tenure-track faculty.

The Office of Information and Instructional Technology (OIIT) at the USG is responsible for maintaining an Integrated Learning Environment to serve the administrative and instructional needs of the USG clients. Georgia supports one common learning management system (LMS) throughout the state. Known as GeorgiaVIEW, the system currently utilizes WebCT VISTA (GeorgiaVIEW, 2010). All online ITEC courses are delivered using GeorgiaVIEW.

TERMINOLOGY USED

Watson and Watson (2007) observed that the non-standardization of terminology such as content management system (CMS), learning management system (LMS), and various other names and acronyms for e-learning systems is confusing. Learning Management System and Course Management System have become interchangeable. Moodle is self-described as a “Course Management System (CMS), also known as a Learning Management System (LMS) or a

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