Chapter XI

A Blended Technologies Learning Community–From Theory to Practice

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INTRODUCTION

This chapter of the section will share the journey of a higher education faculty development team as they meet the challenge to modify a state accredited teacher licensure program to be delivered in a technology-enhanced learning environment. The Bemidji/Metro Urban Teacher Education Collaborative faculty for physical education, art, music, educational psychology and Foundations of American Education recently began to develop hybrid (blended technologies and face-to-face) courses which will meet the new K-8 Minnesota state licensure competencies. In this chapter of the section, we will also suggest a model for future blended technologies program development.

Objectives for This Chapter of the Section

This chapter of the section will briefly review existing technology-enhanced curriculum programs; describe meetings with funders, administrators and other potential supporters; describe program development pre-planning; and discuss strategies for faculty course development in-

centives. While not specifically applicable to individual course planning, readers will gain strategies and insights useful for creating change in their own education programs.

Next, this chapter of the section documents the reflective statements from participating faculty and administrators and an example of a Paradigm Shift Worksheet, intended for designing curriculum for "hi-touch" disciplines such as visual art, music and physical education/movement.

Finally, recommendations for future blended technologies program development is suggested.

WHAT DO WE KNOW TO DATE?

Turn of the millennium teachers are facing the most dramatic paradigm shift to emerge within the educational community in the last several centuries. Both teachers and students must become Webslingers, like Spiderman; enter a chaotic realm, anarchy; merge onto the super highway, the no speed limit Autobahn; and willingly embrace a new learning model that may prove to be exhilarating and frustrating, challenging and rewarding.

Current educators, by and large, were educated using an *instructivist* model. Instructivism is teacher centered: we lecture–the students learn. Johnson and Dupis (1999) discuss instructivism in terms of truth: "Truth is best when understood by the person with expertise who is the authority" (p. 388). The experts (teachers) "hold" the knowledge and "tell" the students, who in turn "hold" the knowledge.

In contrast, blended technology delivery methods are inherently embedded with *constructivist* possibilities. The students are actively involved in discovering the curriculum content: "the constructivist curriculum teacher invites the student to learn by shaping their own understandedness" (Johnson & Dupis, 1999, p. 404). The interactive nature of the blended technologies involves the student in constructing their own knowledge using several thinking and learning tools (see Chapter One of this book).

BLENDED TECHNOLOGY OPTIONS

We think of "blended technologies" as the merging or blending of a variety of different delivery technologies to distribute academic curriculum. Bemidji State University has a history of using a variety of technologies, including the Internet, CD-ROM, videotape, interactive television, satellite, and broadcast television to deliver course content regionally, nationally and

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