TOGETHER!

Supporting the Transition: Faculty Development towards e-Learning

Faculty support and development as demonstrated effective ways of empowering e-learning and increasing chances for student success

SEE PAGE 3

Note from the Editor

Dear readers:

Issue after issue TOGETHER will be more and more about collaboration. Every article will look for potential ways in which a common problem can be solved through the use of collaboration and technology. Not only this, but we will expect this publication to become the product of your collaboration, as you get together to share, write, discuss, and learn from each other, and even send your contributions to the magazine.

As mentioned in the previous issue, TOGETHER is all about togetherness. I encourage readers to submit your ideas, articles, case studies, and projects, as we innovate for future of education. Make this publication your own.

You can reach me at willmarie.latorre@gmail.com with any of your questions, comments, and contributions.

Enjoy this issue.

Willmarie Latorre
Editor

TEACHING ON-LINE
EN
Español

Celebrando el Mes de la Hispanidad, HETS le ofrece un evento de desarrollo profesional en nuestra lengua materna …

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Este intenso seminario le permitirá adquirir las destrezas básicas para ofrecer y administrar un curso en línea, mientras aprende desarrollando uno. Examinará principios de diseño instruccional, su desarrollo efectivo e interactivo, permitiéndole la creación de verdaderas comunidades en línea.

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Supporting the Transition: Faculty Development towards e-Learning

When institutions decide to enter the mainstream of e-learning, diverse institutional elements are impacted. From administrative procedures to teaching styles, many decisions have to be made in order for distance education, particularly online learning, to be effective. One of the main issues affecting the successful implementation of online learning is the reluctance of faculty to try this new venture. This, in some cases, is provoked by administrative pressures and, in others, by the excessive workload that this represents, having to continue with their normal daily responsibilities and not receiving a rewarding compensation for the additional time and effort invested. In a great deal of cases, the problem lies in the inability to manage technology or distrust about the capacity of this technology to maintain an appropriate level of pedagogical quality.

Overcoming these obstacles could be a way of supporting the successful implementation of e-Learning initiatives in postsecondary institutions. Being faculty such a vital element for student success, supporting faculty transition towards online teaching will be essential in this process. Within this transition, opportunities for development are a key ingredient; faculty support and development are demonstrated effective ways of empowering e-learning and increasing chances for student success.

Development and support strategies for faculty can range from seminars on how to work with technology to workshops on creating online courses. However, they can also focus on the use of digital online objects to improve their teaching strategies, sharing learning and discussion spaces with other colleagues, and engaging faculty in blended learning programs.

A unique way of supporting faculty development is the use of online communities of practice, sharing, learning, and support with colleagues. These virtual communities of support can include not only other faculty members, but also instructional designers, media developers, educational technologists, and

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student support specialists. Such a network would facilitate the sharing of innovative teaching strategies and encourage the exchange of best practices in the development and delivery of online education. These types of initiatives also help to raise the profile of innovative teaching practices, and foster communication and collaboration. These online learning spaces also allow for peer educators experiences in online teaching to guide faculty members who have recently been initiated in this area.

Another useful development and support strategy is the use of blended learning opportunities for faculty themselves. Blended course combines face-to-face and computer based learning opportunities, in which educators are able to learn from and use a variety of instructional techniques. This allows faculty to fully understand the technology by being in their students' shoes, while developing their own solutions to course problems and incorporating innovative learning activities. A blended learning development facilitates reflection upon the faculty's own teaching practice, resulting in improved learning outcomes for students.

While the above mentioned strategies may be useful in helping support faculty in the implementation of online learning, it is of outmost importance to make sure that faculty members understand how this technology can benefit both their own teaching styles and their students' learning opportunities.

Can Online Learning Techniques Support Student Success?

> Using the techniques of online learning in a regular setting, with the effective use of technology, can help deal with the barriers impacting student success in a regular setting, as well.

It is true that many students face barriers to success in college. Retention and student success have become imperative problems to overcome for postsecondary institutions, particularly HSIs. Not only statistics make it absolutely clear, but numerous institutional efforts have been created to deal with this issue: student retention task forces, student support departments, freshmen programs, mentoring, tutoring, advising, and counseling. Some have seemed to work, some have not.

With the emergence of online learning, diverse strategies have been tried out in order to help online students persist and complete their degrees. Online learning itself has proven to be effective to help students complete their degrees, not only because it helps students overcome problems associated with distance, transportation, time, and excess of responsibilities, but because it has also proven to be effective in creating supportive networks for students, promoting a student-centered perspective, encouraging a direct relationship with the teacher, and openning up expression channels, among others.

Online learning classes, for example, overcome many of the barriers faced by Hispanic students. They can also give the student the one-on-one support and encouragement they need from an instructor. Online learning also provides self-confidence at times when it is uncomfortable answering questions in a face-to-face setting, particularly when having to deal with the English language.

Using the techniques of online learning in a regular setting, with the effective use of technology, can help deal with the barriers impacting student success in a regular setting, as well. A combination of web initiatives for academic support, interaction with faculty, and interaction with other students, institutions can maximize their efforts towards student retention, satisfaction, and success. In particular, the capability of interacting with others and receiving support from others in either a virtual or a face-to-face environment increases the student's probability to persist and succeed. This is why the creation of virtual communities has been so effective in the progress of online students.

The Internet technology has made it possible for student affairs to offer many of their services to facilitate institutional and students' processes (e.g., online admission services, online advising, career services, registration, etc.). However, these services need to be integrated with one another, as well as with the learning objectives and strategies of the institutions in order to have the intended impact. There is an opportunity for student affairs specialists and faculty to work together, learn from each other's experiences, and even apply not only online learning techniques, but also pedagogy and behavior principles, in shaping virtual environments that support the continuing progress of the learners.

Quality and Results:
Measuring the Impact of Corporate e-Learning

Objectives for any kind of training and development program should be about the training needs identified for the company's workforce.

Many corporations have turned to online learning as a way to give their staff equal training and development opportunities, withough in a cost-effective way. E-learning also offers companies and their staff convenience, self-paced learning, and useful downloadable and archivable contents. However, e-learning objectives for corporations should go beyond these obvious benefits that are strictly related to the technology itself. Objectives for any kind of training and development program should be about the training needs identified for the company's workforce.

Changes on-the-job behavior, competencies, and attitudes is probably the goal of most corporate training programs, but measuring this change is more difficult than simply adding post-seminar questions. There is a need to achieve changes in individual work and business results. Given the difficulty of this task, only few companies address appropriate evaluation processes that measure trainee results, and a small group have the knowledge required to evaluate the quality of an online training program before buying the product.

Instead of just concentrating on return on investment measurements and simplistic cognitive tests after a training has been delivered, it is precise to design more effective assessment methods for this type of e-learning program. Another way of approaching the attempt to guarantee better results in e-learning programs is to look at content quality measures.

Postsecondary institutions can team-up with organizations offering online training opportunities to corporations in order to assure that learning outcomes are achieved. Experienced e-learning specialists can help assessing quality content, teaching and learning techniques, and post-measurements. Human resource specialists can also join managers and education specialists in this process in order to identify work-related changes. Also, human resources specialists and managers can start getting trained in online learning techniques to facilitate training processes within their corporations.

With the proliferation of corporate e-learning for training and development, it will be important for online learning experts, continuing education directors, and human resources specialists to start developing adequate online training models and effective evaluation instruments that guarantee that the needs of trainees are fully met.

Innovative Queensborough Partnership Benefits Healthcare, Business, and Construction Industries

The Queensborough Community College Department of Continuing Education– CUNY recently partnered with Gatlin Education Services to provide new non-credit, online career training courses.

Online career training courses are in heavy demand. Staying on the cutting edge of this popular educational methodology, Queensborough Community College, Department of Continuing Education– CUNY recently partnered with Gatlin Education Services to provide non-credit, online career training courses in the fields of healthcare, business and construction.

The courses can help individuals at any stage of their career. Whether the student is interested in switching career paths, obtaining advanced training and certificates, or a first-time job seeker in need of specialized training, the Department of Education at Queensborough and Gatlin provide the necessary resources for workforce, corporate, vocational rehabilitation or individual career training, all from the convenience of your own home or office.

Gatlin programs blend various types of instruction in a unique format that provides logical, comprehensive and effective education. The typical course combines online instructional content, traditional textbook material and instructor-facilitated lessons. Though the courses are self-paced, personal instructors are available to guide every student. This blended learning differentiates Gatlin's and Queensborough's courses from ordinary online courses. Each course is open enrollment and takes an average of 90 days to complete.

Web-based instruction is growing in popularity. Gatlin's enrollments with their partner institutions have increased by more than 80 percent in the last year. The company has strategic partnerships with more than 480 institutions of higher learning worldwide.

"Between juggling a job, a home, a family and a social life, there isn't always a lot of time left to attend an on-campus class," said Stephen Gatlin, founder of Fort Worth-based Gatlin Education Services. "Online training offers the convenience of working from your personal computer and at your own pace. It's a viable tool right now as evidenced by the growing number of people utilizing it, and is the way of the future."

Established in 1989 by Stephen Gatlin, Gatlin Education Services is the largest provider of Web-based, instructor-supported training to community colleges and universities. Gatlin's courses are open-enrollment. This means interested students can start their desired training tomorrow. Gatlin's online career training courses are designed to provide the skills necessary to acquire professional caliber positions for many in-demand occupations.

For enrollment information, contact Program Coordinator Barbara Nasewicz at (718) 631-6343

INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF EDUCATION

Open Source Technology in Higher Education

Increasingly, colleges and universities are turning to open source as a way to meet their technology infrastructure and application needs. Higher education leaders and innovators consider open source as a significant way to leverage distributed innovation within the higher education community and incorporate it as part of the institutional strategy.

Open source involves the implementation of a new model of software development that depends on a cooperative effort from participants around the world. What many considered a terrifying in terms of organization and ability to ensure results has turned out to produce better products faster and more reliably than anyone deemed. The open source model can allow for the concurrent use of different agendas and approaches in production, in contrast with more centralized models of development.

The use of open source software constitutes a commitment to participate in a collaborative community. The community structure emerges from a licensing agreement that maximizes distribution, while also encouraging participation and collaboration in a continuous development process. Opportunities are created as better products are achieved through the feedback and involvement of a large user community.

Higher education's nature makes it a favorable ground for the development of Open Source programs. Since this sector tends to be more collaborative than most industries, it represents a strong community for collaborative effort in developing these products. Used in different forms, Open Source can support higher education's efforts towards improving the quality and cost-effectiveness of its initiatives.

For example, Open Source Teaching (OST) utilizes emerging technologies to facilitate shared learning and the development of communities. OST eliminates the barriers of time and distance in the relationship between learners. It provides simultaneously access to the ideas of people with varying degrees of experience, expertise, points of view, knowledge, and skills. In the case of Open Source Curriculum, instructors can freely use, distribute, and modify numerous instructional resources that are practical to their courses and the needs of their students. The open source curriculum development process invites the feedback and participation in a community of educational practitioners working to create a course or unit of study.

Higher Education is a fertile ground for Open Source developmental processes, just as Open Source is a fertile ground for the development of Higher Education. It is a matter of institutions understanding the functionality of this innovation in order to support the success and growth of all its constituencies.

ABOUT THE HETS CONSORTIUM:

The Hispanic Educational Telecommunications System (HETS) is the first bilingual distance learning consortium dedicated to serving the higher education needs of our fast-growing Hispanic communities. HETS was founded in 1993 to capitalize on the reach of evolving communications technologies to improve historically low Hispanic college success rates. As an organization dedicated to promoting the use of telecommunications and distance learning as means to facilitate higher education and support the success of Hispanic learners in distance education, HETS has acknowledged the importance of creating different tools to improve faculty and academic leaders performance in these areas. Please, browse through our site www.hets.org to learn more about us and join us. With your support, HETS can expand its reach and provide your institution or organization the myriad benefits of joining our online familia to serve our diverse communities of higher learning.

Member Benefits

- Enhance distance-learning resources
- Faculty training, program sharing, and other collaborative initiatives
- Access to state-of-the-art collaborative technology services and products at special discounts, group rates, or price splits
- Increase your outreach and service beyond your local community
- Get connected to a group of more than 20,000 faculty members, institutional leaders, partners, and administrators
- Guidance and Advising in Distance Learning and Educational Telecommunications
- Participation in efforts for new grants and funding resources for innovative distance learning programs
- Participate in collaborative projects and ventures with other distance education partners
- Use of HETS portal to promote Distance Learning courses and programs
- Access to thousands of contacts through HETS extensive listserves and database
- Free web hosting for institutional and collaborative project dissemination
- Participation and access to institutional surveys
- Develop and provide access to bilingual online learning tools and student support services
- Discount fees for faculty training and support
- Free access to training modules, learning objects, resources, and support services.
- Promote your latest news, events, and e-learning initiatives
- Exclusive access to the members-only Newsletter

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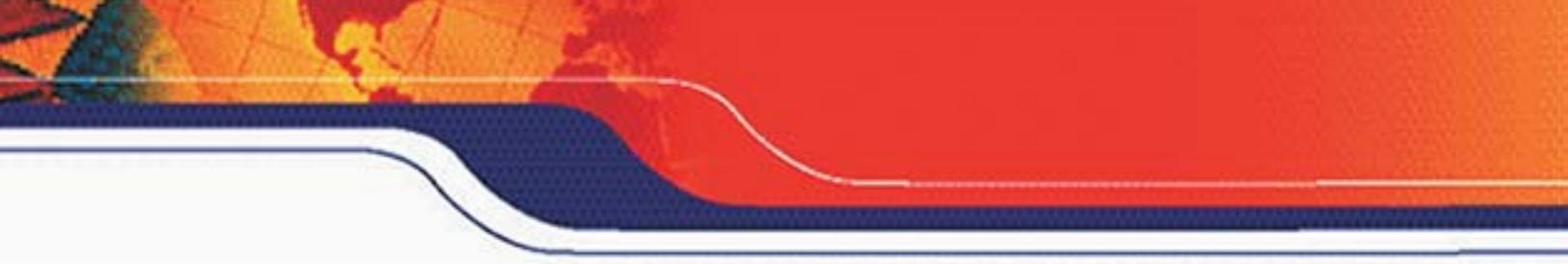Dr. José Jaime Rivera

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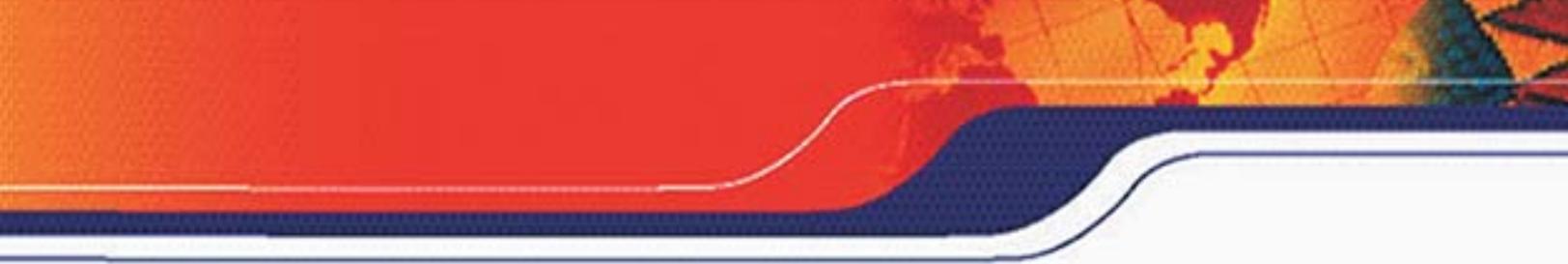
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