Innovative Online Instruction at a Research University: Development and Implementation of a Comprehensive Evaluation System

eLearn 2004
Washington, D.C.
USF was awarded a large grant from the U.S. Department of Education’s Fund for the Improvement of Post Secondary Education (FIPSE)

The focus of the grant is Innovations in Technology & Teaching

The grant provided funds for the development of three online degree programs (Masters level)
Development Structure

- **Analysis** - three instructional designers were hired to work with faculty members.
- **Design/Development** - each designer is responsible for the development of three courses per semester.
- **Implementation** - faculty members teach the courses; designers provide technical support.
Example

- Current Trends in Career and Technical Education
- Part of MA program in Career and Technical Education
  - Completely online
  - Veteran instructor with online experience
  - Cohort enrollment
  - Instructional designer and support provided
MA in Career & Technical Education  Apply for Fall 2004!

* Apply to pursue an MA Degree in Career & Technical Education (CTE) offered online by USF's College of Education!

* Forget driving to campus, searching for a parking place and sitting in class after working all day!

* Complete your Master's Degree in Career & Technical Education in two years--95% online--from the comfort and convenience of your home or office!

* Join the Fall 2004 cohort group from throughout Florida who will complete the program together and who will continue networking long after graduation!
Working With the Media and Marketing Your Program

Unit 5 Introduction

One very important element of maintaining effective relations between programs, schools/institutions or school districts and the various communities with which they interact is using the media effectively. Some teachers and school leaders see the media as the “enemy” while others view the media as a potential ally.

Connors writes, “Schools have two options regarding the media: (a) open a two-way process for clear, honest communication; or (b) have an adversarial relationship based on mistrust and misinformation. The latter is a no-win situation.”

This unit looks at ways to be more effective with the media in promoting your program, school or institution.

Another highly important component of any ongoing school and community relations effort is marketing the program, school (or programs within the school) or school district to potential customers and to the public.

This unit also looks at various ways instructors can market their programs or that school leaders can market their school or institution, particularly the multi-media presentation.

How To Get The Best Media Coverage for Your School, Gall Connors, Corwin Press, 2000.

Note: You may want to print this unit (and each of the units as you begin work on them) and check off each step as you complete it. Click here to open a printable version of this unit. You will need Adobe Acrobat to view the document (see the Help section for information on downloading Adobe Acrobat).
## Evaluation Criteria

Your work will be evaluated based on the criteria listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Possible Points</th>
<th>Points Earned</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Scope of &quot;10 Most Important Principles Educators Need...&quot;</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Effectiveness of news release or PSA</td>
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<td>3. Effectiveness of page one of newsletter</td>
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<td>4. Email to participants and instructor on three newsletters</td>
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<td>5. Participating in Focus Group discussion on marketing</td>
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<td>6. Effectiveness of Multi-media presentation</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Email with nominations of best presentations</td>
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**Total:** 60
Evaluation Team & Initiatives

- Faculty members and graduate students in Measurement and Instructional Technology form the evaluation team
- Our goal is to develop, pilot test, and validate an assessment system for online courses
Method

- Systematic multi-method approach
- Gather data from key stakeholders regarding processes and products
- Tap other relevant resources and documentation
- Review of the Literature
  - Instructional technology
  - Current practices in evaluation
Multiple Methods & Sources

- **Surveys**
  - Students
  - Instructors
- **Interviews**
  - Designers
  - Instructors
- **Documents**
  - SOW, IDP
  - Syllabus
  - Course Materials
- **Problem Logs**
  - Designers
  - Instructors
Student Surveys

- All linked via unique identifier
  - Initial Survey
    - reasons, experiences, resources
  - Mid-Semester Survey
    - access, communication, utility
  - End of Course Survey
    - delivery, support, overall impressions
Instructor Survey

- Instructor Surveys – Method
  - Both open and closed items employed

- Instructor Surveys – Content
  - Ease of use
  - Features
  - Utility
  - Lessons learned
  - Dissemination
Instructor Interview

- Background and preparation
- Teaching load
- Supports
- Challenges
- Innovations
  - Technology
  - Pedagogy
- Improvements needed
Designer Focus Group

- Designer perspective
- Course management system
- Development process
- Faculty/designer interaction
- Monitoring, maintenance & evaluation
- Resources
Document Analysis

- **Instructional Design Plan (IDP)**
  - Course objectives, intended audience, course structure, creative design, technical specifications

- **Statement of Work (SOW)**
  - Course description, overall objective, strategy, deliverables, expected outcomes

- **Course Syllabus**
  - Checklist: electronic communication, online resources, processes & products, course administration

- **Course Content**
  - Checklist: navigation, resources, communication, feedback, outcomes
Content Analysis Checklist: Instructional Design Plan (IDP)

- Innovative Features
  - Streaming audio/video
  - Interactive activities

- Instructional Strategies
  - Collaborative learning
  - Video presentations

- Blackboard Options
  - Announcements; communication; assignments
Content Analysis Checklist: Course Syllabus

- Contact information
- Online resources
- Course Delivery and Instruction
- Processes & Products
- Course administration
- Software/Tools
Content Analysis Checklist: Course Content

- Course design
  - Technology, format, content
- Instruction and collaboration
  - Technology, feedback, level
- Assessment
  - Technology, outcomes, student presentations
- Learner support
  - Technology use, help & resources, evaluation
Results

- Surveys
  - Students
  - Instructors
- Interviews
  - Instructors
  - Instructional Designers
- Document Analysis
Student Surveys

- **Survey One: entry characteristics of distance learners**
  - 60% lived further than 30 miles from campus
    - 47% lived more than 60 miles away
  - 70% intended to access course from home
  - Most students novices with DL
  - Top reasons for DL choice:
    - Scheduling (63%)
    - Work obligations (69%)
    - Distance from campus (65%)
Student Surveys

- Survey Two: perceptions of course delivery
  - Majority of respondents (70% - 76%) had little or no technical problems accessing and using the course and related materials online
  - Elements found to be ‘Useful’
    - Online submission of assignments
    - Online gradebook
  - Navigation tended to be ‘Easy or Very Easy’
Student Surveys

- Survey Three: satisfaction with delivery, technology and overall impressions
  - Responses to effective delivery very positive (mean = 3.7 of 4.0).
  - Mean responses on satisfaction with technology and support relatively high (mean ranged from 3.3 to 3.4 out of 4.0)
  - Overall satisfaction mean score was 4.0 out of 5.0
- Concerns
  - Unable to skip over familiar content (53%)
  - Timely feedback from instructors (24%)
Instructor Interviews

- Eight interviews with six of eleven faculty conducted over two semesters
- Vastly different backgrounds, perceptions and experiences with distance learning
- Highly favorable about assistance from Instructional Designers
- Time and resources were common areas of concern
- Student loads ranged from 5 to 70
Faculty End of Course Survey

- Responses of ‘Very Satisfied’ on 21 of 30 items
- Two faculty interaction items were the only ones receiving ratings of ‘Dissatisfied’
- No evidence of plans for dissemination of findings
- Faculty indicated being impressed with the quality of the student work
Instructional Designer Focus

Groups

- All three Instructional Designers were interviewed

- Seven domains identified
  - Faculty/Designer Interaction
  - Monitoring Maintenance and Evaluation
  - Course Management System
  - Resources
  - Designer Perspective
  - Instructional Design
  - Instructional Development
Instructional Designer Focus

Groups

- Instructional Designers reported numerous positive aspects of the project
  - Collaboration between instructors and designers considered strongly positive
  - Ability to work with a variety of tools, specialists, and topics is very enjoyable

- Most negative themes were focused on developmental aspects of the process
  - Restrictions of capability
  - Short time frames for development
Course Document Review

- Seven syllabi reviewed with six domains
  - Contact information
  - Online resources
  - Course delivery and interactions
  - Processes and products
  - Course administration
  - Software/tools
- Blackboard most used delivery system
- Only one course referenced using electronic portfolios
Nine Instructional Design Plans reviewed

Variety of approaches evident, though all IDPs called for student discussions and some type of group work

Only two included activities with immediate feedback

Two major themes emerged:
  - Emphasis on collaboration
  - Project-based learning
Course Content Review

- Multi category checklist reflecting four domains used on six course accessible
  - Course design
  - Instruction and collaboration
  - Assessment
  - Learner support
- Sample of noted innovations:
  - Narrated, web-based presentations
  - Student use of technology to make web pages for the course
  - Video presentations with authentic examples
Lessons Learned

- Timing is critical
- Technology is temperamental
- Coercion (incentives) may be necessary
- Accurate, regular, friendly communication is critical
  - Evaluation team
  - Project administrators
  - Teachers
  - Designers
Next Steps

- New online courses each semester
- Reliability & validity investigations
- ADA compliance
- Sustainability
- Improved student course evaluation system for online instruction
- Untapped data sources & resources
  - Problem logs
  - Student outcomes
Conclusions

- Assessing distance learning courses is a complex undertaking
- Multiple methods and tools are needed
- Professors and designers welcome formative feedback