Identifying Effective Methods of Faculty Training and Support in the Design, Instruction, and Management of Blended Courses

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**Recommended Citation**

Wright, Roseanna J.; Sullivan, Claire A.; Agnew, Maria; and Berry, Brian, "Identifying Effective Methods of Faculty Training and Support in the Design, Instruction, and Management of Blended Courses" (2014). *SoTL Commons Conference*. 78.

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IDENTIFYING EFFECTIVE METHODS OF FACULTY TRAINING AND SUPPORT IN THE DESIGN, INSTRUCTION, AND MANAGEMENT OF BLENDED COURSES

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Definitions

Traditional Course
100% FTF

Web Enhanced
Up to 30% Online

Blended (Hybrid)
33% to 80% Online

Online
More than 80% Online

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Presentation Overview

- History of Blended Course Development at Holy Family University
- Professional Development Projects:
  - Co-Teaching the Blended Course
  - Putting into Practice Student Feedback
  - Pilot Policy and Procedures with Mentoring
- Discussion
  - Merits of each approach
  - Other faculty development options

Holy Family University

- A four-year university based in Philadelphia.
- About 3,500 students
- Undergraduate and graduate programs
- Four schools
  - Education
  - Business
  - Nursing and Allied Health Professionals
  - Arts and Sciences

History

- 2009 – QM Training
- 2011 – SOE first blended courses offered
- 2012-2014
  - Pilot Policy and Procedures
  - Growth in offerings from 2 in SOE to 18 university wide
  - By December 2014 will be 11 more
Concerns

Course Quality → Professional Development

Three Studies...

- Co-Teaching the Blended Course
- Putting into Practice Student Feedback
- Pilot Policy & Procedures with Mentoring

Study 1

Co-Teaching the Blended Course
Study 2

Putting into Practice

Student Feedback

Previous Study

- Explored challenges to participation in blended courses for students with and without disabilities in terms of:
  - access to the online environment
  - completion of online academic tasks
  - using the Learning Management System - Blackboard

Method

- Instructor journal
- Interviews with students currently in blended courses at Holy Family
- Survey of all students at Holy Family

Student Feedback

- Students appreciate the increased availability of the instructor via the face to face classes and through email.
- Students report that the face to face classes are crucial in mastering the material introduced in the online modules and allow them to clarify future module instructions.
- Students identified the increased variety of learning materials as an important factor in their success in the course.
- Students appreciate the organization of a consistent course template.
- Students value the convenience of the online module in terms of time and travel.
Professional Development

- Faculty Workshop
  - Specific student feedback from earlier study
  - Specific ideas on how to integrate into course design and management
  - Blended course template based on Quality Matters rubric
- Monthly check in
- Availability of help as needed

Putting Feedback into Practice

- Organize class materials in a consistent manner with active links, minimize clutter and bundle online activities
- Provide information for “what” and “how to” in both the online and face to face classes
- Minimize online collaboration requirements and reduce discussion board confusion
- Be consistent and timely with feedback during the online module
- Consider accessibility for all students, implement the principles of universal design in the online modules as well as the face to face classes

Instructor Tasks

- Integrate course management/course design ideas into their course
- Keep a journal
  - Student questions/challenges
  - Your questions
  - Your ideas
Faculty Feedback

- “Bundling the online as well as face to face classes has helped organize the course not only for the student but for myself”
- “The ability to use a consistent template helps in my development of other blended courses and provides consistency for students across courses”
- “This experience has made me a fan of the blended course model”
- “I was apprehensive about an online course and never meeting my students face to face, but the blended module is the best of both worlds”
- Concern: “Would have liked more meetings/training”

Study 3

Pilot Policy & Procedures with Mentoring

The Process...
Pilot

- Training Requirements
  - Mentors
  - Faculty Developers
- Preliminary Review Checklist
- Course runs once
- Internal QM full peer review

Mentor/Faculty Developer Feedback

**Strengths**
- Provides Framework
  - QM Training Requirements
  - Preliminary Review Checklist
  - Full Review
- Faculty Developers feel supported

**Challenges**
- Increase mentor visibility/accessibility within schools
- More training for mentors
- More mentors
- Voluntary nature

Student Outcome Measures

- Resurvey of all students in participating courses:
  - Benefits/challenges
  - Academic Tasks
  - Online Environment
  - Learning Management System
Merits of each approach...

- Co-Teaching
  - Provides framework
  - Provides expectations

- Policy & Procedures
  - Provides support for FD
  - Provides Consensus
  - Voluntary roles
  - Need more mentors

- Mentoring
  - FD confidence/skill
  - FD comfort with online
  - More meetings needed

- Putting Into Practice
  - FD confidence skills
  - FD comfort with online
  - More meetings needed