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Enhance, Engage, Evolve: Challenges, Rewards, and the Culture of Evidence in Online Learning

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Improving Online Learning at Bainbridge College
Presenters

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Bainbridge College

Member of the USG  
Located in the SW corner of rural GA  
~4000 students (41.5% full time)  
Serving 12 counties  
21.9% increase in enrollment between  
Fall 2008 and Fall 2009

Two locations:  
Main Campus (Decatur County)  
Satellite Site (Early County)
Purpose

• Face-to-face retention 85%
• Online retention 60%
• Online success 33%
Discussion Objectives

• The challenges and potential rewards involved in implementing the institution’s Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), a comprehensive approach to enhancing online learning.
• Developing a culture of evidence that will move an institution toward the learning-centered ideal.
• Direct and indirect measures of learning outcomes as gauges of “success.”
• Negotiating the complex challenges of creating a viable assessment plan where none currently exists.
• Brainstorming assessment and implementation techniques.
• What should you take away? Ideas and strategies that will enhance your home institution’s online learning programs.
The conceptual model of the QEP starts with initiatives to enhance the quality of online course design.

The design of effective and high-quality courses delivered online substantially differs from the design of courses delivered in on-campus, traditional, face-to-face mode.
Engage

• Ways in which students and instructors engage in quality online courses are substantially different from traditional patterns of engagement in face-to-face, on-campus courses.

• The QEP's conceptual model recognizes improvement in instructor and student readiness to engage in online teaching and learning is essential.
As the quality of the design of online courses improves and as the readiness of instructors and students to engage in online teaching and learning improves, online student learning is expected to evolve and reflect improved student success in online courses, higher enrollments of satisfied students, improved student retention, and expanded online course offerings.

Student success in course completion, satisfaction and retention in online courses is expected to improve and be closer or equal to the experiences of students in comparable on-campus courses delivered in a traditional face-to-face format.
Implementation

- Gather and analyze baseline data from current online course offerings
- Use baseline data to determine training strategies for pilot instructors
- Liaise with OIIT to determine the best use of available technology
- Gather and analyze benchmark data from pilot classes
- Evolve online learning through continued analysis of the 3E’s plan
Challenges

• Navigation & structure of online LMS
• Student responsibility and initiative
• Time management
• Complexity of content
• Fitting assessments to online environment
Assessments

Enhance: Improve the quality of all of BC's current and future online courses.

BC Quality Course Design Rubric

- Adaptation of Georgia’s eCore program 5-Star rubric and components derived from several other well-documented and highly-regarded guidelines for course design and evaluation including Quality Matters and Blackboard’s Exemplary Course Rubric.
 Assessments

Engage: Improve the readiness of instructors and students to successfully engage in high quality online teaching and learning.

Faculty Based Assessment
  • Faculty LMS Survey
    • Perception of the readiness of their students to use the LMS after completing the tutorial, and problems that students reported to them during the semester about the use of the LMS.

Student Based Assessment
  • Completion of online tutorial on use of LMS
  • Online Class Student Course Evaluation
Assessments

Evolve: Improve the effectiveness of Bainbridge College's online courses with particular emphasis on improving the quality of online student learning.

• Grade data analyzed each semester
• Online Class Student Evaluation
• Retention data will be summarized to provide comparisons between online and traditional courses.
Conclusion

Thank you! We appreciate your feedback and interest in the topic of online learning and assessment.

Final thought for discussion: Once developed, how can the integrity of assessments be maintained in an online setting?