Mar 28th, 4:00 PM - 5:30 PM

Ready or Not, Here It Comes!: Distance Learning and Online Teaching

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Recommended Citation

Russ, Laura; Hung, Dave; Davies, Kim; Akins, Maureen; and Hammock, Gina, "Ready or Not, Here It Comes!: Distance Learning and Online Teaching" (2013). *SoTL Commons Conference*. 30.  
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With increasing interest and pressure on university faculty to augment course offerings to meet student learning needs with online sections, a faculty learning community at Augusta State University set out to examine faculty concerns and readiness for teaching online.

**Introduction**

**Data**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Are You Willing to Teach an Online Course?</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>79.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Are You Currently Teaching a Course that is Completely Online?</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>87.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12.3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Concern Factors**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>70.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>30.00</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionable Course Quality</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>68.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>31.1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not Meeting Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>75.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>24.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Motivations:**

Both faculty members who are willing to teach a course online and faculty currently teaching an online course are more motivated by:
- Flexibility in delivery
- Personal interest
- Financial stipend
- Reassigned time
- Opportunity for innovation
- Meeting student interest
- Meeting student need

**Concerns:**

Faculty members who are willing to teach a course online are less concerned with:
- Lack of student interaction with each other
- Questionable course quality
- Not meeting learning outcomes of the course

Faculty members who are willing to teach a course online are more concerned with:
- Lack to time to prepare the course
- Work overload

Faculty currently teaching an online course are less concerned with:
- Lack of student interaction with each other and with the instructor
- Not being able to be responsive to students
- Lack of flexibility
- Lack of adaptability to making quick changes to the course
- Questionable course quality
- Not meeting learning outcomes of the course

**Conclusion**

As suggested by the research on distance education (including not just online courses), faculty are intrinsically motivated to teach online but they also appear to be motivated by financial stipend and reassigned time. These extrinsic motivations may reflect the work needed to develop courses online.

Faculty who have taught online are less concerned with perceived issues such as lack of student interaction and this may because they have found ways for students to interact.