Chapter 8
Faculty Perspectives of Technology-Enhanced Course Redesign

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ABSTRACT

This chapter will discuss how one team of faculty members used technology enhancements to transform the delivery of their own existing courses into new and improved courses which could be delivered consistently over time and in a variety of delivery modes (i.e., face-to-face, online, or hybrid), while maintaining course rigor. Previously, the selected courses had been redesigned for online delivery, but with limited technology enhancements. As faculty members progressed through the steps of the redesign process, many opportunities for reflection and introspection emerged. This chapter provides their perceptions of features of online learning, including course design, course delivery, assessment of learning and teaching, and student and instructor roles. The chapter concludes with implications for working with faculty from a variety of levels of willingness and technological proficiency for developing effective online learning environments.

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INTRODUCTION

I love learning online; I just don’t like teaching online. Teaching online is like tossing a message in a bottle into the ocean. It takes a lot of energy to get the message inside, the message could be profound, and it may or may not reach someone. There is no way to ever really know. - Dr. Traditional

The excerpt above illustrates one faculty member’s view of one particular component of online learning: online instruction. It is one of many different views, which vary based on the background, experiences, technological expertise, and teaching philosophy of the individual. While one instructor may loathe online learning, another may be enthusiastic yet lacking in technological savvy, and another may be a technological guru. Regardless, it is extremely useful to hear, explore, and understand the varying perspectives so that faculty can support one another, move beyond perceived barriers to effective online learning, and begin to implement and promote strategies that support effective and engaging online teaching and learning experiences for instructors and students.

This chapter explores the perspectives of three faculty members in a School of Education, who used technology enhancements to transform the delivery of their existing undergraduate courses into master courses. The ultimate goal of the redesign is for the master courses to allow consistent delivery over time and in a variety of formats. Because the faculty members were at different stages in their comfort with technology and online teaching and learning, they each had unique experiences, including challenges as well as successes. Their personal accounts may be useful to other faculty as they plan and implement technology-enhanced course redesign in their own departments. To better understand why the faculty members hold their own particular viewpoints, it is helpful to know a little about their backgrounds, and how they perceived online learning prior to embarking on the journey to course redesign with technology enhancements. The following section provides an introduction to the three team members: Dr. Expert, Dr. Transitional, and Dr. Traditional.

Dr. Expert

Dr. Expert is a full professor who teaches graduate level courses in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction. He describes himself as “advanced to expert” in the fields of educational technology and online learning. He has doctorate level certification in Instructional Technology Specialist Computer, and he has served as Interim Chair in the department of Educational Leadership, Technology and Research; as well as Program Coordinator for Educational Technology. He is Quality Matters (QM) certified, and teaches his online graduate classes with a strong synchronous component. With regard to his expertise with online learning, he leads by example, and is the faculty member that others turn to when they have questions about almost anything related to technology.

Although Dr. Expert did not redesign a course while working with the team, he has done so previously on multiple occasions. Rather, for the current project, he served as a mentor and guide for the rest of the team as they worked to redesign their courses. He offered professional development in the form of group and 1:1 tutorials, as well as webinars modeling technological tools such as the use of Blackboard Collaborate for synchronous sessions. He served as a knowledgeable other, providing scaffolding as other faculty members became more competent and confident with the tools of online learning.

Dr. Transitional

Dr. Transitional is an associate professor who considers herself to be somewhat technologically savvy, but not quite as confident or adept as Dr. Expert. She has been teaching online classes at
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