Building a Quality Assurance Network for Online Classes: Early Successes & Lessons Learned

Online Learning

• Characterized by rapid proliferation.
  - 4.3 million undergrads
  - 20% of all undergrads

• Both championed and maligned
  - The No Significant Difference Phenomenon
  - “when... course materials and teaching methodology were held constant, there were no significant differences”

Online Learning at CSU

• State of California Assembly Bill 386
  - Requires CSU provide students access to all fully online CSU courses across 23 campuses by Fall 2015

• At CSUF, we had 9438 online students in 2013
  - 15 online degree programs
  - 16 online professional development
  - 2 online degree completion programs
  - Students enrolled in standalone online courses

“Systemwide Program to Support and Enhance Academic Quality in Online Courses”

• Flexible program
  - Professional development
  - Establishing faculty associates
  - Integrating system-wide services
    - Ex: Quality Matters, QOLT, Wiley Learning Institute

• $10-20k per grant cycle
  - Began March 2014
  - Currently approaching the third grant cycle

Quality Matters

What is it?

• From their website:
  - “...A nationally recognized, faculty-centered, peer review process designed to certify the quality of online course design and online components”

• Scale
  - 23,000 faculty & instructional design staff

How does it work?

• Workshops/Certifications
  - QM rubric
    - 8 General Standards
    - 43 Specific Standards
  - Alignment
  - Peer Reviewer
  - + 17 others

• Course Reviews
  - Informal
  - Official

“The QM Rubric is used in course reviews that result in continuous improvement and faculty development”
1. Course Overview & Intro
2. Learning Objectives
3. Assessment & Measurement
4. Instructional Materials
5. Course Activities/Interaction
6. Course Technology
7. Learner Support
8. Accessibility & Usability
Our Proposal

- Utilizing QM-trained faculty to support "QM certification ready" redesign of three classes
- Needs Assessment & QM Training results were shared during the School of Nursing's Back to School Faculty Meeting in August 2014
- Expanding needs assessments & establishing networks through all eight colleges

Grant Cycle 1
Spring 2014 – Summer 2014

Grant Cycle 2
Fall 2014 – Summer 2015

Activity

**Step 1: Take...**

- Papers x2

**Step 2: Place...**

- A challenge to implementing online courses
- A solution to another's posted challenge

Activity

**Results**

Challenges to implementing high-quality online courses identified by conference participants:

- **Students:**
  - Student online readiness (and how to assess)
  - Tech literacy

- **Faculty:**
  - Teaching multiple teaching and learning modalities
  - Time
  - Meeting intellectual and social presence
  - Capturing videos
  - Explaining difficult concepts
  - Course assignments / face-to-face interaction
  - Optimal tech changes (ex: CMS)

- **Course Logistics:**
  - Technology alignment with course needs
  - Academic Integrity
  - Assessment

Activity

**Results**

**Problems**:

- Student online readiness (and how to assess)
- Tech literacy

**Proposed Solutions**:

- Allowing students to self-select teaching medium
- Provide Roadmaps
- Provide Rubrics
- Video (Camtasia, Adobe Captivate)
- Tech Support
- Faculty Mentors
- Instructional designers
- Faculty Learning Communities
- Student created Wikis

Needs Assessment

Combined, 47% were interested in trying a new teaching medium
Early Successes: Results of Needs Assessment

Over half of responding faculty use Adobe Connect, a synchronous technology. In contrast, asynchronous tools were rarely used.

Lessons Learned: Crafting QM Certified Courses

Lessons Learned: Preparing for QM Certification

- What have we learned so far in preparing our courses for QM Certification?
  - Time
  - It (can) take a village
  - Reimbursement
  - 508 Compliance

- Time
  - Meeting 2x/month
  - In 3 months of work
    - 3/8 of the way through the rubric
    - Note: Course needed substantial content revision, too

- It (can) take a village
  - One course preparation involving up to 6 people per meeting
    - Graduate Programs Coordinator
    - Concentration Lead
    - Course lead faculty
    - Campus QA Lead
    - 2 QM-trained Faculty Members
  - Certainly not the case with every review, but has implications for scaling up certifications
Lessons Learned
Preparing for QM Certification

- Reimbursement
  - QM-trained faculty assisting with course reviews reimbursed
  - Need mechanisms to fund the faculty member revising the course
  - A larger issue in converting classes to online formats in general

Lessons Learned: Building a Network

- Copyright and Intellectual Property
  - Who owns the course materials created?
  - What can a department reasonably ask faculty to share?

Lessons Learned
Preparing for QM Certification

- 508 Compliance
  - Another issue commonly raised in online learning discussions
  - Low-hanging fruit
    - Accessible syllabi
    - Course templates
  - More intensive
    - Transcription
    - Scripting

Lessons Learned
Building a Network

- What new issues have been voiced as we expand our network across all 8 Colleges?
  - Copyright and intellectual property
  - Expertise
  - Quality Assurance or Online Expansion
  - Sustainability

Lessons Learned
Building a Network

- Expertise
  - Intrinsic challenge of recruiting field experts to academia
  - Burden imposed by learning technologies
Lessons Learned
Building a Network

• Quality Assurance or Online Expansion
  – Not all support the online education trend
  – Creates a balancing act
    • Want all at the table to have a voice
    • Want to ensure uniform quality assurance

Lessons Learned
Building a Network

• Sustainability
  – Fluctuations in grant support
  – Changes in ideological direction
    • Ex: QM versus QOLT

Thank You!

Any Questions?

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