A Multidisciplinary Team Approach to Develop and Validate an Online Course

ABSTRACT

Faster computers and broadband internet have introduced many options for educators. Moving from an idea to development of effective and engaging technology-enhanced learning materials requires both content knowledge and technology skills. This best practices presentation will describe the origins and development of a multidimensional online course and will explore the processes and collaboration required to make the project succeed. It is the goal of this paper to highlight the processes and skill sets involved in the implementation of an idea for a product as well as the process of getting a team working together when they have different backgrounds and agendas.

Faster computers and broadband internet have introduced many options for educators. Moving from an idea to development of effective and engaging technology-enhanced learning materials requires both content knowledge and technology skills. Implementing an idea for online materials in an institutional context requires an even wider range of research and administrative skills. An individual content expert such as an instructional designer or an instructor might work alone or with another person with a complementary skill set, but it is likely that a much larger team would need to be involved to make the product a success. The process requires not only that content be carefully crafted, and tools for learning be created and used effectively, but that the team effectively collaborates over the entire of the project.

This best practices presentation will describe the origins and development of a multidimensional online course and will explore the processes and collaboration required to make the project succeed. It is the goal of this paper to highlight the processes and skill sets involved in the implementation of an idea for a product as well as the process of getting a team working together when they have different backgrounds and agendas. While this particular project was for a nursing curriculum and involved a wide variety of research, technology and content specialists, the presentation will be designed to distill best practices that can be applied in a variety of settings.

The work on this project has evolved over time but at the heart of the project is the collaborative nature of the relationship between the team members. Kirriemuir and McFarlane (2004) suggested that for the development of successful technology-based learning products, the “key to success is likely to be the development of effective collaborations between both educators and technical experts (p. 25).

The team for this project includes university and simulation center leaders, faculty, researchers, educational technology specialists and instructional designers. A crucial part of the collaborative process was a shared commitment to the project. As Hoegl, Weinkauf and Gemuenden (2004) state, project commitment, solidarity and identification emerge when the project members are proud to participate in the development. Such commitment changes the dynamics of the team and the roles that the team members are willing to take on, as well as the agility the team bring to continue to work on the project over a long period of time.