Best Practices for Developing an Effective Online Training Course for Faculty: Four Years and Growing

This paper will focus on the design and development of an asynchronous online training course for faculty at a major research institution. The course, now it is fourth offering, was designed to be a solution to the problem of faculty (full-time, part-time, adjunct, and teaching assistants) who were ill-prepared to teach hybrid, blended or online courses. Several questions arose. On a very limited budget, how do you reach faculty throughout a statewide educational system who are busy teaching, researching and doing community work? How do you reach them and what motivates them to succeed? What is the “takeaway” for the faculty member? Most of the faculty participants have little, if any, instructional design assistance, technology training, or networking available. Pedagogy is a foreign concept to many. By modeling good online teaching behaviors and following a constructivist mindset, the course provides a place for discourse on instructional technologies, social media, pedagogy, and acts as a “safe place to land” for those nervous and anxious faculty members. This non-threatening, collegial environment gives faculty a hands-on experience of what it was like to be an online student.

Since its inception four years ago, valuable lessons have been learned in reference to the learners’ skill sets, their time constraints, behaviors, and priority levels. In addition, there is the aspect of funding as this course is not funded per se and faculty members do not receive monies for their participation. Each of these issues will be addressed in the paper and there will be a demonstration of the online course.