Assessment in Online Programs: Use in Strategic Planning for Faculty/Adjunct Development and Course Instruction to Improve Faculty and Student Engagement

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This article describes the use of assessment in the design and implementation stages of launching online courses and programs. While use of assessment for improving student engagement in both face-to-face and online courses has been commonly used, the authors augmented the strategic planning of programs to include assessment as a tool for designing faculty/adjunct training sessions to simultaneously improve faculty engagement. Employed initiatives were based on the hypothesis that high faculty engagement during training would yield higher quality courses, leading to greater course satisfaction and engagement by both students and faculty. Results are provided from two online programs in the School of Allied Health and Life Sciences at the University of West Florida. To demonstrate these strategies, a case example is also provided on the use of Second Life as an instructional tool to improve faculty and student engagement, and to develop a sense of online community. Outcomes were tracked along four criteria: (a) quality enhancement, (b) accountability, (c) marketability, and (d) productivity. Results included improved student and faculty satisfaction with engagement in...
developed courses, low operational costs due to low turnover rate in trained faculty/adjuncts, and improved tracking of quality enhancement data for accreditation efforts.

Assessment can be used effectively to improve faculty and student engagement in online programs. Consequently, much attention has been given to the importance of and strategies for improving students' learner-learner engagement in online environments (Anderson, 2002; Muirhead, 2004; Palloff & Pratt, 2005), as well as faculty-learner engagement (Kuh & Hu, 2001). Researchers recently surveyed theoretical paradigms employed in the fields of instructional technology and organizational studies for applicability to e-learning research (Hogarth & Dawson, 2008). This article applies concepts from both streams of research in summarizing an approach to strategic planning for faculty training that emphasizes collaborative faculty engagement as the driving force to ensure the sustainable delivery of high-quality online learning experiences for students. The developed strategies were employed in training initiatives for online courses and programs in the School of Allied Health and Life Sciences (SAHLS) at the University of West Florida (UWF). These efforts were based on a team-oriented model for development and evaluation derived in part from lessons learned in designing effective outcome-driven medical education, and managing change in health care organizations (Davis, O'Brian, Freemantle, Wolk, Mazmanian, & Taylor-Vaisey, 1999; Weber & Joshi, 2000). Standards for competency-based programmatic development advocated by accreditation agencies such the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) were also incorporated (CEPH, 2005). The developed training program for online teaching further utilized traditional didactic training supplemented with characteristics of the 360-degree feedback model (i.e., multi-source assessment) successfully used in business sectors and recently in some health care and higher education venues (Armstrong, Blake, & Piotrowski, 2000; Sachdeva, 2005; Swain, Schubot, Thomas, Baker, Foldy, Greaves, & Monteagudo, 2004).

Four criteria were emphasized as part of the assessment in these efforts: (a) quality enhancement, (b) accountability, (c) marketability, and (d) productivity. Emphasis on quality enhancement was based on achieving high faculty and student engagement relative to course and programmatic student learning outcomes. Accountability to quality was based on a learner-centered and needs-assessed approach to training that encouraged faculty self-improvement in course design and implementation decisions to address solicited and unsolicited student feedback, to participate in peer review sessions, and to meet and exceed both objective checklist requirements for design and implementation as well as standards set by national accreditation agencies (e.g., CEPH). Assessment of marketability was based on both fac-
Quality and student feedback regarding overall course experiences, and faculty and student willingness to promote courses to new students and faculty. Finally, productivity was measured in terms of impact on teaching effectiveness and student learning outcome attainment, the efficiency of training services, and the scalability of the training model to new online courses and programs. These assessment criteria are summarized in Table 1.

The next section of this article addresses organizational assessment as the first data-driven step in designing an effective training program. The following section then describes the follow-up steps of setting priorities and establishing corresponding measures to track outcomes. A specific case example is then presented that demonstrates the application of the described strategies. Following this are implementation results summarized in terms of the four assessment criteria. Finally, conclusions are provided that suggest relevance this work may have for others similarly engaged in training initiatives for online teaching.

ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT

The School of Allied Health and Life Sciences is located within the College of Arts of Sciences of the University of West Florida, a regional comprehensive university. In 2005, the School began planning for the launching of two new online programs: a Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences and a Master of Public Health program. Both programs were to rely on faculty from various departments within the University to develop courses and a set of expert adjuncts local to the regional area to incorporate a strong practitioner-based focus. At the time of the rollout of these programs, formal training for faculty and adjuncts consisted of mini-workshops offered during the weekday in which features of the learning management system were dis-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Measures</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality Enhancement</td>
<td>Faculty and student engagement relative to course and programmatic student learning outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>Faculty and solicited/unsolicited student feedback, peer reviews, and use of program design and course implementation standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketability</td>
<td>Faculty and student feedback regarding course experiences. Faculty and student willingness to promote courses to new students/faculty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Productivity</td>
<td>Impact on teaching effectiveness and student learning outcome attainment. Efficiency of training services. Scalability of training model to new courses/programs.</td>
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</table>
cussed. While these training sessions were open to all faculty in these programs, 80% of the faculty and adjuncts involved in the first set of courses launched were unable to attend due to scheduling conflicts. Faculty unable to attend were given electronic access to technical manuals and copies of handouts distributed at training sessions; however, these faculty subsequently reported low engagement during follow-up. Additionally, initial development efforts utilizing this approach yielded sub-par evaluations of course content since little high-quality content had been added to courses by faculty who struggled with technical features of the learning management system. During this same period, up-and-coming faculty expressed reluctance to even engage in online course development or allow majors within their college to enroll in courses developed through these efforts.

To increase faculty engagement and ensure the launching of high-quality courses leading to high student engagement, the School initiated a self-assessment that was conducted by the School Director and one lead faculty member. The assessment was conducted in 2005-2006 utilizing a variant of the 20-item Client-Centered Care Organizational Assessment instrument (Center for Health Care Training, 2000). At this time the combined score from the self-assessment for training initiatives within the School and UWF as a whole were within 30% compliance. Weaknesses in the training compared to other successful training initiatives in medical education included five general problem areas: (a) minimally learner-centered (Davis, et al., 1999; Dewitt, 2003); (b) minimally based on needs assessment and lacking flexibility and formats for just-in-time training (Gercenshtein, Fogelman, & Yaph, 2002; Wind & Reibstein, 2000); (c) failing to include hands-on problem solving of contextually relevant problems (Davis, 1998; Gercenshtein, Fogelman, & Yaph, 2002; Sachdeva, 2005); (d) failing to include discussion of contextually relevant cases, strategies, and implementations by local leaders or champions (Park, 2004; Weber & Joshi, 2000); and (e) failing to effectively and transparently communicate objective course design and implementation criteria (Leung, 2002).

**TRAINING PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIC PLANNING**

To address the results from the Client-Centered Care Organizational Assessment instrument, the School established new organizational priorities related to policies and procedures, efficiency of training, and intervention protocols. The priority related to policies and procedures was driven by a sub-score of 43% on 7 items regarding systems, protocols, and procedures on the organizational assessment instrument results. The priority related to efficiency of training was driven by a sub-score of 17% on 6 items regarding staff support in providing client/learner-centered training. Finally, the priority related to intervention protocols was developed to proactively install additional protocols to address situations with less than enthusiastic attitudes about assessment, technical problems. Additionally, all priorities were focused on achieving positive outcomes consistent with other pockets of higher education imperatives and training (Cavanaugh, 2001). The priorities are described in this section and additional.

**Priority 1: Policies and Protocols**

The first priority established was related to the development of a comprehensive, policies, and procedures, and protocol-centered training as the basis for a successful School. Initiatives employed to address this priority included:

1. Designing and implementing an online system referred to as eJams driven by monthly two-hour meetings of the School faculty providing solutions, eJams, and engagement-reinforcing strategies in addition to traditional assessment system features (Gercenshtein, 2002).

2. Implementing and testing new online systems. The technological leader/Director of this approach provided staff support with follow-up peer-to-peer discussion (Park, 2004; Weber & Joshi, 2000).

**Organizational Priorities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Associated Initiative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Policies and protocols</td>
<td>eJams (peer faculty training)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficiency of training</td>
<td>Student complaint tracking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention Protocols</td>
<td>Proactive sequenced learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
open to all faculty in these programs in the first set of courses during conflicts. Faculty unable to complete technical manuals and copies of however; these faculty sub-sub-follow-up. Additionally, initial sub-par evaluations of the learning management system had been added to courses by the learning management system. Certain faculty expressed reluctance or allow majors within these efforts.

The launching of high-quality programs, the School initiated a self-paced Director and one lead faculty 2005-2006 utilizing a variant of the state of the art Assessment instrument. At this time the combined scores within the School and UWF Weaknesses in the training of medical education included learner-centered (Davis, et al., 2000) needs assessment and lacking, Gercenshtein, Fogelman, & failed to include hands-on problems (Davis, 1999; Gercenshtein, 2004); (d) failing to include discussions and implementations by local & Joshi, 2000); and (e) failing to site objective course design and

**Strategic Planning**

Center-Centered Care Organizational priorities regarding training, and intervention procedures were driven by a subset protocols, and procedures on the list. The priority related to efficiency of 17% on 6 items regarding staff training. Finally, the priority dropped to proactively install additional protocols to address situations arising from the possibility of faculty with less than enthusiastic attitudes about the implementation of engagement and assessment, technical problems, or sub-optimal student satisfaction. Additionally, all priorities were focused towards administrative support to achieve positive outcomes consistent with strategies successfully utilized in other pockets of higher education implementing new approaches to education and training (Cavanaugh, 2001). The priorities and associated initiatives are described in this section and additionally are briefly summarized in Table 2.

**Priority 1: Policies and Protocols**

The first priority established was to develop University/School communication systems, policies, and protocols to support effective client/learner-centered training as the basis for reinforcing accountability within the School. Initiatives employed to address this priority included:

1. Designing and implementing supplemental roundtable training sessions referred to as eJams driven by needs assessment. These weekly or monthly two-hour meetings consisted of faculty posing questions, peer faculty providing solutions, peers/staff demonstrating, student-tested, engagement-reinforcing strategies, and innovative communication tools in addition to traditional didactic training in the learning management system features (Gercenshtein, Fogelman, & Yapha, 2002).

2. Implementing and testing new instructional strategies by the administrative leader/Director of the School and lead peer faculty first. This approach provided student-tested examples to other faculty with follow-up peer-to-peer training sessions on best practices (Park, 2004; Weber & Joshi, 2000).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2</th>
<th>Organizational Priorities and Associated Initiatives</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Priority</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intervention Protocols</td>
<td>Proactive sequenced learn-work-learn training sessions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Cross-enrolling peer subgroups in similar courses to facilitate additional peer-to-peer discussions and mentorship opportunities (Watson & Groh, 2001).

Priority 2: Efficiency in Training

Next, a priority to increase efficiency in training services by periodic examination of faculty/adjunct flow studies compared to course evaluations and student complaints was established to promote a culture of productivity tied to ongoing quality enhancement. Initiatives employed to address this priority included:

1. Formally tracking student complaints via a Student Complaint Log and analysis of sub-par evaluations of student engagement against faculty/adjunct training attendance.
2. Designing avenues for conducting voluntary and confidential course audits involving evaluation of course design and implementation using transparently communicated, objective, and standardized criteria (Leung, 2002). This feedback was considered in parallel with the quantitative University-mandated student evaluations of courses with special attention paid to suggestions for course changes with potential to improve student satisfaction in courses.
3. Supplementing training schedules with individualized one-on-one tutoring sessions for faculty/adjuncts experiencing high levels of training absenteeism, or for faculty/adjuncts with course audits or Student Complaint Log entries that suggested sub-par course design or implementation methods.

Priority 3: Intervention Protocols

Finally, to address the importance of ongoing quality enhancement tied to course and program marketability, a priority was established to develop both proactive and reactive intervention protocols to reduce training bottlenecks and student complaints. Initiatives employed to address this priority included:

1. Scheduling periodic sequenced training sessions to promote a learn-work-learn model of reinforced skill building (Davis, et al., 1999; Sachdeva, 2005).
2. Intervening during the first two deliveries of courses by assisting with the administration and interpretation of supplemental and confidential mid-semester course evaluations to solicit early student feedback. This approach helped faculty to implement mid-course corrections.
3. Designing avenues for voluntary and confidential peer-based interventions to provide a comprehensive assessment of course design and implementation decision-making student or faculty engagement.

A key component of the new approach was the self-assessment instrument in the Student Evaluation of Course and Services provided on campus to increase the quality online courses and the skill of adjuncts to be fully engaged in that process and measure outcomes to evaluate the effectiveness.

ESTABLISHING AND TRACKING CRITERIA

Four criteria were established for the program. The criteria and the guiding questions are as follows:

1. Quality enhancement – What is the level of student engagement relative to the learning outcomes in the development of the newly-developed program standards of national agencies?
2. Accountability – Are faculty/adjuncts with the program and the quality of the faculty/adjuncts perceive the program as assessed? Are faculty/adjuncts responsible for improvement in course development, response to solicited and unsolicited feedback, and in peer review sessions, as standards set by national agencies?
3. Marketability – What feedback is available regarding overall course satisfaction, student effectiveness, and students willing to promote the program?
4. Productivity – Do the courses deliver the new skills implemented in course evaluations? Are the student attainment and the attainment of students willing to develop additional or new skills achieved in terms of a low turnover rate and high training program scalable for national agencies?
similar courses to facilitate additional mentorship opportunities (Wat-

training services by periodic s compared to course evaluations promote a culture of productivity itives employed to address this ints via a Student Complaint Log of student engagement against e, filling voluntary and confidential of course design and implement- nicated, objective, and standard-fed back was considered in paral-y-mandated student evaluations of paid to suggestions for course t student satisfaction in courses. s with individualized one-on-one ncts experiencing high levels of ty/adjuncts with course audits or it suggested sub-par course design going quality enhancement tied to ly was established to develop both ols to reduce training bottlenecks id to address this priority included: ning sessions to promote a learn-skill building (Davis, et al., 1999; liveries of courses by assisting with n of supplemental and confidential to solicit early student feedback. mplement mid-course corrections. and confidential peer-based intensive assessment of course design and implementation decisions within courses exhibiting sub-optimal student or faculty engagement/satisfaction.

A key component of the new approach to training was the use of a formal self-assessment instrument in the School to identify gaps between training services provided on campus to increase faculty engagement in creating high-quality online courses and the skills actually needed by these faculty and adjuncts to be fully engaged in that process. The criteria established to track and measure outcomes to evaluate this training approach are described next.

**ESTABLISHING AND TRACKING OUTCOME MEASURES**

Four criteria were established for tracking the overall impact of the training program. The criteria and the guiding questions relevant to these criteria were:

1. **Quality enhancement** – What is the level of faculty/adjunct and student engagement relative to course and programmatic student learning outcomes in the developed courses before and after training? What is the overall assessment of the online courses and programs as reflected in University-mandated evaluations? To what extent do the newly-developed programs meet or exceed the accreditation standards of national agencies?

2. **Accountability** – Are faculty/adjuncts satisfied with the training program and the quality of their developed courses? Do faculty/adjuncts perceive the training as learner-centered and needs-assessed? Are faculty/adjuncts willing to (a) engage in self-improvement in course design and implementation decisions in response to solicited and unsolicited student feedback, (b) participate in peer review sessions, and (c) meet and exceed both objective checklist requirements for design and implementation as well as standards set by national accreditation agencies (e.g., CEPH)? Are faculty/adjuncts responsive to training changes resulting from an externally documented Student Complaint Log?

3. **Marketability** – What feedback do faculty/adjuncts and students provide regarding overall course experiences? Are faculty/adjuncts and students willing to promote courses to new students and faculty?

4. **Productivity** – Do the courses consistently attract new and existing students? Do faculty/adjuncts perceive the training services as efficient? Are new skills implemented in courses contributing to teaching effectiveness and the attainment of student learning outcomes? Are faculty/adjuncts willing to develop additional online courses? Are lower operational costs achieved in terms of a low turnover rate in trained faculty/adjuncts? Is the training program scalable for new online courses and programs?
The next section provides a description of the application of these guiding questions to components of the training program. In this context, a specific example of the training and integration plan for the incorporation of one popular online tool often used to increase learner-learner interaction (Second Life) is presented.

**CASE EXAMPLE: USE OF SECOND LIFE TO INCREASE STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND ONLINE COMMUNITY**

A sense of community is an important contributor toward effective learning and student engagement (Osterman, 2000; Royai, 2002). However, community can be more difficult to establish in online courses than in face-to-face courses. One of the innovative communication tools included in faculty training at UWF in 2007-2008 was the use of the virtual world Second Life. Lead faculty in SAHLS and the Department of Computer Science took advanced training in this tool in 2007. In SAHLS, the potential utility of this tool was leveraged through course enhancements that incorporated exploration of Second Life areas related to public health and health sciences. While response was positive and enthusiastic, subsequent follow-up in faculty/adjunct training sessions during 2007 uncovered two common problem areas:

1. Use of older and slower computers caused some problems with the graphical display.
2. Bandwidth issues caused some computer lock-ups.

Faculty/adjuncts were positive about the course enrichment potential of Second Life, but were also significantly concerned that students would experience similar problems resulting in decreased student engagement. To address these concerns, SAHLS passed a resolution to experiment with Second Life for a year as a low-stakes (i.e., low-credit) extra credit activity in several courses to solicit student feedback on preliminary experiences, to develop a set of best practices for faculty/adjuncts to consider, and to then incorporate additional Second Life activities based on those practices.

During the first year of testing within SAHLS, the use of Second Life was offered through an extra credit activity in the form of a scavenger hunt for course-related information in several health science and public health courses. In Fall 2007, approximately 30% of the students participated in these activities. Of those, approximately 50% experienced technical problems related to installation, or had navigational difficulties. For the 50% able to install and explore successfully, feedback was extremely positive; students located and described multiple virtual sites visited that augmented or reinforced learning of course topics.

During this same period, the Computer Science Department at UWF also began beta-testing interaction inside Second Life in one course to increase community, support collaboration between student and faculty engagement. In this class, students studied aspects of virtual self with Second Life through an avatar of their classmates. Students met at the virtual campus inside Second Life and used a snapshot tool to obtain snapshots of their avatars. This activity required that the students use their avatars in the virtual world and share them with others in the virtual world. Students then described their experiences inside the online environment. During the Fall 2007 beta-test of this activity, four groups of four students met weekly and used Second Life to discuss and coordinate activities. This activity was a collaborative tool and demonstrated the group activities in traditional classroom settings. The Second Life group in this offering worked together, whereas those developed by the other groups; this raised discussions about the benefits derived from the collaborative use of Second Life.

![Figure 1. Online students and instructors use Second Life to increase community, support collaboration between student and faculty engagement.](image-url)
of the application of these guidelines. In this context, a specific plan for the incorporation of 
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Contributor toward effective learning; Rovai, 2002). However, combine online courses than in face-to-face 
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student and faculty engagement. In this test, prior to engaging in group work, 
students studied aspects of virtual software teams and familiarized themselves with Second Life through an assignment that asked them to create avatars in the virtual world and to arrange Second Life meetings with a few of their classmates. Students met at the Computer Science building on UWF's virtual campus inside Second Life and were required to use the Second Life snapshot tool to obtain snapshots of themselves with their classmates inside Second Life. This activity required that students become adept at navigating their avatars in the virtual world and use communication mechanisms available in the virtual world. Students then posted those snapshots with descriptions of their experiences inside the online learning management system.

During the Fall 2007 beta-test of this activity with computer science students in an online course, four groups of five members each were formed. One of four groups chose to meet regularly—once or twice a week—inside Second Life to discuss and coordinate activities related to group learning activities. A screenshot of the instructor, and the group that met regularly inside Second Life, is presented in Figure 1. The other three teams chose to discuss and coordinate group activities in traditional chat forums. The artifacts developed by the Second Life group in this offering were not significantly different than those developed by the other groups; thus, this test did not provide quantitative evidence of benefits derived from the use of Second Life.

Figure 1. Online students and instructor discussing a group learning activity inside Second Life.
Faculty observing the students in Second Life noted that the capability for students to customize their appearance, combined with avatar gestures, conveyed personality that enriched discourse generally lacking in asynchronous discussions and synchronous chats. Physical behavior of avatars in groups during communication also provided visual cues that resulted in less chaotic discussion threads than typically attributed to chats with more than two or three participants in which multiple threads of thought often interweave in appearance. From these experiments, SAHLS and Computer Science established a goal for upcoming semesters to increase student engagement in the virtual world of Second Life beyond 25-30%.

The New Media Consortium’s indoctrination area (http://sl.nmc.org/join) is expected to improve the initial Second Life experience for students. This newly constructed indoctrination area has been specifically designed to support educational use within Second Life by streamlining the process for creating avatars and reducing distractions that new users might otherwise encounter through the general populace entry pathway. Both programs in SAHLS and Computer Science will also formally survey student opinions regarding Second Life to further study the impact of virtual worlds on student engagement and group collaboration in online learning environments. The survey data will also be used to supplement faculty/adjunct training sessions in SAHLS with discussions of best practices for using Second Life for these purposes. In terms of the outcome measures outlined earlier in the article, current planning for training with this instructional strategy includes:

1. Quality enhancement – Continue to provide faculty/adjunct training for those enthusiastic about Second Life as an engagement enrichment communication tool and willing to participate in beta-testing in selected courses.

2. Accountability – Develop and implement best practices to increase student engagement and teaching effectiveness while minimizing negative feedback related to technical problems. Conduct additional evaluations to assess the effectiveness of Second Life activities to achieve these goals.

3. Marketability – Publish positive faculty/adjunct and student feedback derived during beta testing as part of incentives to increase student participation. Develop resources to assist students through technical bottlenecks.

4. Productivity – Ensure Second Life enhanced course activities are presented in accordance with best practices to support efficient execution by students and streamlined evaluation of assignments by faculty/adjuncts.

Analysis of areas in which we did not achieve assessment criteria and guiding questions is summarized in Table 3. At this time, it is recommended that future faculty/adjunct training and support focus on low-stakes activities that can be easily accommodating of student, faculty, and adjunct learning environments and technical problems. This approach ensures that all faculty and adjuncts involved in teaching offerings can participate in student development.

**Table 3**

Summary of Assessment Criteria for Faculty in Second Life Learning Environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Criteria</th>
<th>Measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality Enhancement</td>
<td>Level of engagement as reflected by faculty implementation and student participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>Level of satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketability</td>
<td>Impact on course promotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Productivity</td>
<td>Impact on teaching/learning effectiveness and attainment of student learning outcomes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Analysis of areas in which we did not get expected results relative to the assessment criteria and guiding questions used in strategic planning are summarized in Table 3. At this time, it is anticipated that Second Life will continue to be used as low-stakes and/or extra-credit activity in courses to accommodate faculty/adjunct and student concerns regarding graphical display and bandwidth problems. However, the next round of beta-testing, with goals to increase participation and positive learning outcomes, should help to ensure that students choosing to participate in these activities spend the majority of time engaged in course-related activities rather than in logistical or technical problems. This approach will then naturally benefit the productivity of newer faculty and adjuncts incorporating these activities in courses.

RESULTS

Preliminary results from the representative case example provided in the previous section, as well as the successful rollout of the Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences and Master of Public Health programs, indicated that the goals related to the assessment criteria were achieved. Representative post-training feedback from faculty and students is summarized in Table 4.

Student feedback in the first three comments in Table 4 illustrates improved quality enhancement and marketability and emphasizes the importance of highly involved and engaged faculty in online courses. The fourth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Criteria</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Current Status</th>
<th>Strategic Planning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality Enhancement</td>
<td>Level of engagement as reflected by faculty implementation and student participation</td>
<td>Student: Low. Faculty: Low</td>
<td>Continue beta-testing to develop best practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>Level of satisfaction</td>
<td>Faculty training: High. Faculty's perceived impact on course quality: Low to medium</td>
<td>Promote best practices to overcome bottlenecks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketability</td>
<td>Impact on course promotion</td>
<td>Participating Students: Medium to high. Faculty: Low to medium</td>
<td>Design how-to resources leading to faster student success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Productivity</td>
<td>Impact on teaching/learning effectiveness and attainment of student learning outcomes</td>
<td>Students with technical bottlenecks: Very low. Faculty: Medium</td>
<td>Develop and demonstrate scalable activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and fifth comments from faculty in Table 4 emphasize the benefits of accountability and productivity gains derived from assessment-based training. The sixth and seventh comments in Table 4 emphasize the learning benefits derived from learner-learner interaction and learning resources available within Second Life.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I got to learn epidemiology and disease surveillance from the director of our local health department and I got to learn about disease transmission and barriers to health in developing countries from a professor from Zimbabwe.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I enjoyed the traditional class I took, but discussions with my classmates essentially ended when the class ended and the threads were forgotten by the next week. In my online course, discussions can go on for days and weeks.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Even though I am learning in an online environment, I have always felt very engaged in my courses. I think the discussion forums are a big part of that, but I know my instructors also play a big part in helping us engage and helping us get the most out of our courses. I think they have worked hard to develop courses that are challenging, well-planned, and promote learning.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Having never before developed an online class, I heavily depended on the expertise and experience of the SAHS and ATC staff. The faculty training process including the eJams was invaluable to a neophyte like myself in developing the courses because it allowed for group as well as one-on-one interactions. Based on the new technologies available as presented in the faculty trainings, I am constantly adding to/revamping my course content, and will continue to do so.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The upfront preparation is immense for an effective online course...the eJams provide a valuable feedback for not only development but later course editing and improvement geared to the unique on-line environment. What pairs are doing and their reaction to your ideas molds into an effective course improvement.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I have introduced several of my friends to this Second Life application and have received positive feedback on the vivid array of information available at the event site. The eJams have been helpful in teaching online.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The School began its new client-centered 2005-2006 with 6 faculty and adjunct programs. As of 2007-2008, the School (Organizational Assessment instrument, 2000) was within 80% compliance, up from 5% in 2005, with 25 faculty and adjunct teaching 9 different programs. Since 2005, the low faculty engagement and dissatisfaction was less than 5%, including the loss of 20% of absenteeism during all available training periods. Faculty with sub-par student feedback have also been developed one of the original programs as well as others.

**LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS**

Implementation of training thus far to the CEPH-mandated Student Complaints and Student Health program. Goals associated with the improvement of 100% of student complaints and improvements implemented as warranted by decreases in sub-scores from the Client-Centered Development regarding systems, protocols, and processes, 71%, and the sub-scores related to student-centered training improved from 1% to 5%. Although these results indicate some improvement and alternative assessments in faculty feedback evolve from these results, future focus on student learning outcome assessment.

Implications for future research include (a) adopt a formal client-satisfaction survey, expectations, and satisfaction of students; (b) formal departmental faculty and adjunct orientation to teaching online; (c) expand objective peer feedback to include effectiveness; and (d) adapt job evaluations to institutionalize the use...
The School began its new client/learner-centered training program in 2005-2006 with 6 faculty and adjuncts developing 5 courses for 2 new programs. As of 2007-2008, the School’s score on the Client-Centered Care Organizational Assessment instrument (Center for Health Care Training, 2000) was within 80% compliance, up from 30% compliance in 2005-2006, with 25 faculty and adjuncts teaching 32 different online courses in support of 9 different programs. Since 2005, the faculty/adjunct turnover rate due to low faculty engagement and dissatisfaction with online student engagement was less than 5%, including the loss of one faculty member with high levels of absenteeism during all available training opportunities. During this same period, faculty with sub-par student evaluations showed sustained engagement over time following the first launching of their courses and noted improved course evaluations, student engagement, and/or overall improvement in course quality in subsequent offerings. Several faculty/adjuncts have also subsequently developed one or more additional online courses for the original programs as well as other new programs.

**LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

Implementation of training thus far has been driven in large part by the CEPH-mandated Student Complaint Log for the UWF Master of Public Health program. Goals associated with this resource include acknowledgement of 100% of student complaints received with programmatic improvements implemented as warranted by data supporting student complaints. The sub-scores from the Client-Centered Care Organizational Assessment instrument regarding systems, protocols, and procedures improved from 43% to 71%, and the sub-scores related to staff support in providing client/learner-centered training improved from 17% to 50% over a two-year period. Although these results indicate some success, the need for further improvement and alternative assessments is expected as the nature of student and faculty feedback evolves from mechanics of online delivery to increased focus on student learning outcome attainment and teaching effectiveness.

Implications for future research in this area to garner institution-wide support at UWF for the delivery of high-quality online courses and programs include adopting: (a) formal client-satisfaction surveys to determine wants, expectations, and satisfaction of students and faculty; (b) formal intradepartmental faculty and adjunct orientation/training on best practices for teaching online; (c) formal intradepartmental observation of faculty/adjunct training to get more objective peer feedback on training follow-through and effectiveness; and (d) adapting job descriptions and annual performance evaluations to institutionalize the use of assessment-driven training.
CONCLUSIONS

The overriding goal for efforts in the School of Allied Health and Life Sciences at UWF as new courses and online programs were developed was High Quality, with Innovation to Build and Support an Engaged Online Learning Community. With this theme, the School was committed to advocating and employing an open source paradigm in using assessment to drive organizational change and to expand the use of collaborative improvement in innovative instructional methods for both online and traditional face-to-face courses. The School’s model for an engaged community valued faculty, adjuncts, and students equally and emphasized the value of learner-driven training to improve teaching effectiveness and efficiency.

The success of this approach thus far was based in part on the provision of multiple training strategies and intervention protocols, and a move from a traditional hierarchical structure to a team-oriented, process-driven structure that has worked in other domains emphasizing technology adoption without loss of quality and accountability (Weber & Joshi, 2000). Quality enhancement was measured in the School’s programs as high levels of faculty/adjunct and student engagement relevant to course-defined student learning outcomes supported by policies such as lead faculty beta-testing instructional tools identifying best practices as part of training and directing additional faculty and adjuncts to these tools. Accountability to quality in these systems was based on ongoing organizational self-assessment reported annually as part of multiple accreditation efforts related to the programs under development, documenting and addressing faculty contributions to needs assessment planning, and traditional student/administrator assessments of course delivery. Marketability was improved as a direct result of the increased faculty/adjunct satisfaction with the increased breadth of resources for online course development and implementation. The productivity of these faculty members and adjuncts was also improved through student feedback-driven best practices that worked to increase efficiency and streamline use of new instructional techniques to maximize positive student learning outcomes.

With the incorporation of peer-based course engagement assessments, the training program utilized characteristics of the multi-perspective 360-degree feedback model successfully used in business sectors and recently in some health care venues (Sachdeva, 2005; Swain, et al., 2004). As health care organizations similarly move away from solely didactic modes of instruction in the professional development of its workforce to models that embrace practice-based learning and improvement, it is expected that best practices gleaned from these efforts will be applied in other areas. This includes adherence to a similar 4-step, practice-based learning and improvement process promoted in health care for demonstrated positive effects on patient care (Sachdeva, 2005). Our adapted model for faculty/adjunct development is shown in Figure 2.

If these steps can be accomplished leads while retaining a low turnover continue to increase with benefits that institutional level (Cavanaugh, 2001). There is always room for improvement and the most efficiently run training with these protocols. Assessments and strategies to engagement will evolve as needs change for that best assist a diverse population of regarding instructional strategies for teaching.

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School of Allied Health and Life Science programs were developed with the goal of Support an Engaged Online Environment. The School was committed to an approach in using assessment to drive the use of collaborative improvement. Online and traditional face-to-face engaged community valued faculty, assessing the value of learner-driven and efficiency.

As based in part on the provision of protocols, and a move from a traditional, process-driven structure (using technology adoption without & Joshi, 2000). Quality enhancements as high levels of faculty/adjunct role-definition student learning outcomes faculty beta-testing instructional aiding and directing additional faculty to quality in these systems assessment reported annually as to the programs under development contributions to needs assessment scenarios. Assessments of course definition result of the increasedased breadth of resources for online. The productivity of these faculty factors through student feedback-driven efficiency and streamline use of new interactive student learning outcomes.

Course engagement assessments, the multi-perspective 360-degree sickness sectors and recently in some issues, (et al., 2004). As health care organiza
didactic modes of instruction in the case of models that embrace practice-based that best practices gleaned areas. This includes adherence to a continuous improvement process promoted in the patient care (Sachdeva, 2005).

If these steps can be accomplished without disenfranchising faculty or adjuncts while retaining a low turnover rate, course and program quality will continue to increase with benefits that can be shared and supported at an institutional level (Cavanaugh, 2001). There is also a need to recognize that there is always room for improvement and that not all faculty or courses will fit into the most efficiently run training with thoroughly vetted policies, procedures, and protocols. Assessments and strategies to improve faculty and student engagement will evolve as needs change and will require varied techniques that best assist a diverse population of faculty experience and preferences regarding instructional strategies for teaching in online courses and programs.

References


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