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EDTC 814
Project 2 – Higher Education Case Studies

Case Study #1 – Online Learning Director

| Overview | South Run State College (SRSC) is an urban state university which primarily serves the population of the local urban region. <ul><li>As state support declines, SRSC has been forced to raise tuition and fees, making it difficult for potential students from its economically challenged service area to afford.</li><li>SRSC's enrollment is declining, while surrounding institutions have not been impacted as much.</li><li>One area of concern is online courses, which receive poor evaluations</li><li>Faculty are only permitted to teach one online course per semester, per a new Provost rule</li></ul> |
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| Needs Analysis | The needs analysis will identify the gaps between the desired outcome and the present situation. Brown and Green (2016) describe the steps of the needs analysis: <ul><li>Determining the desired change: One contributing factor to the declining enrollment at SRSC is the lack of quality online course offerings. The desired change is to increase the quality of online courses, to broaden the online offerings at SRSC, and increase enrollment</li><li>The primary parties being asked to change are the faculty members who teach online courses.</li><li>To assess the situation, interviews with online faculty should be arranged, along with reviews of best practices in the literature and at other universities</li><li>The voice of the student must also be considered. This can be captured using focus groups of students who have taken online courses</li><li>The Provost is asking for the change, but the change directly affects the faculty. It will be important to get buy-in from both when implementing a plan</li><li>It is important to note that many of the faculty are experienced educators, and may not be receptive to intervention in their teaching techniques by an outside party. The interventions must be collaborative, and developed with respect for the expertise of the faculty member</li><li>Support must be ongoing, not just a professional development seminar</li></ul> |
| Task Analysis | Faculty members who teach online courses must be able to create an effective learning experience for students, including communication and support, feedback and interactive activities. Lewis and Abdul-Hamid |

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| | (2006) studied the practices of exemplary online instructors, and found that in addition to the qualities above, enthusiasm and organization were key factors.<br><br>Another critical factor is assessment. Loafman (2014) suggests that the Quality Matters standards are a good tool for self-evaluation when building an online course. |
| Learner Analysis | • Reisman (2006) notes that faculty comfort with technology is directly related to their age. For example, the primary technology that a professor who is over 50 was exposed to in school is the blackboard. Only those 25 and under were exposed to online learning as children.<br>• Because of this experiential gap, it is important to provide support programs for faculty creating online courses<br>• Other stakeholders in this analysis include the University Senate and the Faculty Union, which would both desire input on any proposed solutions.<br>• Additional stakeholders include the Provost and the Vice President of Finance, who would ultimately approve and fund the plan |
| Goals/Objectives | The goal of the implementation is to increase the quality of online courses at SRSC, to allow expanded online offerings with the result of increasing enrollment. This will be assessed by evaluating courses against a standard quality indicator. Student evaluation of online courses will improve by 15% over the first 3 years of this program.<br><br>Specific objectives:<br>• Develop a training program for all faculty who wish to teach online courses. This program should be offered at various times, and an online option should be included<br>• Hire 2 Instructional Designers, to partner with faculty as the faculty member develops their online course, and to assist the faculty member when problems arise<br>• Adopt the Quality Matters standards as an internal evaluation tool to assess the quality of online courses. Enlist the support of the Institutional Research team to analyze this data<br><br>The costs associated with this project are the salaries of two full-time Instructional Designers. |

Brown, A. and Green, T. D. (2016) *The essentials of instructional design*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Lewis, C. C., & Abdul-hamid, H. (2006). Implementing effective online teaching practices: Voices of exemplary faculty. *Innovative Higher Education, 31*(2), 83-98. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10755-006-9010-z

Loafman, Lucas (01/01/2014). "Going Online: Building Your Business Law Course Using the Quality Matters Rubric". The Journal of legal studies education (0896-5811), 31 (1), p. 21.

Reisman, S. (2006). Experience from the trenches: Toward effective online teaching.*IT Professional Magazine, 8*(5), 64-63. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1109/MITP.2006.105

Case Study #2 – Paul Seymour, Assistant Professor

| Overview | Paul Seymour, PhD is and Assistant Professor at the State University at Chicago, currently in his first semester teaching Molecular Evolution. |
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| | • His approach to this course is collaborative learning, which he observed during his postdoc fellowship at Johns Hopkins. His mentor, Dr. Mary Craxton, used the method in her classes, and Seymour found it intriguing. |
| | • Seymour's students are all junior pre-med students at the university, whose primary focus is to prepare for the MCAT admission exam, and to get good grades. |
| | • He recently surveyed his students to gauge their reaction to the course, and found that they were very unhappy with his performance and the structure of the course. |
| | • Seymour is also hearing other faculty comment on his course format. |
| | • In addition, the department chair has approached Seymour because he is not seeing the grant writing activity that is expected for his position. |
| Needs Analysis | Brown and Green (2016) discussed several aspects of a needs analysis: |
| | • Seymour would like his students to find his course valuable, which is not currently the case. He is also concerned that they will be successful in their studies and in preparation for the MCAT. |
| | • He has already proactively surveyed his students, so reviewing that feedback would be useful in planning an intervention. That review could be supplemented with interviews with Seymour and a few students, to understand their expectations and needs. |
| | • Seymour is a new professor, trying an innovative technique. Possible solutions to this situation include Seymour seeking advice from others who have successfully implemented collaborative learning, such as Dr. Craxton. |
| | • He also must help his students realize that group work is a good preparation for medical school, and for a career in medicine. |
| Task Analysis | Seymour must find a way to make collaborative learning an effective technique in his classroom, or he must revert to traditional teaching. Some components of this task: |
| | • Seymour needs to seek advice from others who have successfully implemented collaborative learning. He can contact Dr. Craxton for resources. Another option is to seek out a Professional Learning Network (PLN) that is devoted to collaborative learning. Such communities can be found on Twitter devoted to many different teaching techniques. By joining a PLN, he can get advice and assistance from professors all over the world (Lalonde, 2012). |
| | • Seymour needs to teach his students how to work in a collaborative environment. Currently his students feel he is a |

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| | passive observer. He must monitor and guide group work in a proactive manner. He must also demonstrate enthusiasm and be more organized (Lewis & Abdul-Hamid, 2006). <br> • Seymour must make his students understand that medicine is practiced in a team setting, and that this learning technique will prepare them for their careers. <br> • Seymour may want to consult with the Instructional Design team at the University, to get ideas for engaging and effective activities for his classroom that go beyond discussion. <br> • Seymour should consider incorporating MCAT-type questions into his course, to increase the student's confidence that they are being adequately prepared for this critical exam. <br> • As Seymour makes these changes, the pressure he is experiencing should be reduced, and he may be better equipped to spend more time writing grants, which will satisfy his chair |
| Learner Analysis | Seymour must improve his skills to effectively implement the collaborative learning technique. <br><br> • The other major stakeholders in this analysis are the students themselves. Almajed, Skinner, Peterson & Winning (2016) studied student perceptions of collaborative learning. They found that there were several key factors, including the mix of students, the facilitator working to ensure participation was balanced, and the facilitator questioning, explaining, and resolving conflicts. <br> • From the results of the survey Seymour administered, the students are not currently satisfied with his course. <br> • At the end of the semester, if Seymour is able to change his approach and explain the advantages of group work, the survey results should improve significantly. |
| Goals/Objectives | The goal of this analysis is to help Paul Seymour improve his implementation of collaborative learning techniques, which will increase his students' satisfaction with his course. <br><br> Specific objectives: <br> • Seymour will contact colleagues to help him understand how to implement collaborative learning effectively <br> • Seymour will contact the university Instructional Design team, to learn about various activities that can enhance student motivation and satisfaction <br> • Seymour will implement some of the techniques discovered above into his Molecular Biology course <br> • Student survey results will improve by 20% by the end of the semester <br> • As the students and Seymour become more effective at participating in collaborative learning, Seymour should be able to |

| | manage his time better, and meet his obligations regarding grant writing |
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| | The interventions described above can all be adopted together, and should have no impact on the university financially. |

Almajed, A. a., Skinner, V. v., Peterson, R. r., & Winning, T. t. (2016). Collaborative Learning: Students' Perspectives on How Learning Happens. Interdisciplinary Journal of Problem-Based Learning, 10(2), 68-84. doi:10.7771/1541-5015.1601

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