

Learning to Teach with Technology:

Needs Analysis

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Institution Description

Greenville State University is an urban, public four-year institution in Hudson County, New Jersey. Its School of Business recently moved to a new building, which is filled with state-of-the-art technology such as interactive smartboards and digital overhead projectors. The campus also includes a trading lab set up as an authentic real-time trading environment. The University has approximately 60 laptops for student use that can be reserved by faculty for in-class projects or borrowed by students for use in the building.

Current Status

Currently, many members of the faculty use the presentation equipment to replace their previous slides on an overhead projector. Some faculty members incorporate videos into their courses. Very few currently use Internet applications to enhance student learning and engage students. Every semester, a faculty workshop is offered to introduce a new application. However, a single, on-site workshop does not develop confidence and expertise in the faculty. Moreover, due to scheduling constraints, many faculty members who are interested in these new applications are not able to attend the workshop. This proposal will augment the in-person workshops with online learning modules, which will present the material again and provide support for faculty.

Desired Outcome

There are two desired outcomes for this initiative. The first is the establishment of an intranet site for all School of Business faculty. This intranet site will be a portal to a series of mini-courses, designed using the existing technology in the classroom to enhance the student

experience. The mini-courses will include a video demonstration of a specific application, step-by-step instructions on how to use the application, and ideas for implementation in the classroom. The applications will include, but not be limited to, YouTube, Kahoot!, word cloud generators, quiz shows such as Jeopardy, Padlet, FlipGrid and free website builders such as Wix. All of these applications are available free on the Internet.

The second outcome is the development of a community of professionals who can support each other and share information about using technology in the classroom. Demonstration and single session training is not sufficient to develop competence and self-efficacy. Continued support is needed for effective implementation of new technology in the classroom (Santovec, 2010). The mini-courses will provide some of this support. The website will also include a portal to have questions answered both by the instructor and by peers. This will be the first step toward developing a community of practice at the School of Business to support the expanded use of technology in courses. Faculty members will be able to learn new techniques while providing other faculty with the benefit of their experiences (Wenger, 2000).

Technology Requirements

The proposed implementation will require the building of a faculty intranet site for this project. In the event that this is not economically feasible, the material could be delivered to the faculty through a Blackboard shell. All other applications involved in the project are freely available on the Internet. Most of the applications can be used by students on their mobile devices, or a laptop cart can be reserved by the faculty member for the specific class session.

Training Requirements

Most faculty members at the School of Business use Blackboard and the Internet in the course of their daily work and lives. An orientation to the new website will be included at the in-

person professional development sessions scheduled during the year. An Internet-based orientation to the new site will also be prepared to be distributed to all faculty members via e-mail. This orientation will reside on the actual website, so the other modules can be explored as well.

Potential Issues and Solutions

The most likely issue is that developing an intranet site associated with the University website may be cost-prohibitive, as it may require the services of professional web designers to meet the University's design standards. If this obstacle is encountered, it would be very easy to set up a Blackboard course that is made available to all School of Business faculty. The mini-courses would have the same content on either platform, as pages linked to the intranet site or modules within Blackboard.

The second issue that could impact this implementation is the need to recruit faculty members to use this portal. One way to combat this is to continue the workshops that have been established, and to initiate monthly brown bag lunch and learn sessions to introduce a new technique and promote the new website.

References

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