

## **Developments in Business Simulation & Experiential Learning, Volume 27, 2000**

### **YOUR CLASS IS IN SESSION, NOW WHAT! THE CHALLENGES OF GOING ON-LINE**

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#### **ABSTRACT**

This presentation will take the form of a “hands-on” workshop designed to assist faculty members who wish to deliver a course on-line. It will offer a model that was used to develop on-line courses and present tips on what worked well and what did not.

#### **INTRODUCTION**

On-line education quickly is moving from fad to mainstream status as a result of accommodating technology and the continuing growth in the adult learning market. A report prepared by Pricewaterhouse-Coopers suggests that software will serve about 50 percent of the total student enrollment in community colleges and about 35 percent in four-year institutions. At Teikyo Post University, which has quickly become the on-line leader in Connecticut, on-line enrollments grew from 75 registrations in 1998 when on-line courses were first offered to over 400 in the 1998/99 academic year, and over 1,000 on-line registrations are projected for the 1999/2000 academic year. In addition, the University now has three complete degree programs on-line with a fourth due on-line in January 2000. The University also offers extensive faculty development seminars and programs to support faculty transition to one-line delivery.

#### **THE ON-LINE EDUCATION REVOLUTION**

About three years ago, a very distinguished college president commented that there would be a “shakeout” in higher education similar to that which had occurred in the corporate and health care sectors. At that time, he clearly believed the shakeout would be related to the

rising costs and the growing “commercialism” of higher education. That shakeout is occurring, however, it is related not directly to financial considerations but rather to technology-supported distance education. An emerging body of literature discussing the merits or lack thereof of on-line education is now taking shape and this is appropriate (Phipps & Merisotis, 1999). Distance education is being viewed not only as a means of increasing access to postsecondary education, but as an opportunity to hasten the overall pace of reform in higher education (Gladieux & Swail, 1999). And, a recent article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (April 9, 1999) noted that “for an industry that barely existed three years ago, the level of activity is dizzying.” On-line education is here to stay, at least to the near and not-so-near future.

#### **GOING ON-LINE**

This presentation will not focus on the arguments and counter-arguments relative to the efficiency, effectiveness or efficacy of on-line instruction. Rather, it will take the form of a workshop wherein I will present “hands-on” information on how to take a class on-line and the challenges therein.

I agreed to teach a course online for several reasons. First, I am intellectually curious and always have been challenged by new developments. Second, I was hired as a consultant to prepare the licensing application for the four on-line degree programs being offered by Teikyo Post University through the Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium. I believed very pragmatically that teaching a course on-line would better prepare me for that task. Third, I believe on-line delivery will

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dominate American high education well into the next millennium and I want to be part of that revolution—but not consumed by it. Finally, I wanted some protection from becoming a pedagogic dinosaur. Once the decision was made, I started my preparation by researching the literature. While I found much editorializing about the advantages and disadvantages of on-line instruction, the literature was sparse in information on “how to” actually organize and deliver an on-line course. This is not surprising, however, since on-line instruction is an emerging field and most of the actual development is still at the collegial level.

More specifically, this presentation will focus on:

- Deciding what course to begin teaching on-line.
- The instructional development process and searching for a model.
- Design principles and content issues.
- Searching for resources and collegial support.
- Developing threaded discussions.
- Encouraging student interaction on-line.
- Encouraging student to student interactions on-line.
- Creating and evaluating virtual teams.
- Monitoring faculty/student interaction.
- Monitoring group discussions, projects, and presentations.
- Evaluating student performance.
- Reflection - What I did wrong.
- Reflection - What I did right.
- Ethical considerations.

This presentation will also include a demonstration of the course I developed for on-line delivery: *Entrepreneurship, Creativity and Innovation*. The course was offered by Teikyo Post University in Waterbury, CT and through the Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium.

### DEVELOPMENT MODEL

While one must start with a totally different mindset in developing an on-line course, some of the general design models and principles overlap. I used a model that I have used previously in developing courses for traditional classroom delivery, which is cyclical in nature with stages as follows:

- Design
- Deliver
- Assess
- Revise

A discussion of this model will focus on design and delivery principles and how these vary or are similar to traditional classroom course development and delivery.

### REFERENCES

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