

**Title of Session:** Faculty Resistance to Online Learning

**Moderator:** Roger Goodson

**Title of File:** 20060323frol

**Date:** March 23, 2006

Room: Faculty Resistance to Online Learning Group

**RogerMG:** Let's start with introductions.

**JulianneP:** I am a respiratory therapist (by trade) and would like to teach respiratory care on a collegiate level. Currently I'm professional development at a hospital. PD is a very "resistant" learning field

**RogerMG:** I am a professor of business and management at Notre Dame de Namur University in Belmont CA.

**GeorgeK:** I am one of Roger's partners at NDN

**JasonB:** already did a little, my name is Jason 28 Charleston WV Masters in Ed Leadership currently teaching middle school health and pe as well as coaching college football at the NCAA D-II level

**JulianneP:** at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, MD

**CherylKe:** I'm a curriculum development specialist at SAS in Cary, NC. I taught mathematics for 16 years and now I design web-based mathematics software, conduct professional development, and design online courses.

**RogerMG:** Cheryl, tell us a bit about your motivation research . . .related to innovation in education. Perhaps how you became interested in the topic to start.

**CherylKe:** Do you all have the "March madness" game going at the same time as the chat <grin>

**JasonB:** without a doubt

**CherylKe:** I became interested in distance education when I was teaching at a community college. It seemed like such a good fit for all the adult learners.

**CherylKe:** I was surprised though by the reaction of faculty to teaching by distance.

**CherylKe:** It seemed that they believed that anything that was not f2f was inferior instructionally.

**JasonB:** I received my masters as an e learner, some of my faculty look down upon it

**JasonB:** the first question asked was, "Is it actually recognized"

**CherylKe:** I really wanted to know what quality education would look like and how would we know it, as teachers, when we saw it.

**JeffC:** that's what Cheryl's here to talk about in part I'm sure, Jason.

**GeorgeK:** I was at a national conference recently and many/most older, traditional faculty heavily discounted the value of on-line degrees

**JeffC:** discounting and discrediting things they don't understand is typical... isn't it?

**JulianneP:** it's difficult to get people to even buy into short online sessions

**CherylKe:** I think it's hard for people that don't know what it is to put a value on it.

**JasonB:** I think that there was resentment from older teachers that received their masters by driving some place, they felt cheated

**RogerMG:** Did you discover any ways in your research, Cheryl, where 'value' might be encouraged regarding OL?

**JasonB:** many of those people felt driving was the hardest part of the program

**JulianneP:** there's not enough out there that's really selling the "value" of online degrees. All the "pop ups" tell how convenient it is. if it's convenient to get a degree, it must not be worth much, huh

**CherylKe:** I found Rogers - Diffusion of Innovations studies to be really helpful in that regard.

**RogerMG:** I am not familiar with that book, but ordered it from Amazon when you mentioned it in your email message to Deos-L

**JeffC:** I think that many educators buy into David Noble's "Digital Diploma Mill" argument from 1998 [http://www.firstmonday.dk/issues/issue3\\_1/noble/](http://www.firstmonday.dk/issues/issue3_1/noble/) ...personally, I think brick and mortar institutions are more diploma mills than anything else.

**LynnePS** joined the room.

**CherylKe:** For people to see the value in something - if it is new to them - they have to see others being successful at doing it.

**RogerMG:** Makes sense/

**BjB:** welcome, Lynne

**LynnePS:** Thanks - sorry I am late

**GeorgeK:** Or the loss of their customers...oops I am not supposed to use that word...students to on-line programs.

**CherylKe:** Rogers says that for people to adopt an innovation they have to believe it is relevant to what they do, easy to do, and be compatible with their current beliefs, They also have to see others being successful - people that they consider their peers.

**RogerMG:** It would seem that in these days of 'assessment madness' that demonstrating 'learning' through online interaction of learners might be one route.

**CherylKe:** That's why you need people from within your own peer group to convince you. An English teacher talking to a math teacher will not have the desired effect.

**RogerMG:** Good point.

**CherylKe:** Roger, would you expand a little on what you mean by "demonstrating "learning" through online interaction of learners?"

**RogerMG:** University campuses sort of are extreme cases of cloistered groups . . .hard to get to people in other depts. and programs.

**JulianneP:** yeah, and some people have the "I'll believe it when I see it" mentality, so the only convincing they'll get is through personal experience. tough when they refuse to do it!

**CherylKe:** True Julianne. That's why mentoring programs work so nicely.

**CherylKe:** There is also a tipping point when most people will accept and adopt an innovation.

**JulianneP:** what do you consider to be well-designed mentoring programs?

**RogerMG:** Demonstrating learning through interaction: one example would be setting up project groups that require research and the production of an actual project of some sort . . .some community based, others more 'academically' based . . .both requiring demonstration of skills.

**GeorgeK:** only if the protégée is willing and a volunteer, not a conscript

**CherylKe:** George, you are right. Many educational settings tend to choose the "weakest" and most reluctant to get on board. When in reality it should be the change agents working first with the most enthusiastic.

**RogerMG:** So, one needs to identify the 'opinion leaders' and 'change agents' right?

**JeffC:** online education will eventually challenge brick and mortar institutions once students truly understand their power. if indeed there was a mechanism in place where students could pick and choose from a variety of courses across university boundaries and build their own degree, vetted by a university, then the universities wouldn't have all the power. that is what they fear... loss of control over the monopoly they enjoy over degrees... not really a diffusion of education (which is a good thing... since online offers the possibility of truly educating more than the elite 5% of the world's population which can now afford high university tuitions).

**CherylKe:** Yes, they are the "evangelizers". Most people will sit back and watch to see what happens with them. They don't identify with those types of early adopters, but they are important to start the ball rolling

**CherylKe:** PS - my comment was in response to Roger's opinion leaders post :+)

**CherylKe:** Don't forget --- distance education isn't just for universities. This sme issue is playing out in a lot of school and public systems worldwide.

**RogerMG:** I view it all as one 'massive' system . . .we just separate it through various social rites of passage.

**KathyGst3:** My high school has distance learning in three different classes.

**GeorgeK:** We (traditional profs) represent an "elite" interest group and are out to protect our interest by stifling entrepreneurial faculty behavior. If you get a chance, read Lachmann's article: "Elite self interest and economic decline in early modern Europe." The article virtually describes what we (entrepreneurial-types) are struggling with.

**CherylKe:** Access to the Internet has opened up a tremendous wealth of resources for teachers to pick and choose from. But many teachers are reluctant to have their students "learn" from the web instead of from them.

**RogerMG:** Why the defensiveness there?

**CherylKe:** It is not what and how they learned.

**CherylKe:** They imitate that which is most familiar.

**KathyGst3:** It's hard to become a teacher and sit back and not feel like you're teaching.

**RogerMG:** So they never really 'learned how to learn'?

**GeorgeK:** There may be a reason for defensiveness of a kind. There is a lot of "undependable" material on the web, along with the good stuff.

**JeffC:** Do they also fear loss of not only control, but pedagogical style? Professors who have traditionally lectured to classes will need to change their approach in the future, since distance ed points out the efficacy of "guide on the side" rather than "sage on the stage?"

**CherylKe:** Kathy and Roger - I don't think it's so much a matter of not feeling like you are teaching as much as it is not having learned how to teach in that way. Some of you may recall cooperative learning when it first hit the classrooms.

**RogerMG:** Interesting thing I came across today was about wikipedia . . .some research by Nature, indicated that Wikipedia had four errors per entry . . .Encyclopedia only had three errors per entry:-)

**RogerMG:** That's Encyclopedia Britannica

**CherylKe:** When cooperative learning first came to the classrooms, teachers were enraged - they didn't want students learning from each other - they might not learn what they were supposed to learn. But as teachers learned the mechanisms for facilitating learning, it became a useful and accepted strategy.

**KathyGst3:** The benefit and problem with wiki is that it is edited by so many people without control.

**CherylKe:** Kathy you are right.

**JeffC:** well... wiki's can also be password protected if you choose... and there is usually a moderator for a page... so some control is possible if you want it. they offer a collaborative style to learning which again is something that most of us haven't been brought up with... which again makes them suspect to a lot of people regarding their validity.

**CherylKe:** Schools and universities would do well (according to my research) to find out where their faculty are - maybe using the Concerns Based Adoption Model survey - before trying to use the shotgun approach to the carrot and stick for motivating faculty to participate in distance education.

**GeorgeK:** Do you believe the recent proposed (?)/actual change concerning financial aid for universities will affect acceptance of on-line?

**JeffC:** Cheryl, do you have your dissertation and/or other findings online?

**CherylKe:** I don't know what that proposed change is - would you elaborate?

**CherylKe:** Jeff - my dissertation can be gotten through ProQuest and I know it is also at the East Carolina University library. I have been checking to see what other avenues are open to people.

**GeorgeK:** There was a limitation on financial aid to universities based on a percentage of programs on-line vs f2f. I understood that the limitation might be/was lifted.

**CherylKe:** Good question. When I conducted my study I took into consideration the mission of the university, the politics, and the minutes from the organizational meetings that proposed distance education.

**KathyGst3:** I am a graduate student in educational technology. I probably wouldn't be able to go to grad school if it weren't for having my classes online. I have three kids and wouldn't be able to afford the babysitting and time away from home.

**CherylKe:** Then I surveyed faculty and administrators and conducted focus groups. I don't think there is any one thing that will encourage faculty to participate - but there is definitely a way to find out what those things are and work to promote the adoption of DE.

**KathyGst3:** Taking part in this discussion is actually one of my assignments--to take part in an online event.

**BjB . o O** ( Kathy is resisting joining Tapped In )

**CherylKe:** Kathy - I took probably 1/2 of my doctoral studies online from ECU. That is how I became convinced that the education I was getting online could be as good as any other f2f class I had.

**KathyGst3:** Online learning is such a great way to let nontraditional students, like me, to get a higher education.

**CherylKe:** I agree.

**KathyGst3:** I may be resistant, for now but after I graduate I'll have more time to do this kind of thing just for the sake of learning and discussing.

**LynnePS:** I am taking a class where we have to design an online class

**GeorgeK:** My wife had to design on-line classes as a part of her masters, too. I got to observe the use of her work with her students. The students loved it.

**RogerMG:** One thing that I have noticed is that some institutions are resistant to requiring ICT literacy of new hires (teachers) So, when the older ones who are more resistant leave, there is a tendency to get more of the same.

**CherylKe:** If you are planning on doing research into motivating faculty to participate in distance education I would recommend that you look at Everett Roger's Diffusion of Innovations and the Concerns Based Adoption Model (CBAM). My study was conducted at East Carolina University. The dissertation is listed in ProQuest as "Institutional Structures that Influence Faculty to Participate In Distance Education". by Cheryl Keeton

**LynnePS:** Thanks Cheryl

**CherylKe:** I think it's important to remember that faculty are not static in their resistance. Faculty change a lot (even though it might not seem so) as time passes, and what was an obstacle for them before to teaching in DE is not the same a year from now.

**JeffC:** there are obviously differences between university and k-12 levels in regards to issues surrounding distance ed. in my local district, the students spend virtually all of their computer time doing online testing, and limited access means they have very little (if any time) for distance ed.

**KathyGst3:** I would think that faculty would be more interested in distance education, at least the younger and/or more technically proficient ones, just knowing that it would increase enrollment for nontraditional students like me.

**CherylKe:** That's true Jeff in a lot of schools. Although many have Internet connectivity (K-12), they do not have the hardware, space, or accessibility for students. A lab for students is just not efficient.

**RogerMG:** Actually, competition for online students appears to be increasing, particularly at the Grad. level.

**CherylKe:** Kathy - age doesn't seem to be a factor - as far as I've been able to determine. Exposure seems to determine some acceptance to DE. I participated in a mathematics & technology class a few years ago and the youngest "new" teachers didn't want to access the Internet - they wanted to teach as they had been taught. Lecture style.

**RogerMG:** That's particularly true in our area. The Financial Times just put out a listing of online MBA students round the world engaged in online learning. (Thanks George.)

**GeorgeK:** What about us? What are our ages, if we dare admit...

**GeorgeK:** I am 56

**RogerMG:** ohhhhh no!

**CherylKe:** There is tremendous competition now for online k-12 classes as well. Florida is mopping up around the country!

**LynnePS:** I am 35

**GeorgeK:** My point is that, I don't believe it is age.

**CherylKe:** Okay George - you started it...I'm 55

**KathyGst3:** I, too, am 35.

**RogerMG:** I'm not say'n

**KathyGst3:** chicken

**BjB** hits the big 60 in May

**RogerMG:** yup.

**RogerMG:** You're such a youngster BJ

**KathyGst3:** That sounds younger every year.

**BjB** winks

**GeorgeK:** Why : ( think of the alternative. : )

**CherylKe:** That was my point too George - I don't think it is either, but it certainly would seem so - at least you'd think it would give us hope that the next generations would grab DE by the horns and take off.

**KathyGst3:** I read an article today that said Harvard was doing online classes for their business program.

**RogerMG:** We are beginning to approach closing time. Last thoughts, aphorisms, learnings, etc.?

**KathyGst3:** If schools want to be competitive, they'll have to keep up and offer the same.

**GeorgeK:** Given that virtually all businesses, even those of modest size, do much of their work on-line, how can you prepare students for the "real" world, if you don't prepare them to operate comfortably and confidently on-line.

**CherylKe:** That's funny Kathy that you would mention that. I was looking at my dissertation this evening in prep for this talk, and there was a quote in there from a faculty member who said (paraphrased) "I don't see Harvard offering classes by distance. When they do it, I'll do it!"

**KathyGst3:** Famous last words!

**CherylKe:** I think student demand is going to drive this DE train and faculty will have to come along.

**CherylKe:** It would be nice if they had the pedagogical training to do this.

**RogerMG:** Cheryl. I would like to thank you for joining us this evening.

**BjB:** and thank you, Roger, for inviting Cheryl!

**CherylKe:** Thank you all - I enjoyed it!

**GeorgeK:** Yes, thank you very much.

**RogerMG:** I will be sure to look up your dissertation on proquest.

**LynnePS:** Thanks so much! I too will look up your dissertation.

**GeorgeK:** good night, all.

**CherylKe:** Thanks Roger - let me know if you have any questions.

**RogerMG:** I will. And, thanks again.

**CherylKe:** Good night