

Title of Session: Faculty Resistance to Online Learning

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Title of File: 20060824frol

Date: August 24, 2006

Room: Faculty Resistance to Online Learning Group

GeorgeK: So, have any of us experienced any resistance lately, or has everyone jumped on the bandwagon?

GeorgeK: Attended a faculty meeting this morning...half the faculty demanded paper versions of things readily available electronically.

RogerMG: perhaps the bandwagon is traveling a bit to fast for many.

DavidWe: That sounds about right for faculty

GeorgeK: or the band is playing the wrong type of music

RogerMG: One of the rationales that keeps reappearing is, "I don't have time . . ." relating to both learning 'how to', as well as 'doing'.

DavidWe . o O (4-letter word, TIME)

GeorgeK: I have heard it asserted that each of us has all the time there is

RogerMG: I would be willing to accept that rationale for some, but when I see others 'spinning their wheels' I have difficulty believing it.

BJB2: the problem is that learning anything does take time. We just have to learn to budget our time wisely and use the time effectively

RogerMG: Right. There is a learning curve.

BJB2: it's true that the more you use it the easier it gets...but it takes time and practice and lots of 'playing around' to become comfortable

GeorgeK: I see (anecdotal evidence only) a relationship between adapting new methods/tools and stable-to-increasing enrollment vs declining enrollment.

RogerMG: One of the things we experience in our University is being pulled in many, many directions at once . . .some are productive directions, whereas others are . . .frankly, a waste of time.

DavidWe . o O (on-line universities)

DavidWe: First 10 years of ed. tech was too many new gadgets that were exciting, but not clearly valuable, IMHO

JeffC agrees with Roger... and that applies to everything (even Tapped In). Most students are here just to complete an assignment... never really get the benefits.

JeffC: plus... as with everything... not many are willing to climb the learning curve, even with hand holding and real time help. It involves changing your routine... and most of us aren't that pliable.

DavidWe wonders if we did intros

BJB2: nope. Thanks for the reminder, David

DavidWe smiles

BJB2: Art teacher in Pennsylvania

DavidWe: I know everyone except George, I believe

JeffC: Helpdesk here, educator 15 years, online for 10.

DavidWe: I'm David Weksler - Tapped In user for almost 9 years and an educational technology support person. I'm in New Jersey, near New York City

GeorgeK: I am from NDNU in Belmont, CA. I am the Business School Dean...but a new one, faculty up through June.

DavidWe: Welcome, George

GeorgeK: Thank you

RogerMG: One of the things that keeps coming up in the literature is that there can be time efficiencies affected by teaching online. How do you folks view that?

DavidWe: I used to live in the East Bay for a couple of years in the mid-80s

DavidWe: Depends, for me, on what you mean by time efficiencies, Roger

BJB2: whose time efficiencies? Professor or students?

GeorgeK: and inefficiencies. I did an on-line course a couple of years ago and shot most of my evening time in discussion groups with students. I need to learn to budget time online as I had learned to do so in the office.

RogerMG: E.g. grading might be one, providing individual feedback might be another, not having to reset the entire course each time it is taught is definitely one.

JeffC: I think it's analogous to buying a new furnace or water heater. Do you go with the less expensive but lower efficiency or do you spend more and take longer for your payback? For me (obviously I'm prejudiced) I prefer to dish out what I think are more "bang for the buck" solutions like TI rather than trying to plug a single piece of (oftentimes very expensive) software into the mix.

RogerMG: Good analogy

JeffC: As with grading, right Roger... some programs are tougher to pick up... and may be less likely to be used... it does come down to a degree with how much support is available to flatten out the curve.

RogerMG: It is hard to 'sell' time efficiencies to teachers because what they 'see' initially is a lot of work (even with support) setting up a course.

GeorgeK: Perhaps if we were to redefine the on-line course as "published" literature, like the interactive literature that goes on with the sci-fi buffs.

RogerMG: From a personal perspective . . . I see efficiencies for me that have accrued over the past four or five years. That took an investment on my behalf . . . one has to be willing and committed to make that sort of investment. How many teachers will do so?

RogerMG: (I like sci fi George:-)

BJB2: good question! How many teachers at any level are willing to invest in personal prof development

JeffC: What platform(s) do you use to teach online Roger?

RogerMG: WebCT as an LMS . . . but used a couple of other ones before that. Also have patched together yahoo groups etc in the early years.

GeorgeK: Look at one of the best known motivation models, Maslow's hierarchy, and ask at what level can the teacher tie in this kind of professional development?

JeffC wonders if Roger has considered teaching here, to expose his teachers to PD groups, K-12 classroom opportunities and lifelong learning after his class is over...

RogerMG: Actually, Merle Mason and I, (Merle is a member of this group) have discussed that and would like to do something with it . . . last year we almost got it done, but lacked support from a Dean.

DavidWe: Do you think there is any "institutional" advice you can garner from Pepperdine, Roger?

RogerMG: George . . .is there a way we might use TI with adjuncts . . .or FTs?

DavidWe: They've been a presence in Tapped In almost since the beginning

RogerMG: Yes. I have seen their logo on the homepage.

GeorgeK: Yes, but some, particularly in MPA area are old school and may not join in

JeffC is more than willing to help Roger (etc.) set up classroom(s), and alumni rooms here.

RogerMG: Thanks!

DavidWe would be happy to help, too

RogerMG: And, thank you too!

RogerMG: How private can rooms here be made?

DavidWe: Lock and key?

JeffC: extremely

DavidWe: Only people allowed in, can get in

JeffC: but I would recommend making your group Public: Moderated than Private... we can talk about that later.

RogerMG: Well, if a group wished to work here and 'let their hair down' is that possible?

DavidWe: No different than meeting in a real place, privately, Roger

JeffC: yes... you could even have a Private group and Collaborate with another (as many as you like).

DavidWe: Except everyone WILL have a transcript of what has been "said"

BJB2 . o O (everyone who is present at a discussion will get a copy of the transcript)

JeffC: which in turn could be forwarded to others.

RogerMG: IC

JeffC: it's up to you to have students keep things to themselves if you wanted things kept private.

DavidWe: What are your "privacy" concerns, Roger?

GeorgeK: Again, though, you are most likely to reach the choir...how do you hook the absent congregation?

DavidWe: Some people you will never get online - they just make their minds up to fight it all the way

DavidWe: I think if colleagues can present what they are doing, that might be a motivation for some

RogerMG: The usual. Someone might wish to discuss administrators by role or name and not necessarily have nice things to say. It would not be good if that were to be available for general circulation.

DavidWe: There needs to be assurances of support and follow-through

BJB2: the Tapped in 'rule of thumb' is that it takes at least three visits before a user is comfortable in the environment

GeorgeK: agreed, but if our topic is FRTOL, we must want to overcome that, right?

DavidWe smiles

JeffC: same issue with blackboard... people could capture chat and redistribute.

DavidWe: One always struggles for something one believes in

RogerMG: Yes . . .Jeff. Can that be avoided.

JeffC: I'm just pointing out that your security issues here are no greater really than the current LMS you are using.

RogerMG: In any case, I can see how we might use this as a way of getting to faculty during their 'off' time . . .if there is such a thing (Back to time again.)

DavidWe agrees that convincing people to spend TIME is always the issue

DavidWe: It's why in K-12 schools you MUST HAVE administrative support of projects that include technology

RogerMG: But . . .if we have something to offer my guess is that some will come.

DavidWe believes it is probably true in higher education as well

RogerMG: clearly we can't sell time efficiencies at the start . . .so what could we sell?

GeorgeK: back to my Maslow comment: can we use the "social" level as the attractor, the bait, to begin to bring faculty along?

JeffC: good suggestion George

RogerMG: OK . . .but what is the 'hook' for the social . . .what are they going to get? Steak knives, good feelings, something they can use?

GeorgeK: I believe that people playing with this great tool for a while will begin to see uses for it in their work lives.

GeorgeK: Nah, buddy chat, discussing relevant theory and gossip related to their fields, etc.

RogerMG: Whenever I go to a f2f thing where I am supposed to get something from it . . .and I don't . . .I don't wanna go back there again.

JeffC: Well... every time I've brought a new class here... educators go nuts and seem to have a lot of fun, once they learn how to chat. It works best having a prof. in a lab and some helpdesk here doing the online support.

RogerMG: that sounds like George's social idea at work . . .the 'fun' part.

JeffC: I strongly suggest against doing anything where individuals have to figure something out by themselves. They need peer support and above... make it a team effort... collaborate from the start.

JeffC: exactly Roger and George...

RogerMG: OK . . .so we provide 'fun' . . .what's next?

JeffC: show them utilitarian value

RogerMG: I'm all for fun, but I also need to have my curiosity, achievement and other aspects of mind taken care of.

GeorgeK: had taciturn students begin to open up when one of them (from another country) shared a variation on how something technical was done...left on their own, conversation wended to a bunch of other topics, learning occurred, albeit not the original lesson planned...

DavidWe: That's the hook, George - it will be something personal

DavidWe . o O (IMHO)

JeffC: In an hour I can show educators hundreds of PD groups here, set them up with a virtual office, get the major commands out of the way and even set up a PD group or K-12 class....

GeorgeK: I suppose this is self-organizing systems in action...maybe we need a 50's education-style flick about it

JeffC echoes George's point with the question: what is more important, fulfilling objectives of original lesson or keeping students motivated and interested to continue?

GeorgeK: Isn't "the teachable moment" what we really live for? I do.

DavidWe smiles

RogerMG: Actually . . .it's true. when I see learning occurring it is a sort of high.

JeffC: I'm with you 100% George... but we're all preaching to the choir. How will you answer an educator whose students have gone off task the first time (here or elsewhere)? Will you draw back on the teachable moment, or filter it somewhat? Some educators will flip if they see students going "off task."

JeffC: And it will raise the affective filter for FROL.

GeorgeK: I believe the learner feels it, too...and may motivate them to seek more such highs by continuing with such lessons...

JeffC: You think 100% of the teachers will react that way George? If not, what %, and what do you want to do with them?

RogerMG: sort of like Maslow's peak experiences George.

GeorgeK: What is off-task? Everything is kind of connected, if you are willing to look for the links.

GeorgeK: Yes to Maslow's peak....if I can't hook everyone, I want to hook all I can.

JeffC: Off task means that if the students (particularly K-12) were brought here to do something (view specific links, open files etc.) and instead posted to Discussion about something else... then they're off task and teachers will bristle.

RogerMG: You are a fisherman George.

JeffC: So... your point being that we should focus on those who we've hooked and let the other fish swim away.

JeffC: I was wondering if George had a magical fishing net to catch everybody.

DavidWe smiles

GeorgeK: Well, maybe because we've taught teachers to be too "J" like (MBTI-wise), I like the "P" approach

JeffC got lost with those acronyms.

GeorgeK: actually, Roger can tell you that I am the Elmer Fudd of fishing

DavidWe appreciates the far-ranging allusions

GeorgeK: Myers-Briggs Type Indicator: J = Judgmental-- make a decision and move on; P = Perceiver- always seeing more opportunities.

JeffC: thanks George

JeffC: I remember taking a course in "Decision Analysis" from Stuart and Hubert Dreyfus at Cal many years ago.

JeffC: You enumerate the choices and assign a value of "pleasure" to each, along with a percentage chance of that occurrence happening.

JeffC: You then did the math, and found where the highest likely pleasurable outcome was, and took that route.

JeffC: I think it was a book entitled Decision Analysis by Raiffa... but it was almost 30 years ago so my memory is a bit sketchy.

GeorgeK: and lost the pleasure of the journey

JeffC: Well... yeah... making any kind of quantitative assessment of pleasure is a bit weird. But the model seemed to work. I showed them an improvement on it which actually worked better than the method they had.

JeffC: Sorry Roger... I was just waxing on about Decision Analysis... something that analyzes possible outcomes in regards to pleasure, and determining the route to take. That is one way to get FROs on board. If you show them that by doing nothing now, they'll be in more pain in three years, and an easier route to something pleasurable, they may change their routine.

RogerMG: In any case. We're running out of time. Summarize please . . . particularly if I missed anything.

JeffC just summarized my stuff... make the teachers see the long term benefits and short term benefits to change and how keeping the status quo will cause them grief in the long run.

DavidWe: Long-term, sustained, online professional development

GeorgeK: Can the K-12 teachers you worry about be offered this kind of venue for students to explore, without the need for a fixed lesson?

DavidWe: Some take advantage of Tapped In and make the most of it

JeffC: Yes George... in fact I'd recommend it for the first time they login.

DavidWe: We had a wonderful presentation the other night by a early elementary teacher from California

JeffC: Then start working your way up to more structured lessons, collaborating with other classes, etc.

GeorgeK: Maybe the venue for guided exploration is the trick? The hook a well-known / liked faculty member.

JeffC: I think the hook isn't so much whether the faculty will take to it, but what the students will do with it.

DavidWe: Thanks Roger. I enjoyed this discussion. I hope it was helpful for you and George

DavidWe: Nice to meet you, George

RogerMG: happy hunting David. Thanks for coming.

JeffC: If you structure something too tightly, you give up the ability for students to take control. This is of course the major issue on all levels of teaching and learning... the balance of control.

JeffC: Thanks for the session Roger.

GeorgeK: Thank you all so much...enjoyed your company much.

JeffC: And the comments George (and everyone).

RogerMG: My pleasure.

RogerMG: Time for dinner. Night all.

BJB2 waves goodnight. Thanks, Roger. See you next month

BJB2 . o O (September 28)