

E-Learning Plan for Faculty Publishing e-Course

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Introduction

Every year there is a new innovation in technology and every year the teacher educator has to figure out how it can be used in the classroom or to aide in them with research. Educators when brought together to achieve similar tasks and goals can become a learning community, which is “a group of people with common interests, values, and/or goals, who actively learn with and from one another” (Bielaczyc & Collins, 1999, p. 5). Feldman (2000) suggests that during and beyond the new millennium, we witnessed a movement from the “age of the individual to the era of community” (p. xiii). This form of participatory learning embodies a culture in which “everyone is engaged in a collective effort of understanding” (Bielaczyc & Collins, 1999, p. 5). It fits in with Vygotsky’s (1978) theory of social constructivism, which recognizes learners’ contributions to and involvement in the learning trajectories of their careers with peers. As a course developer and agent of change, it is hoped that the formulation of an e-learning course for training faculty in the writing and publication process will strike a balance between individual goals and social connectedness between faculty members as they move on to form support peer-groups as an outcome of the intended e-course enrollment and training. This vision for success is the starting point for the desired change to take place.

Vision

How can one predict the future of something that is constantly changing? Technology is constantly moving and changing and so should the people who use it. A vision for the future of technology of education cannot be entirely summed up in the use of technological devices alone; rather, the focus should be on newer developments such as cloud computing, data mining, and virtual connectivity—access anytime, anyplace and anywhere. As educators and their students interact heavily with social media and MOOCs (Pappano, 2012), the conversation will continue about their place and usefulness beyond the

banal provision of educational content. As online learning and teaching continue to support the intellectual growth of learners, similarly there will be growth in the use of learning management systems such as Blackboard and Moodle (Craig, Wozniak, Hyde & Burn, 2009). The factors that will be fundamentally useful in educational technology will continue to be focused on convenience and accessibility (Ellis, 2011; Fichten et al. 2009). Even the current technological era requires faculty to be able to:

- Prepare students for the future;
- Create learning-centered, technology-enriched environments;
- Become facilitators of learning;
- Develop and analyze learning applications which meet curriculum goals;
- Communicate effectively with others around the world;
- Understand and use the Internet and research resources; and
- Plan for the use of future technologies (Anderson, 2002).

However, there is one item that could be added to the list and that is informal learning for faculty which contributes to their personal and professional development. Technology is the perfect vehicle for enhancing faculty professional development and learning—especially when it aides in the understanding of the elements of research and the process of publication and for expanding the research agenda of any university. A librarian and course developer at the Rosen Morey Library is cognizant of the need of faculty to increase their research and publication profile for promotional exercises, for government consultancy opportunities, and for problem-solving issues of national concern.

The intent of this e-course will be to support faculty in continued development of their maximum intellectual potential and additional skill-building of their research and publication skills. As community of

professionals who promote lifelong learning, the Rosen Morey Librarian and course developer believes that faculty should be assessed and addressed continually (Anderson, 2002). Finally, this course is designed for faculty; however, any staff who would like to participate will be invited to enroll. The course will not cover how to design a study, how to analyze results, how to choose the most appropriate research instrument, or how to write up results. Some guidance will be given on how to locate research instruments. Further details about the e-course will be discussed in the e-learning plan.

E-Learning Plan

According to Dr. Larry Anderson and former graduate students at the University of Mississippi (2002), technology planning is an important activity that provides directions for assisting users. It helps users understand clearly where they are now and imagine where they want to be (p. 9).

The most common technique used to formalize technology planning is the creation of a document. A technology planning document is to technology planning as a road map or a navigational chart is to a journey but the planning document is neither the journey nor the adventure. It is a device that helps explain the various points of interest and destinations to travelers involved in the process of realizing their dreams. The purpose of technology planning is not just to produce a document, but to produce continuous action that creates and maintains a technology-rich educational environment. The plan (noun) is a clear, written description of the plan (verb) that is put into action by members of the community (Anderson, 2002, p. 9).

The e-Learning plan is critical for the course developer to assist with task analysis and for determining if instruction and the use of technology is the best option for achieving the desired instructional design.

Strategy

The strategy for the e-learning plan similar to the technology plan for the faculty publication e-course is as follows. The objective of the course will be to “demystify” the process of researching. It will also serve to guide faculty with the writing process and submission of manuscript products to a peer-reviewed journal. It is anticipated that at the completion of the e-course, participants will have a better understanding of the array of journals in their discipline and exposure to the requirements for submission to their preference journal(s). Another target for the course developer is to assist faculty members in improving their APA skills (or other style guides) and to have solved any basic problems they may experience with the research and writing process. While having access to resources are critical, it is not the exclusive requirement for the achievement of the goal of creating this course. The course developer intends to follow ten principles to achieve results as recommended by William Cohen. Cohen (2004) suggests the following principles of strategy:

1. Commit fully to a define objective.
2. Seize the initiative, and keep it.
3. Economize to mass your resources.
4. Use strategic positioning.
5. Do the unexpected.
6. Keep things simple.
7. Prepare multiple, simultaneous alternatives.
8. Take the indirect route to your objective
9. Practice timing and sequencing.

10. Exploit your success (Cohen, 2004, p. 15-16).

Leadership skills needed

The course designer realizes that strong leadership is needed to achieve any goal or endeavor related to engaging and training the faculty who interact in the research process and research activities with the Rosen Morey Library. James MacGregor Burns (1978) emphasizes that leadership is not just the province of people at the top—leadership can occur at all levels and by any individual within an institution. Leadership he professes occurs in two ways—either transformationally or transactionally. Transformational leaders do more with colleagues than just set up simple exchanges or agreements. They behave in ways to achieve superior results by employing one or more of the four components of transformational leadership (Bass & Riggio, 2005, p. 5). Transformational leadership is just as important in the education sector as it is in any other setting. On the other hand, transactional leadership can service the “structure of relationships and readiness that is already in place, whereas transformational leadership adds to the structure and readiness by helping followers transcend their own immediate self-interests and by increasing their awareness of the larger issues” (Bass & Riggio, 2005, p. 73). Both leadership styles will be useful in this instructional endeavor.

Neumann (1992) pointed out that faculty expects and calls for transformational leadership to deal with the pressures of their academic commitments. Most thought leaders in educational technology are in agreement that “systems thinking” is also an important strategy for promoting shared vision as a framework for addressing problems and opportunities (Senge, 2006). As a course developer and instructional technology designer, acquiring certain leadership skills are necessary if this e-course is to be successful. All academics in the region and internationally require evidence that the person presenting to them is an expert on the subject matter. Therefore, the leadership focus and values that will be important for the

course developer will be to challenge the process (by taking risks, challenging conventions and ignoring rules); inspiring a shared vision among team members (rather than dictating direction), the course developer should also appeal to team members, and infect them with her passion for the project's success.

Enabling others to act will also be a means to share information and empower the team to set and achieve cooperative goals—this creates an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect and will enable the team to perform to their highest potential. As leader, the course developer should model the way, as a leader is always “a part” not “apart” from the group. A leader's power exists not because of her role, but because power is granted by those who follow. Finally, a leader must reward individuals that achieve established goals—so trainers will be compensated and participants will receive a completion certificate and letter will be added to their personnel file.

Organizational Issues

Lewin, a pioneer of social, organizational, and applied psychology, found that in any situation there are both driving and restraining forces to change. Driving forces push or initiate change and sustain it over time. Any efforts to facilitate training combined with managerial encouragement, incentives, collaborative and/or competitive work group activities, may “facilitate change and improve job performance” (Moskowitz, 2005, p. 4). The organizational issues that need to be considered which can become a counterbalance to positive efforts are peer and/or management apathy, hostility, outdated technology, lack of funding, lack of support and encouragement, and/or poor equipment maintenance—these can undo any change in knowledge, skill, attitude, and behavior that the e-course training might produce. Even limited or no opportunities to utilize newly acquired skills can be a restraining organizational issue. Therefore, if organizational issues are not addressed they can prevent the course developer from reaching her goal

(Morrison, Ross and Kemp, 2006, p. 91-92). According to Gupta (2007), a few pre-requisites are crucial to successful completion of task analysis this e-project or initiative:

- Support from senior management or senior officials
- Availability of both human and monetary resources
- A stable environment (It is difficult to get people interested in upgrading during downsizing or takeovers, furthermore, their jobs and tasks may be changing)
- Open communication about why the training is important and how it will impact the participants (Gupta, 2007, p. 108).

Assessment

The course developer will create a web-based survey to be administered to faculty using Survey Monkey to give faculty, instructors, and graduate assistants—the opportunity to indicate the level at which they need guidance or support in research writing and publication. Completion of the survey will also be encouraged through campus mail. Brown and Green (2011) state that “an important formative evaluation activity is to use sustained communication between the course developer and the participant(s) during the entire needs analysis process” (p. 52). This formative evaluation activity should be combined with the summative evaluation that comes at the end of instruction. Data gathered should be shared with participants for accuracy suggests Brown and Green (2011, p. 52).

Skill Development and Marketing

According to Jonassen, Hannum & Tessmer (1998), task analysis is a “process of analyzing and articulating the kind of learning that you expect the learners to know how to perform” (p. 3). So, the first area where further training or exposure is needed by the course developer—is familiarity with the grant

application process. Another focus for the course developer will be to devise a marketing campaign for the e-course by liaising with the Marketing/Communications Department to promote the workshop to faculty.

The course developer intends to read and conduct research to fill knowledge gaps.

E-Learning Planning Team

The technology planning team will comprise the course developer (leader), a grant writer/development officer, planning officer, other academic librarians and a representative from the research or writing department. Consideration will be given to partnering with a representative from the Inter-American Development Bank who funds research projects using college/university faculty to conduct them.

Course Design

This Continuing Education course is designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of:

- Writing for academic and scholarly journals – challenges and how to overcome the most common causes of manuscripts being rejected;
- The process of generating research ideas appropriate for publication;
- The process of matching a manuscript with the most appropriate journal in the discipline and the importance of impact factors;
- The process of conducting a literature review and locating research resources (using academic databases);
- Techniques and tools needed to write in a scholarly or academic style;
- A frame work or timeline for maintaining momentum in research and writing for publication;

- The editorial process: submission protocol, types of peer review, steps in the publication process (copyediting, layout, etc.);
- Using APA and other style guides and citation builders programs; and
- Proving your project is worthy and the foolproof grant template (BONUS).

Again, the course will not cover how to design a study, how to analyze results, how to select the most appropriate research instrument or how to write up results. It will also be extended to staff members at the institution. Zemke and Zemke (1995) as discussed in Anderson (2002) present several useful guidelines for effective curriculum design for adult learners and can also impact technology planning. The guidelines are as follows:

- 1) The learning experience should be problem-centered and relevant to the learner's personal goals;
- 2) Pre-program assessment—i.e. assessment of the learners' entry level knowledge and understanding—is important;
- 3) The learning design should promote the integration of new information with what the learner already knows;
- 4) Curriculum design should where possible, take into account various learning styles; and
- 5) Curriculum design should include "transfer strategies" for ensuring that new knowledge or skills are transferred effectively back to the workplace (Anderson, 2002, p. 32).

There will be four instructors—two at each session and rotated every two weeks. This leaves room for the grading of assignments and limits overworking of facilitators. These instructors will comprise of Librarian trainers and a Staff Writer/English Professor.

Content and Methodology

The course will be fourteen (14) contact hours spread over nine weeks. This works out to be an hour of instruction inclusive of class activity plus thirty minutes for question and answers. It is anticipated that the group will adopt a new attitude regarding academic writing and will eventually form as an outcome of the instruction—a peer-reference group. For participants to successfully complete the e-course there has to be 100% attendance and 100% completion of all assignments/homework (which will be closely tied to class preparation for prior sessions). In order to keep a record of attendance, a tracking mechanism will be devised.

Hardware/Software

The hardware and software needed for course development for a minimum of 15 faculty participants and maximum of 20 by the course developer will include:

- A technology lab or internet café that can accommodate at least 25 persons (facilities);
- 25 desktop computers equipped with Microsoft Office Suite (especially for PowerPoint);
- Internet connectivity and Wi-Fi accessibility for smart phones;
- Learning Management System (LMS): Moodle
- Audio visual support (LCD projector and laser pointer);
- Academic Databases; and
- Organization of instructional materials and modules.

Funding Proposal

Vision value

The value of the vision for the development and implementation of this e-course will point to who we want to be recognized as an organization, what do we value most, and the direction in which we are

headed. The only factors that can inhibit the achievement of this vision are lack of buy-in from faculty, lack of resources and lack of funding (Hamel & Prahalad, 1993). The achievement of this vision is part of the overall strategy of the organization.

Justification

The course designer has been approached by numerous faculty members for assistance and advice on many aspects of the research process. Even an interview conducted with the editor for a local research publication also brought to light that articles submitted needed considerable polishing before they could be published. Hence, the idea for an e-course on the research publication process for faculty members was born. Research output—papers published in peer-reviewed, scholarly journals by faculty—as the editor remarked, “Research articles are not at the level they should be”. It is hoped that the offering of an e-course will help improve rates of submission and acceptance of research publications by faculty who participate in the professional development course. A meeting will be held with Senior Management to convince them of the strategic significance of investing in this program and the increased output that could be expected from faculty who effectively participate and use the skills derived from the e-course.

Benefit to stakeholders

Even beyond the achievement of personal and professional goals of faculty should be the desire to address through research efforts—solutions to areas of national development. The course developer also recognizes the importance of technology as a tool for teaching and learning that when fully embraced provides a competitive educational environment (Anderson, 2002). Operating in an archipelago has its limitations as one does not have physical access to all faculty members which helped to mobilize the conception of the idea of an e-learning course for faculty who want to publish research in the local as well as branch campuses. The use of online platforms such as Moodle as a space for teaching and learning in

higher education is a rapidly growing area and one that is useful for faculty development at the university (Allen & Seaman, 2011; Parry, 2010). This e-course will improve the research capabilities of faculty by filling gaps in knowledge and skills; it should also produced income for the institution from the registration fees which is \$50.00.

Locate funding source

This e-Learning plan recognizes the need to acquire adequate funds to make this technology plan work (Anderson, 2002). A major effort must be taken to ensure that all sources of funding are explored—the institution’s budget for research, government grants and subsidies as well as support from local businesses. The institution will be formally approached for concessions to use their facilities and resources for the development of their faculty members and if excess funding is available then those funds can be ear-marked for upgrading the technology. Based on the needs assessment conducted and the commitment from governmental and business partners for a grant valued at \$2,000, this e-course can be offered and implemented in the next academic year once approval has been granted from Senior Management.

Conclusion

Upon implementation, the course developer will assess and evaluate the success of the plan and the e-course by creating a questionnaire that will be distributed to evaluate the following criteria at the end of the e-course:

- Course instructors
- Facilities and Ergonomics
- Content
- Structure of the course

- Tech Support
- Handouts/Workbook

Evaluation of those elements mentioned above (combined with the formative evaluation activity discussed earlier)—are necessary for improvements and adjustments to be made to the course. Assessment and evaluation as measurement tools will help the course developer to ensure that the dollars were wisely invested.

Proposed Budget

Line Item	Requested Operating Budget	Purchases/Receivables	Subtotals	Explanation
Supplies (Stapler, staple pins, hole puncher, pens, pencils, folders)	\$300.00	\$225.00	\$225.00	Vendor was John Bull—they provided a 25% discount.
Certificates	\$125.00	\$100.00	\$100.00	Only 20 certificates were needed based on registration
Photocopying Fees	\$12.50 for 20 workbooks = \$250.00	\$250	\$250.00	Workbooks and handouts for sessions
<i>Marketing Costs:</i> Web Ads Promotional Materials—flyers,	\$50.00	\$25.00	\$25.00	50% discount given—no charge for labor.
Stipend for trainers	\$100.00 per trainer		\$400.00	4 trainers
Facilities Rental	\$50.00	\$25.00	\$25.00	(50% discount given)
Resources: Books and Articles used by facilitators	-	donation	\$0.00	(APA manuals, etc.) and fees incurred from journal articles ordered
Total costs			\$1025.00	The difference retained from the grant will be rolled over if the course is offered again.
Profit		\$1000.00		(Registration fees from derived from participants—will contribute to the institution making a profit of \$1000.00.

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