Higher Education Case Studies

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**EDTC 814 Adv. Effective Models E-Learning**

**Case Study #1-Director of Online Learning**

| SECTIONS | CRITERIA |
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| **Overview** | **Scenario:** This is a higher education case study that takes place at South Range State College (SRSC), an urban state university. The campus has an enrollment of 6,500 undergraduate students and 2,000 graduate students. The newly hired Director of Online Learning is the person who is creating, submitting and writing the case study for the Provist of the university. The Provist wants an increase in the number of online courses to increase the enrollment. The Provist is thinking about hiring an outside company to deliver all online courses.<br>**Current Situation:** SRSC is facing the following issues:<br>• Years of financial difficulty<br>• Decrease of the funds from the state<br>• Decrease in enrollment of undergraduate and graduate students<br>• Increase in tuition and fees<br>• Few online courses offered to undergraduate and graduate students<br>• Poor evaluations of the offered online courses<br>• Lack of faculty members to create and facilitate online course<br>• Faculty members that do create have very little experience in instructional design of online course<br>• Only two assistances to help faculty troubleshoot LMS; lack of support from Office of Online Learning<br>With all these issues at hand, the Provist requires that the university maintains its' mission which is the improvement of the educational, intellectual, cultural, social-economic, physical environment within the urban community and beyond. |
| **Needs Analysis** | The Director of Online Learning needs to work toward the main goal of increasing the revenue brought in to the university. This leads to another objective which would be to increase student enrollment by restructuring or reworking the instructional design of the online courses to meet the needs of the students and increase the online course selection to entice students to enroll in online courses. The available online courses should address the needs of the students. Also, to increase the number of available online courses. This request has come from the Provist. The need is to change is in the way online courses are perceived by undergraduate and graduate students. The online courses have to be redesigned in order to maintain enrollment. In order for the design structure to change and be implemented, faculty and IT personnel need additional training. Once the enrollment and revenue increases, there needs to be another analysis for justification of hiring additional staff. The Morrison, Ross, and Kemp needs assessment model fits the scenario for this case study (Brown & Green, 2016 p. 49-50). The fours functions: |

(1) problems affecting performance; (2) critical need identification; (3) set priorities for intervention selection; and (4) baseline data to assess instructional effectiveness. These functions are broken down into phases which are:

**Planning:** This important phase is knowing your audience—the characteristics, what makes them tick. The type of data collected can come from focus groups, along with anonymous surveys to students. Questionnaires can be a valuable data collection tool.

**Collecting of data:** This phase details the data groupings, how instruments will be given out and the information collected back. A sample size for one type of focus are undergraduate and graduate students that have participated in online course, feedback on the content, flow, technical issues, and discussions, interactions with professor and colleagues, etc. The course has to cater to the user in order to be successful and increase the enrollment. Another focus group are the faculty, and this is an important group because they administer and monitor the activities of the course. Their feedback on the administration perspective is helpful in instructional design of the course, along with technical issues. Stakeholders and community members can participant in a short survey which would bring in the social perspective, the image from the outside of the university. A general questionnaire to incoming students about their choices and course load would be help in the makeup of the student body. In addition, research of other comparable colleges that have successful online courses would increase knowledge and understand. This can then be applied within the data analysis section and aid in the possible coding and solutions.

**Data Analysis:** After the data has been collected, it needs to be analyzed and place in categories. This is the where the needs are truly identified and justified. For SRSC, the data hopefully will reflect that there needs to be major changes in the instructional design of the online courses, training for faculty and IT support of the online courses that are relevant to the future students.

**Final Report**: There are four parts the final report should cover. The parts are summarization of purpose, summary of process, results summary, and recommendations based on collected data. This report will be the driving force in constituting the findings in an effort to help the university get back on track with a show of increased student enrollment that will bring in the needed revenue, along with an upswing in faculty morale. The Director of Online Learning will submit possible solutions from the data collected. A comparison with other colleges with the same demographics should be undertaken and seeks similarities, differences and possible solutions.

**Possible Solutions/Outcomes:**
- Increase faculty and IT training on online course components
- Evaluate infrastructure of existing/additional online courses

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| | • Establish training program to train the faculty on instructional design of online courses<br>• Add incentives to faculty to implement online course and increase enrollment in their specific online course<br>• Expand the online course offerings<br>• Use social media (Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.) to publicize new online courses<br>• Create advertising campaign to announce new courses (need to get the word out to the public)<br>• Visit local high schools– "college fairs" |
| **Task Analysis** | The following tasks are:<br>• Additional training for faculty on instructional design, implementation and assessment for each online course by outside training company which also provides online support<br>• Provide staff with additional resources<br>• Additional training for IT staff to support online courses and faculty<br>• Hands-on training/test pilot of an online course from beginning to end (learning by doing)<br>• Role play as a student in a faculty created online course and objectively critique the elements<br>• Create mentor groups to help in advising on the course design |
| **Learner Analysis** | The audience are the undergraduate and graduate students. Other stakeholders are the faculty (including IT department), and the Provist. To gauge the student's current levels, I would utilize a combination of two models: Dick, Cary, and Cary (2011) and Bates (2106) Together these models indicate a strong linkage in the understanding of the online user-the audience. These models will help in the: analysis of students online learning attitude, prior knowledge, knowledge of use of technology skills, previous experience with LMS, educational and cultural background, demographics, and learning styles. |
| **Goals/Objectives** | **Goal:** To provide staff (faculty and IT) with necessary training to utilize the instructional design elements to create effective online course(s).<br>**Objectives:** The staff will be able to:<br>• Design an online course which contains all the elements that were demonstrated by training session<br>• Analyze collected data from the university's LMS to determine growth and success of the online course<br>• Summarize student success rate with online course<br>• Modify the online course from the feedback by the students<br>There will be additional costs to bring in professional development team to facilitate the learning for the faculty and IT department. The future benefits to the university in the long run with successful and increasing number of added online course and enrollment will out weight the costs and satisfy all stakeholders. |

**Case Study #2-Paul Seymour, Assistant Professor: A Dilemma Case in Teaching**

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| **Overview** | **Scenario:** This is a higher education study that takes place at the State University of Chicago revolving around Paul Seymour-newly hired Assistant Professor. Additional people are: Dr. Mary Craxton-his mentor; Professor David Montague-University's Chairman; and Seymour's class of 40 juniors. <br> **Current Situation:** Professor Seymour loves teaching, earned high credentials, and was very anxious and excited to start teaching in his classroom and utilize what he had observed, learned and participated in during his postdoc with Dr. Craxton at John Hopkins University. The new method is collaborative learning. This is new to the students at the university, but inspired by Dr. Craxton, he infused collaborative learning into his course, Molecular Evolution. His class makeup consists of juniors looking ahead to MCATS and used to the traditional style teaching. Dr. Seymour met resistant at the very start of his course. Five weeks later, students were still unhappy and started complaining to other faculty members. The chairman heard but was more concerned on why Dr. Seymour was not writing grants. Dr. Seymour is depressed. |
| **Needs Analysis** | A needs analysis is warranted of the Dr. Seymour's methodology in the Molecular Evolution course and what actions can be taken in order to come up helpful solution. Brown & Green (2016) states that a needs analysis has a certain purpose, which is to understand that change is necessary to help improve performance (p. 44). Dr. Seymour, a brilliant professor, performance style needs direction and change to better mix with the university's image and to deliver student academics in a positive manner. The first priority is to determine what the correct method of instruction would be to get the required results and the second priority is for student satisfaction and maximize learning. <br> Meeting the change and goals, Brown & Green (2016) illustrated Robert Mager's model for performance analysis (p. 48). Mager's needs analysis addresses this issue, it is the best model that firs Dr. Seymour's dilemma. In order to facilitate quicker and save money, the university could request that a faculty mentor or the department chair to conduct this performance assessment following the steps laid out in the Mager Model (p. 48). Otherwise, hire an outside instructional designer. Either way this approach will follow certain steps which are: <br> 1. Describe performance discrepancy <br> 2. Determine if discrepancy is important or not <br> 3. Discrepancy is determined important---is it a skill deficiency or performance issue? <br> 4. If it is a skill deficiency, assign formal training to include practice and feedback, Dr. Craxton could be a resource/trainer/mentor <br> 5. If is not a skill deficiency, need to determine if there is performance punishment, non-performance rewarding, |

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| | performance matters, and/or obstacle. Obstacles have to be removed in order to move forward. <br> 6. Questions remain should there be instituted a job change or a simpler method to facilitating the content of the course? Could the course be setup that infuses both the traditional and collaborative method, the best of both for Dr. Seymour? Or just more additional training which is actual in the classroom setting? <br> 7. If there is not a viable solution imposed for Dr. Seymour, then does this warrant a job change, transfer or facilitating a different online course at the university? <br> More information should be gathered in order to determine the outcome of this course and Dr. Seymour's performance. A survey should be administered to his students. From there the responses should be coded and a select group (4-5 students) should be interviewed without Dr. Seymour being present, in order to gather more detailed data about the student's responses and reactions to the course. This is very important data with relevance to the needs analysis. A survey given to the faculty members to gauge the different structures and comfort levels of online delivery of courses. Dr. Seymour should be taking some corrective measures on his own by contacting Dr. Craxton, for advice, researching and reading up on collaborative learning, e-Learning designs and reaching out to professionals who have used this method. <br> **Possible Outcomes:** <br> • Additional training (collaborative, e-learning) for Dr. Seymour <br> • Roundtable discussion (online or in person) with other professors that have experience in the field <br> • Course becomes a blended learning model with traditional and nontraditional elements <br> • Dr. Seymour needs to introduce collaborative learning at very beginning for the course, have student's role play <br> • Dr. Seymour transfers to teaching another course which is does not involve collaborative learning (undergraduate) |
| **Task Analysis** | As state by Brown & Green (2016): "Task analysis is a critical component in the instructional design process because it provides important information about the content and/or tasks that will form…" (p. 61). The following tasks are: <br> • If data collected concludes that Dr. Seymour will continue with his course in the collaborative learning environment, he should: <br>     o Engage in additional training and assessment of his classroom instruction methods <br>     o Collaborate with Dr. Craxton and other experts in the field <br>     o Continue researching and exploring more resources <br>     o Reach out to faculty and staff for feedback <br>     o Communicate more with his students <br>     o Role play with the students the expectations of collaborative learning in the very first in class meeting |

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| | • If data collected recommends that Dr. Seymour will not continue with his course in the collaborative learning environment, then it is recommended that Dr. Seymour should:<br>    ○ Redesign his course to a Blended Learning model, traditional and non-traditional<br>    ○ Receive additional training on collaborative learning and maybe get another chance with an undergraduate online course after a redesign and approval from faculty |
| **Learner Analysis** | The audience is Paul Seymour. Other stakeholders for this are the faculty, the chairman, and 40 juniors. Also needed is an understanding of the student's current levels of learning. The Dick, Cary, and Cary (2011) model bests suits this situation (p.63). This model is appropriate to the understanding of the user which will be taking the online course, in turn the audience. This model will help in the analysis of students' online learning attitude, prior knowledge, knowledge of use of technology skills, previous experience with LMS, educational and cultural background, demographics, and learning styles (p. 63). This would help Dr. Seymour identify his students and understanding their skill set. |
| **Goals/Objectives** | **Goal:** To provide optimal teaching and learning environment for students in the course of Molecular Evolution.<br>**Objectives:**<br>• Evaluate instructional techniques by analyzing the data collected from the performance analysis<br>• Utilize best practice methods including different resources, research, expert advice (including Dr. Craxton)<br>• Establish clear communications between instructor and students, allow for student feedback throughout the course<br>This goal along with the objectives set forth should permeate the different structures of online learning and hence more in a positive direction for all parties involved. With these objectives the foreseen changes should bring about better performance reviews for Dr. Seymour and the online Molecular Revolution course continues to attract students. Students will recognize the advantages of collaborative learning and procure the benefits of collaborative learning and content knowledge. This success can ignite the collaborative learning advantage for the university, bring in additional revenue and reinforce the positive image in the higher education institution field. The cost is minimal to the university such as consulting fees with most of the cost absorbed in the daily functioning of the university, Time might be the one factor which involves the collection, and analysis of data. Overall the benefits outweigh the costs, once Dr. Seymour's revised course is up and running, he will have more time to write grants which would please Professor David Montague and the university. The stakeholders would also be satisfied with the benefits, positive image, increase enrollment, revenues up and additional online courses for student selection. |

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