

Faculty Preparation:

Exploring effective strategies for preparing faculty to teach in distributed environments

The Distributed Learning team within the Applied Learning and Technologies Institute at Arizona State University, is responsible for preparing ASU faculty to teach online. This is a difficult challenge and many different approaches have been considered and utilized to fulfill that mission. A new ASU initiative is being created that will make this effort even more important. Part of the vision to help ASU become a New American University is to increase enrollment to meet the high demand for higher education that exists in the Phoenix area and beyond. The goal is to reach 100,000 new enrollments above and beyond the students that ASU already serves by the year 2012. Because of space constraints on all of the ASU campuses, this growth will need to take place without using the taxed physical university infrastructure. This will require an explosion of online course, certificate, and degree program offerings. It will also necessitate a faculty prepared to deliver these courses. This bibliography makes an effort to collect and expound on the faculty preparation and training methods that have been implemented at other institutions. This will help our Distributed Learning team create a comprehensive training program that will meet all the needs of ASU faculty as they prepare to teach online.

Armstrong, R. D. (1999). An investigation of how faculty learn to teach at a distance with technology: Their strategies for solving the problem. *Adult Education Research Conference (AERC) Proceedings*. Retrieved February 16, 2006 from <http://www.edst.educ.ubc.ca/aerc/1999/99armsr.htm>

As part of the 1999 Adult Education Research Conference, Armstrong reports that faculty learn to teach online primarily by finding people to facilitate their learning, and by utilizing resources that are local, easy to find, abundant, and accessible or easy to get. The author supports this claim through a qualitative research study of 28 faculty members [where] who reported that their sources of information, when learning to teach online, followed these themes. Armstrong draws certain conclusions from this data in order to facilitate faculty development and learning opportunities for those learning to teach online. The intended audience is not the faculty, but those that support faculty development, such as instructional designers.



Conrad, D. (2004, April). University instructors' reflections on their first online teaching experiences. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks*, 8(2). Retrieved February 16, 2006 from http://www.sloan-c.org/publications/jaln/v8n2/v8n2_conrad.asp

Conrad uses in depth interviews of first time online instructors to argue that their questions, concerns, and experiences are indicative of these instructors as a population, and should be

used to direct professional development programs. This argument is presented through a qualitative study of five instructors from [where] where each of them reported a remarkably similar experience. The author shares his findings in a framework of instructional roles that include pedagogical, social, managerial, and technical in order to identify which roles were playing the largest part of their feelings before, during, and after their online teaching experience. The intended audience are those involved in faculty preparation and training and those who would be guiding and developing the online faculty training curriculum.



Hanna, D., Glowacki-Dudka, M. & Conceição-Runlee, S. (2000). *147 practical tips for teaching online groups: Essentials of web-based education*. Madison, WI: Atwood Publishing.

The authors of this handy book of tips outline the steps and considerations of teaching online, and provide these tips in the form of a quick reference handbook for those who want instant access to succinct answers. This information is provided in an easily scannable format for each section so instructors under time pressure can quickly find the information they need as categorized by the major chapter and section headings. In order to provide a simple scannable format, important information is chunked into small pieces a paragraph in length that are numbered as tips, which are listed in the table of contents and grouped into sections and then chapters. The primary audience for this guide book are first time online instructors who need a quick reference to guide their work.



Kidney, G. W. (2004, June). When the cows come home: A proven path of professional development for faculty pursuing e-learning. *THE Journal*. Retrieved March 5, 2006 from <http://thejournal.com/the/printarticle/?id=16803>

Kidney in this 2004 article, describes an example of a professional development approach that the University of Houston System uses to prepare their online instructors. This 3-4 day workshop, called the CampusNet Online Workshop (COW) is fully described, including both its successes as a program and the suggestions from participants for future iterations of the program. This workshop description is provided in order to share this information with other college and university systems and help them in implementing a similar program at their own institution. By providing what went well and what didn't, the intended audience, faculty development coordinators and university instructional designers are able to effectively provide their own instructors with their needed training.



Ko, S. & Rossen, S. (2004). *Teaching online: A practical guide (2nd ed.)*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company.

The authors suggest in this book, "Teaching online: A practical guide" a simple step-by-step approach for designing, developing, and delivering an online course. Ko and Rossen outline this method using many examples taken from real-life situations, combined with advice gathered from their significant experience. Their focus on practicality makes this book a useful tool in building a foundation in instructional design and distance education principles for those who are subject matter experts and accomplished in their individual field of study and want to successfully share that knowledge with their students in an online environment.



Kosak, L., Manning, D., Dobson, E., Rogerson, L., Cotnam, S., Colaric, S., & McFadden, C. (2004, Fall). Prepared to teach online? Perspectives of faculty in the University of North Carolina system. *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration, VII(III)*. Retrieved February 23, 2006 from <http://www.westga.edu/%7Edistance/ojdl/fall73/kosak73.html>

Kosak et al. suggest that the online environment requires instructors to become proficient in a number of new skills including administration and management, course layout and design, understanding and choosing the delivery method for content, understanding communication methods, increasing and maintaining student involvement, and finally creating appropriate student assessments. They ask the question, are instructors prepared to teach online?, and then they use this paper to answer this question by surveying faculty from the University of North Carolina system and determining the types and amount of training they experience in order to teach online. The authors present this data in order to emphasize that these instructors need support from the planning stage through implementation, an understanding of online pedagogy, and experience with learning communities, support networks, and security practices.



Perry, B., & Edwards, M. (2005, April). Exemplary online educators: Creating a community of inquiry. *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education, 6(2)*. Retrieved February 23, 2006 from <http://tojde.anadolu.edu.tr/tojde18/articles/article6.htm>

Perry and Edwards state that building a "community of inquiry" with a strong social and cognitive teaching presence that follow some specific roles, is what is required to become an exemplary online teacher. This article identifies and outlines several roles of exemplary teachers in an online classroom.

- *Challengers* are demanding, have high standards, question their student's assumptions, and provide structure and leadership in the online environment.
- *Affirmers* are comfortable giving positive feedback and encouragement, they value the students as individuals and show them respect
- *Influencers* model their expertise, have a strong online presence, and they provide many practical examples for the students to experience.

The authors present these roles as necessary to understand and develop in order to develop high quality online teachers and understand what makes them successful.



Riedinger, B., & Rosenberg, P. (2006). Uniting technology and pedagogy: The evolution of an online teaching certification course. *Educause Quarterly*, 29(1). Retrieved February 28, 2006 from <http://www.educause.edu/apps/eq/eqm06/eqm0616.asp>

In this article, Riedinger and Rosenberg describe and propose an online teaching certification course designed to improve and increase an instructor's opportunity to gain hands-on experience in an online classroom. The authors compare their original face-to-face workshop structure, where there was little retention and few participants, to their new online delivered course, where direct, applicable experience was provided and people were able to participate no matter where they were living and working. Riedinger and Rosenberg delineate the value of online teaching preparation and certification courses in order to establish a pattern and methods that can be implemented in any college or university setting. The intended audience for this article are faculty trainers who are attempting to establish online teaching certification programs to meet the growing needs of faculty learning to teach online.



Shelton, K., & Saltsman, G. (2004, October). Tips and tricks for teaching online: How to teach like a pro! *International Journal of Instructional Technology & Distance Learning*, 1(10). Retrieved February 23, 2006 from http://www.itdl.org/Journal/Oct_04/article04.htm

In this journal article, Shelton and Saltsman argue that feedback, attention, and additional resources should be core elements of an online course. They use a gardening analogy (structure, nurture, and harvest) to explain how these elements can be incorporated into an online class and to summarize their ideas of best practices in online class design, development, and facilitation. In order to insure that feedback, attention, and good design are part of the course, the course must go through a structuring process where critical elements are brought together in the course syllabus and used to direct the development of the course and where an early tone of excellence is set with a welcome email, announcements and introductions. Nurturing is the next phase, where a community is built through regular communication, facilitation, and modeling of proper behavior which instills the sense of belonging. Finally the harvest comes when the instructor keeps a journal about what worked and what didn't and solicits feedback from their students on how to improve the course. The intended audience for this journal article, that demystifies the process of teaching online, are instructors who are considering teaching online, or who have been given an online teaching opportunity and aren't sure where to start.



Sixl-Daniell, K., Williams, J.B. & Wong, A. (2006). A quality assurance framework for recruiting, training (and retaining) virtual adjunct faculty. *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration*, 9(1). Retrieved March 20, 2006 from <http://www.westga.edu/~distance/ojdla/spring91/daniell91.htm>

Sixl proposes that a quality assurance framework incorporating a screening, recruiting, training, and retaining process is necessary to hire and ensure quality in the virtual adjunct faculty for the U21 Global system. This framework involves a four step process that includes recruitment, training and accreditation, supervision and mentoring, reflection and performance appraisal, where proficiency is continuously monitored and suitability of faculty is determined throughout. This process is very strict in order to insure that the adjunct faculty that are hired are able to demonstrate their competence in the four key areas deemed critical by the U21 Global system:

1. Maintain an online presence
2. Provide a value-add
3. Grade to standard
4. Encourage peer interaction.

This article is primarily written for those individuals responsible for establishing high quality distance education programs online, and who are faced with the question of how and where to find or train high quality online instructors.



Smith, T. C. (2005, July). Fifty-one competencies for online instruction. *The Journal of Educators Online*, 2(2). Retrieved February 16, 2006 from <http://www.thejeo.com/Ted%20Smith%20Final.pdf>

Throughout this article, Smith states that effective instructors are necessary for quality learning to take place online. A list of fifty-one competencies is provided that describe a skill set needed by online instructors that will help them become effective and qualified online teachers. These competencies are provided in order to facilitate an instructor training program that includes mentoring, assessment of effectiveness, effective overview of the LMS, writings about the subject, online delivery, a face-to-face component, and a support forum. The audience for this article could be either instructors teaching online or those that will be developing training content for these instructors.



Wilson, C. (1998, Fall). Concerns of instructors delivering distance learning via the WWW. *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration*, 1(3), Retrieved February 16, 2006 from <http://www.westga.edu/%7Edistance/wilson13.html>

In this journal article, Wilson makes the argument that the success or failure of distance education (online instruction) is tied to the enthusiasm and support of faculty. To back up this claim, Wilson provides data from a qualitative survey that gathered data on the concerns of instructors online. These concerns are provided in order to have administrators and institutions, who are feeling political and marketplace pressures to provide online educational offerings, become familiar with the instructor training and support issues that must be addressed first.