

THE WEAKEST LINK

Course Development for Techno-Dummies



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Social Workers & Technology: An Oxymoron?



- ◆ "Necessity was the mother of invention"
 - ◆ Large program that expands to distant campuses
 - ◆ Commuting faculty over the Rocky Mountains – traveling conditions not ideal
- ◆ The Budget Crunch
 - ◆ Efficiency issue – how do we most efficiently use the infrastructure of the main campus to support students and faculty?
- ◆ Ignorance is bliss with pioneers and early adopters
 - ◆ Teaching and learning paradigm, but no technological expertise



A Shotgun Wedding to Information Services: Culture Shock!

- ◆ Information Services (IS): Let's meet in the virtual classroom?
 - Teacher: Why can't I get into the virtual classroom?
 - IS: I don't know.
- ◆ Teacher: Is that next to Smith Hall?
 - Teacher: Why can't I open this student's document?
 - IS: Are you even logged in?
 - IS: I don't know.
- ◆ Teacher: What?
 - Teacher: Are you going to provide technical support to students in my course?
 - IS: How can I help you?
 - IS: What?
- ◆ Teacher: I don't know.



A COLLABORATIVE MODEL

- ◆ Information Services can't only be about fixing computers and teachers can't remain complete techno-dummies.
- ◆ In Distance Education, course development and technology are inseparable.
 - ◆ You can't consider one without considering the other
- ◆ Develop a collaborative model.

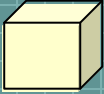


FROM TRADITION TO INNOVATION

- ◆ The Course: Policy issues for Clinicians.
- ◆ Who were the students and what kinds of computer skills did they have?
 - ◆ Student Population: Graduate students, average age: 36.
 - ◆ Computer skills – zero! "Do I need to be connected to the internet?"
- ◆ Other Questions we began to consider:
 - ◆ How will learning occur without a classroom?
 - ◆ How to create a virtual learning community?
 - ◆ What is my role as the teacher?

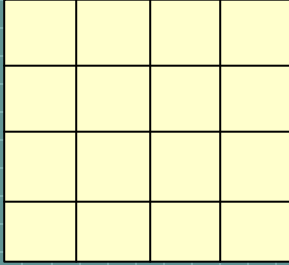


PARADIGM SHIFT



- ◆ But I don't want to change my paradigm!
- ◆ Experience - It's Hip to be Square!
- ◆ What we discovered!
 - ◆ We considered the class from new learning objectives – this opened the door to many "squares" or possibilities with regards to teaching this material.
 - ◆ We started over and re-discovered our class. We didn't rely on the comfortable classroom teaching methods rather we started over with course development from the ground up.
 - ◆ We wanted to maintain the experiential and the skill building of the face to face course and impart new technological skills to students.
 - ◆ We realized that good course development does not need all the "bells and whistles" that technology offers.

How many did you count?




COURSE DEVELOPMENT

- **Experiential Distance Learning: Using the world as the classroom.**
 - Internships/agencies
 - Political arenas of student's communities
 - Class community – Face to face contact & Discussion Forums
- **Class Development Objectives.**
 - Emphasized information processing & concept attainment within real world social contexts.
 - Emphasized personal interests & creativity of students in social policy.
- **Class Methods**
 - Learning Inventories: VARK <http://www.varklearn.com/questionnaire.htm>
 - Reflective Journals: breaking down large assignments into smaller parts.
 - Discussion forums: assisted in building class dialogue and community.
 - Class Portfolio Defense: using information processing to synthesize student experiences.


What Technology Supports this type of class?

- ◆ **BlackBoard - Learning Management System**
 - ◆ External links
 - ◆ Discussion boards
 - ◆ Chat rooms
 - ◆ Gradebook
 - ◆ Attachments
- ◆ **E- journaling**
- ◆ **Telephone/faxes** (low tech, but still technology!)



What is my role as the teacher?

- "Subject Centered" model required us to...
 - coach
 - provide resources
 - mentor and advise
 - trouble shoot technological problems
 - find ways to be "real" to students



...all this without giving one lecture!


THE NEXT BIG THING...

"QUIT LOOKING FOR THE NEXT BIG THING. PUT THE TECHNOLOGY THAT'S SITTING ON THE SHELVES TO WORK, AND DO IT WITH CLEAR PURPOSE."

Bob Davis, Venture Partner, Highland Capital Partners
Fast Company, July, 2002


What did our students learn?

- ◆ Outcomes - General
 - ◆ Increased competence and confidence with legislative process and interaction with state/federal legislators.
 - ◆ A greater awareness of ability to strategically make policy change within their organizations.
- ◆ Let me tell you about individual students.




What did we learn?

- ◆ Involvement in the on-line inspired us to ask pedagogical questions about our face-to-face course.
- ◆ Teaching is much more than lecturing.
- ◆ Students & teachers with minimal skills in technology can learn in an on-line environment.
- ◆ Pedagogy should come first and technology should be used to support effective teaching and learning.



SOWK 544 – A VIRTUAL TOUR

Questions and Answers



<http://class.wwc.edu>