Formalizing online faculty training
Does it make a difference?

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Objectives

Upon conclusion of this discussion, participants will be able to:

- Identify key elements in an online faculty-training program
- Describe the Seven Principles of Good Practice
- Recognize barriers preventing faculty from implementing learned teaching strategies
- Evaluate student perceptions of teaching effectiveness

Background & Significance

- Substantial growth in online education over the past decade has increased the demand for faculty who possess the skill set needed for effective delivery and student engagement in the online world.

- Many institutions of higher learning offer training programs aimed at teaching faculty to facilitate online learning; however, little is known about the application and effectiveness of newly acquired knowledge upon completion of the faculty development.

Purpose

- The purpose of this study was to investigate how online faculty apply the training principles and strategies learned in an online faculty-training program, and how students perceive teaching effectiveness.

Literature Review

- Online education
- Online faculty training
- Common elements of training
- Online pedagogy
- Seven Principles of Good Practice

Seven Principles of Good Practice

1. Student-faculty contact
2. Cooperation among students
3. Active learning
4. Prompt feedback
5. Time on task
6. High expectations
7. Respect for diverse talents and ways of learning

Research Questions

- RQ 1: After completing an online faculty-training program, what effective teaching practices do faculty use in their online teaching and why?
- RQ 2: After completing an online faculty-training program, what keeps faculty from using effective teaching practices in their online teaching?
- RQ 3: How do online students perceive the teaching effectiveness of the faculty?

Methods

A mixed methods case study approach was taken to determine:

- Frequency, ease of use, and level of proficiency with which faculty applied newly acquired teaching practices learned in the training program
- Barriers to using effective teaching practices in online teaching after the training program
- Student perceptions of online faculty teaching effectiveness

Methods

Population - Online Programs:

Ogden, Utah

- 7,000 + online students
- 251 online faculty members
- 3 Associates degrees
- 4 Bachelors degrees
- 2 Certification programs
- General education classes

Theoretical Framework:

- The Seven Principles of Good Practice served as a theoretical underpinning for the study

Instruments

- The Instructional Practices Inventory (IPI) instrument used to survey faculty online teaching strategies
- Student perceptions of teaching effectiveness measured with Student Evaluation of Online Teaching Effectiveness survey (SEOTE)

Demographics - Faculty Participants

8 Respondents from Population of 67

- Gender *N*
  - Male 2
  - Female 6
- Education
  - BS/BA 0
  - MS/MEd/MA 2
  - Candidate 1
  - PhD/EdD 5

- Classes taught pre-training *N*
  - None 0
  - 1-10 3
  - 11-20 3
  - 21-30 0
  - 31 or more 2
- Classes taught post-training
  - 1-10 3
  - 11-20 3
  - 21-30 1
  - 31 or more 1

Demographics - Student Participants

56 Respondents from population of 653

- Gender — *N*
  - Male — 24
  - Female — 32
- Age
  - 18-25 — 26
  - 26-30 — 17
  - 31-35 — 5
  - > 35 — 8

- Prior online classes — *N*
  - None — 9
  - 1 — 9
  - 2 — 7
  - 3 — 8
  - 4 — 0
  - 5 or more — 23

Results for RQ 1 –"Frequency of use"

Ranking of KS&G Principles by Frequency of Use	*N*	*M*	*SD*
KS&G 8: Create an instructional environment that supports inquiry	8	4.6250	.74402
KS&G 2: Use extensive and deliberate practices	40	4.2000	.85335
KS&G 6: Link inquiries to genuine problems or issues of high interest to the learners (thus enhancing motivation and accelerating their learning)	36	3.6111	1.59065
KS&G 3: Provide prompt and constructive feedback	39	3.5128	1.55380
KS&G 5: Elicit active and critical reflection by learners on their growing experience base	63	3.3651	1.41765
KS&G 1: Make learning goals and one or more path clear	54	3.2000	1.87972
KS&G 4: Provide an optional balance of challenges and support that is tailored to individual students' readiness and potential	32	2.8437	1.54731
KS&G 7: develop learners' effectiveness as learners early in their education	42	2.7143	1.51876

N = number of faculty responses of items per principle

Results for RQ1 – "Ease of use"

Ranking of KS&G Principles by Ease of Use	*N*	*M*	*SD*
KS&G 8: Create an instructional environment that supports inquiry	8	4.7500	.70711
KS&G 2: Use extensive and deliberate practices	40	4.4750	.81610
KS&G 1: Make learning goals and one or more path clear	45	4.3556	1.19003
KS&G 3: Provide prompt and constructive feedback	31	4.2258	1.05545
KS&G 6: Link inquiries to genuine problems or issues of high interest to the learners (thus enhancing motivation and accelerating their learning)	31	3.9677	1.30343
KS&G 5: Elicit active and critical reflection by learners on their growing experience base	57	3.9298	1.17807
KS&G 4: Provide an optional balance of challenges and support that is tailored to individual students' readiness and potential	27	3.5185	1.47727
KS&G 7: develop learners' effectiveness as learners early in their education	36	3.1944	1.36945

N = number of faculty responses of items per principle

Results for RQ1 – "Level of Proficiency"

Ranking of KS&G Principles by Level of Proficiency	*N*	*M*	*SD*
KS&G 8: Create an instructional environment that supports inquiry	8	4.7500	.70711
KS&G 1: Make learning goals and one or more path clear	45	4.2889	1.21771
KS&G 2: Use extensive and deliberate practices	40	4.2500	.95407
KS&G 3: Provide prompt and constructive feedback	31	4.2258	.99028
KS&G 6: Link inquiries to genuine problems or issues of high interest to the learners (thus enhancing motivation and accelerating their learning)	31	4.1613	1.09839
KS&G 5: Elicit active and critical reflection by learners on their growing experience base	57	3.9649	.99937
KS&G 4: Provide an optional balance of challenges and support that is tailored to individual students' readiness and potential	27	3.6667	1.41421
KS&G 7: develop learners' effectiveness as learners early in their education	36	3.2222	1.39614

N = number of faculty responses of items per principle

Results for RQ2

After completing an online faculty-training program, what keeps faculty from using effective teaching practices in their online teaching?

- Time
- Strategies that do not apply to course taught
- Students not eager to use all possible tools
- Synchronous issues

Results for RQ3

SEOTE Ranking of Principles	*N*	*M*	*SD*
Principle 3: Active learning	222	4.8423	1.28246
Principle 4: Prompt feedback	165	4.8000	1.18528
Principle 5: Time on task	168	4.7976	1.10827
Principle 6: High expectations	223	4.6951	1.22523
Principle 7: Diverse talents and ways of learning	278	4.6691	1.31027
Principle 1: Student faculty contact	220	4.6318	1.21478
Principle 2: cooperation among students	165	4.5818	1.28819

N = number of student responses of items per principle

Data Analysis

- Quantitative data from survey instruments informed follow up interviews with faculty using qualitative case study methodology

Findings

- Eight faculty members and 56 students participated in the study
- Integration of the newly acquired skill set from training programs varied among faculty (n = 8)
  - Overarching themes for successful implementation were:
    1) Ease of use
    2) Relevance to subject matter

Findings

- Time constraints were a major barrier to implementation of newly learned strategies
- Student perceptions (n = 56) of teaching effectiveness:
  1) Principle of active learning – highly favorable
  2) Cooperation among students (group work) – unfavorable
- 67% of students surveyed –
  - Prompt substantive feedback with error identification & tips for correcting work was essential
  - Differential assignments based on student competency

Lessons Learned

- Strengths
  - Mixed methods
  - University was committed to online education
- Weakness
  - Small sample size
- Limitations
  - One university
  - Data collection only two semesters
  - Timing of faculty telephone interviews
  - Possible bias of participants

Implications and Conclusions

- Distance learning - not analogous with face-to-face classrooms
- Differences in student populations, technology, and the asynchronous nature of online learning create unique challenges for faculty and students alike
- Students' ranking of active learning supports constructivist view and is essential for online learning
- Online faculty should use realistic assignments and problem solving activities to motivate students & encourage active learning

Future Research

- More research is needed in the field of online faculty development
- Many opportunities to improve the online classroom to better support inquiry, engagement, and proficiency through formalized faculty-training programs and continuing educational offerings

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Questions