Note taking template

Academic Planning Summit

January 16, 2015

Title of Session: Innovations and new models for course delivery

Faculty Facilitator(s): David Byrd

Note taker name: Jaime Pierce

Check one:

____x__ Morning Breakout 1 _____Morning breakout 2

_____Afternoon breakout _____Afternoon breakout 2

How could these thoughts be applied to the structure of course delivery at URI?

How can URI respond to the suggestion of a need for innovation in teaching and innovation in delivery to retain value and sustainability?

What are some/any potential ideas or principles that URI might consider adopting related to this talk? Ideas you have about expanding on these considerations?

Ideas Proposed/Recommendations

TRADITIONAL CLASSROOM vs ONLINE/ HYBRID COURSES

Traditional Classroom Courses:

- Offer valuable face-to-face interaction; personal interaction is paramount during some part of the course
- New students lack self motivation and need coaching offered in traditional classroom settings
- Traditional methods are not necessarily working effectively anymore, it is the professor's responsibility to find and innovate models to help students learn
- Everyone can identify an instructor that inspired learning in academic career
    - Even if you have a course that includes online learning, providing some sort of interaction lends itself to more engagement by making interpersonal connections
    - Many new students need this type of personal engagement

Flipped Classrooms/ Online Courses/ Hybrid Courses:

- It takes training and guidance for students to adapt these models
- More meaningful learning can occur in the classroom if these models are conducted properly
- In a flipped classroom, lecture time can be spent focusing on student concerns/issues and instructors have more time to solicit feedback from students
- As a downfall, there is misinformation that students absorb while researching on their own
- At URI and nationally, students complain about interaction with instructors
- Pre-recording lectures then coming to class with a question and answer session surrounding the lecture is a successful way to conduct a flipped classroom
- The flipped course or a blended course works as a springboard for interaction and meaningful discussion
- Lecturing to 300 students is not meaningful face-to-face interaction

    - Instead of doing this, having students watch a video online and then return to discuss it is far more effective
- We tend to look at online learning as less than face-to-face and more self-directed— this is a bias
    - If something is wrong with an online course, we blame the media (however, you can easily find a parallel flaw in face-to-face instruction)

SUGGESTIONS/ PROPOSALS

Support Systems:

- Encouraging students to come to class prepared is essential for engagement during class time
- It's hard to hold students accountable when you have several students; Students must have the desire to complete assignments and stay on track
- Students come into the university with a wide variety of capabilities— we will still need a mentor/coach role to show students how to delve into these new models successfully

New Models for Introductory Science Courses (Especially for Non-Majors; Science for Citizenship vs. Science for Majors):

- For non-majors, we are teaching them the same way as engaged/major students, and this is not necessarily productive
    - For example, nurses don't need an intro chemistry course that requires them to balance 200 equations in their practice (they don't ever do that and, therefore, do not need a weekly lab
    - Rather, a few labs in person and a few offered in video would make instruction more palatable and reduce costs for the university
- Same goes for mathematics— non-majors are simply trying to fulfill a requirement and engagement is not there
- Digital labs will engage younger generations and offer greater flexibility
- Video labs are offered through MIT for no cost— this speaks directly to value, efficiency and sustainability for the university

Seminar Classes/ Interdisciplinary Approaches/ Real-World Application:

- Seminar classes conducted in the graduate school are a viable way of learning that should be brought into the undergraduate world
- More problem-solving and project related work should be introduced into the university's courses to make learning more meaningful for students
- Additional workplace training should be offered
- More interdisciplinary approaches (education for sustainability)

Notable Issues, Questions, Challenges:

Notable Examples/ Experiences:

Hybrid Music Course—

- All evaluations showed that students wanted to be in the classroom more
- The time was flexible, so no one knew when the class really was (based off of deadlines)
- Music, for example, can be made in any form; When you are in the room with the person making music, the experience is much different

Nutrition Department—
- Attempts with blended courses were a positive experience for both instructors and students
- Students enjoyed the independence and group-work associated with the course

Statistics Course—
- As a result of course difficulty, students start study groups and review homework and examples from class
- There are a multitude of resources available; having these resources is beneficial to students if they know how to utilize them properly
- Motivated students will find sources of help if they are not getting the support they need in class

Economic Challenges/ Issues:

- The video highlighted how expensive higher education is becoming
- Many people will not be able to send their children to a campus university in the future; there will be more people opting for online programs that may be less expensive
- In Tennessee, people are considering free community college along with several other states
- The price of higher education is a burden on a majority of the population
    - What population and in which environments need the small classroom education?
    - Part of this is deciding when to spend money and in what realm

Change of Major:

- With general education revisions, we wanted to ensure that when students change majors, they can carry what they've learned to their next major
- 75% students at URI change majors
- If we were to differentiate methods of resources, we'd have to make sure there are additional modules to allow students to move forward if they change majors (rather than waste credits and money)

Impact on Faculty:

- Many of these ideas of utilizing online methods increases the amount of time that faculty has to spend planning
- It must have value from the institution for the faculty
- A roadblock is that instructors must re-think their class
    - However, instructors should be doing this anyway
- The university could take benefit from different faculty members that have technological experience
    - There would have to be group training (one on one training is not efficient)
- Is there a disconnect? Is the institution not providing the resources that faculty need?
    - The institution needs more instructional design and "tech" people to assist faculty with every-thing they'd need to implement new models of teaching

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Ideas proposed/Recommendations

Flipped classrooms:

- In some instances, students do not like the flipped classroom; they claim that it is more work and prefer the standard method of instruction
- More learning can come from a flipped classroom if a culture change exists amongst both faculty and students— How do we make this changes? How can this be accomplished?
- Students must be prepared before taking an online course so that they understand it is not necessarily "easier" than a traditional course
- Students have been taught the same way for many years, so they need to learn how to learn in a different manner.
- Students have a fear and undesirable emotion towards flipped classrooms because it is unfamiliar
    - However, once they experience it, many of the students reflected that they enjoyed the course and benefitted from it
    - Students have to be taught and encouraged to be engaged in order to succeed
- Online student orientation will help students find out how learning online is different from the media they are used to— it will teach them that online learning is not necessarily simpler, easier, etc.

Support for Faculty (Faculty Learning Communities):

- There is no administrative brokering to discuss what other people do here on campus— what is missing is a support system for the university, both faculty and students
    - This would be helpful in assuring there is no redundancies
- If the instructors come together to begin mentoring workshops, it can be successful for the university
- Faculty relationships are more effective than a specialist coming in to teach new methods
    - This Academic Summit, for example, is extremely helpful
- We've had a series of workshops and these workshops could create networks of faculty that share similar pedagogy
    - This is far more beneficial than an "expert" coming in to speak about their ideas on effective pedagogy
- Faculty learning communities, formal groups, are a great place to gather information and advance as an instructor
- Working in groups or coming to sessions like the Academic Summit is helpful because there is solidified facilitation
    - Facilitating networking should be a focus of the university
- Training for varying course delivery needs to be done in individual disciplines

Notable Issues, Questions, Challenges:

Pedagogy/Delivery (what we are teaching vs how we are teaching):

- What do we need and what's going on?— this question must be addressed before figuring out how to deliver the curriculum
- A crucial question we must ask is what ARE you teaching? What do you need to know?
- Our delivery systems are tied to our content
    - Content is rapidly changing in each discipline
    - Teaching students to identify reputable resources to find research surrounding their field is important
    - The content should not be the focus of delivery, teaching students to learn to be curious should be the focus
- As a university, we need to address our resources in a larger realm (moving people to more productive activities)
- There is a culture shift and attitude change surrounding teaching
    - You don't just learn how to do it, you must revisit how to do it
- Innovation beyond online courses needs to be considered
    - New ideas and ways may be more beneficial than raking over ways to innovate online courses
    - Students are not necessarily computer savvy— they know how to do a few things online very well; however, introducing something new can wreak havoc on some students.
- The best practice is to clarify how the course works and how to manage the course platform
- We need delivery systems that are inexpensive and efficient
- How do we do what you're asking us to do? What is it that we should be doing? What can we provide and how can we provide it in a way that faculty will effectively take advantage of it?
- Content coverage is the enemy in teaching
    - If we are so focused on the content, running through the curriculum, the focus is no longer on the learner
    - We need to focus on ensuring students become effective, lifelong learners

A barrier is students' outside lives (work commitments, finances, etc.)— this has taken a toll on student learning and it's a diff