



Online Learning Effective Practices Research

Preliminary Findings

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Online Offerings Can Impact Key Issues

- Provide greater access to education
 - Reach a particular population
 - Span a greater geography
- Meet needs of non-traditional students
- Overcome physical space limitations
- Build and strengthen the institution's reputation
- Find additional revenue streams
- Help ensure entering students are prepared



But Skepticism Remains

- How rigorous are these programs?
- Can they deliver more than glorified correspondence courses?
- Will they dilute the value of the institution's degree?
- What about cooperation from faculty and traditional departments on creating courses, teaching them?
- Will online siphon students from in-class offerings, take jobs from in-class faculty?



Online Learning Effective Practices Research

Project Goal:

- To surface and share practices from a cross section of institutions delivering online learning programs

Methodology:

- Phase 1 research and digest completed Feb – June 2009
- Telephone interviews with online programs leaders
 - 9 Higher Education, 1 K-12
 - Program Directors, Deans, Provosts, Presidents
- Interviews focused on full spectrum of effort from strategy to implementation and measurement
- Phase 2 research definition underway



Institutions Interviewed



The Must-Haves Leaders Identified

Strategy and Planning

- Influential leaders with an online vision that clearly links to institutional mission
- Separate online organization with some level of autonomy
- Financial model aligned to support distinct program goals
- Clear understanding of target audience
- Right mix of sales and marketing

Non-Traditional Student Experience

- High-quality course creation via carefully controlled process
- High-quality course delivery
- Student services that support the non-traditional student

Metrics

- Capacity to measure for success



Preliminary Findings: Strategy & Planning



Leadership

Respondents cited the need for 2 leaders: a powerful administrative champion and a strong leader of the online program

Online champion at the highest level (President, Chancellor, Provost)

- Ensures that the online initiative aligns with institutional mission
- Finds funding to support the online initiative
- Able to corral other top administrative support
- Empowers leader of online initiative

Leader of online program

- Shares the online vision and is capable of delivering
- Needs support from administration but also meaningful autonomy
- Builds relationships w/ traditional departments, mitigates fears and builds trust



Leadership: Examples



Administrative Leader: President

Goal: Deliver on mission as a technology-focused university and create new revenue stream

Program Leadership: President & CEO, reports to President



Administrative Leader: Governor and KCTCS President

Goal: Increase the education level of all KY working adults

Program Leadership: Chancellor, reports to President



Administrative Leader: President

Goal: Address physical space limitations while increasing access to education for Indiana residents

Program Leadership: Executive Director, reports to Provost



Leadership: Spotlight

Ivy Tech looked to online learning as a means to increase access to education, as well as to increase capacity in lieu of physical space limitations

“We have widespread support from the administration of the college. Our President is very interested in distance education. Not only in promoting it, but also in making sure we're doing it at the highest quality possible, and that our students are having a really good experience in those classes.”

“We present monthly to our 14 Vice Chancellors for Academic Affairs who are the top ranking academic official at each campus...when you think that those folks spend, at a minimum, an hour a month...that’s a fairly significant investment across the college over an annual basis.”

- Dr. Kara Monroe, Executive Director, Center for Instructional Technology



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Separation & Autonomy

Institutions created a separate group focused specifically on online initiatives. However, there was significant variation in how much these groups relied on support from the traditional institution

Separation:

- Many of the online leaders reflected on how critical it is to be separate from the rest of the institution so that they can be more flexible, nimble, and able to try different approaches

Autonomy:

- Some online groups run almost as their own, separate college within the institution
- Others are dependent on the traditional colleges/departments, and focused more on providing certain elements of the online offering while relying on the traditional institution for the rest



Separation & Autonomy: Examples



- Drexel eLearning (DeL) is largely focused on the sales and marketing of the online programs. All course creation, program design, and staffing is done by the traditional academic departments



- USC's Technology Enhanced Learning group is part of the central organization that provides university-wide services per its federated model. The Technology Enhanced Learning group looks to provide efficiencies based on the colleges' demand



- Baker College Online (BCO) operates like its own college within the college. It has its own administration, deans, faculty, processes, and policies. BCO is completely independent of the traditional college



Separation & Autonomy: Spotlight

In order for an online initiative to be successful, it must have *“the ability to be creative... We try things, we test things, we track things, we review the results, we change the things we could have done better. If you’re playing in the online world you should be aware that there’s a lot of creative competition out there. You have to somehow convince the President, Provost, Dean that you need a degree of independence... you need independence to try things. The most successful online operations are trying different things...Universities don’t often do that...You’ve got to give someone room to develop...Traditional is not going to get it done in this marketplace right now.”*

– Art Zamkoff, President and CEO, Drexel eLearning



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Financial Model

Each institution has carefully crafted a business model that supports their online goals and institutional culture. These models vary significantly, but most include revenue recognition and compensation models

- The revenue recognition of these online groups falls into two buckets:
 - Self-Sustaining - clear understanding of the revenue the group generates and they typically get a portion of the revenue
 - Cost Centers - service entity that is funded through a service fee charged to its users
 - The financial model correlates to the autonomy of the online group; self-sustaining entities seem to run more independently than those that are cost centers
- Each group interviewed carefully designed a compensation plan for those involved in the online initiatives – individual colleges, content creators, course teachers – in a fashion that ensures and promotes quality courses and course delivery



Financial Model: Examples

- DeL, BCO and KCTCS Online all operate with their own independent financials. DeL and KCTCS Online are both for-profit entities
- Ivy Tech is self-sustaining through its online course fee that is charged to all students enrolled in an online course. Both the statewide support of overall distance education initiatives as well as individual campus support is provided through this fee.
- UT TeleCampus (UTTC) and USC are cost centers:
 - UTTC is funded by the universities based upon the number of students they have enrolled online. The universities recognize the online tuition revenue.
 - At USC, the academic units are taxed for information technology centralized infrastructure and services, including Technology Enhanced Learning support



Financial Model: Spotlight

BYU's Financial Compensation Model:

1. Financial reward for developing the course. The amount of which is driven by two factors: effort and strategic value.
2. Financial reward for grading the course – amount largely dependent on grading difficulty
3. Financial reward for the time answering emails, phone calls, etc. related to teaching the course
4. Financial reward back to the department that offers and sponsors this course

Note: the department has complete control of this entire financial stream



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Financial Model: Examples

UTTC, a cost center, is paid by the institution based on the number of online courses they are offering. It is then up to the individual campuses to determine if and how they will compensate for course creation, delivery, and maintenance.



Ivy Tech brings one faculty member from each of the 15 campuses together to create an online course. Two of the 14 are considered lead contacts and are paid by the center for the development of the course; the time invested by the other 13 is unpaid as it is counted as one of their annual committee assignments.



Financial Model: Spotlight

KCTCS relies on the 16 colleges to create and deliver the online programs in partnership with KCTCS Online

- **Program development:** 10% of the profit is divided amongst the 16 colleges with the lead and partnering schools getting the largest percentage
 - *“This was designed to encourage the colleges to take the lead or to be a partner in the development process,”* says Jay Box, Chancellor
- **Course Facilitator payment:** KCTCS facilitators teach online as overload and are paid by the number of students enrolled
 - Course facilitators are able to negotiate how many students they have in their online course in order to make more money
 - This decision is made based upon their history of teaching online and their certification scores
- **Facilitator assignment:** Facilitators are assigned online courses based upon their history of teaching online and their certification scores. This incents the faculty to be the best they can be and directly impacts the quality of the online course.



Financial Model: Lesson Learned

Regardless of financial model, institutions need to ensure that they are financially rewarding the right behavior

- Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University Worldwide (ERAU) started out with a royalty model for course creation. As ERAU Worldwide grew, the fees it was paying became financially unsupportable. Furthermore, it did not incent course maintenance or faculty mentorship. ERAU Worldwide adjusted this model.



Target Audience

Interviews pointed to careful definition of the online target audience in alignment with the key institutional goals

- All interviewed found a specific niche where they could be successful in the online world
- All interviewed understood their target student population as well as their internal supporters, which drove specifics around program choice and delivery



Target Audience: Examples

- ERAU targets the military and aeronautical companies around the world. Online allows their students to learn wherever they are and compliments their 130 worldwide physical campuses.
- BYU's mission is to *“assist individuals in their quest for perfection and eternal life.”* BYU's online initiative enables BYU to extend the access to those that cannot make it to campus at both the k-12 and higher education levels.
- Ivy Tech's mission talks about educational access for residents of Indiana. Online increases the access of their target audience: Indiana residents.



Target Audience: Spotlight

KCTCS's mission is to “improve the quality of life and employability of the citizens of the Commonwealth”

Year-long research surveying 3,000 working adults, aged 19-54 found:

- 1.3 million KY working adults without a bachelor's degree
- Extrapolated that 500,000 of target population would want to take KCTCS courses if they:
 - Didn't require campus time
 - Were shorter than the typical 16 week timeframe
 - Enabled the student the flexibility to start and stop on his/her timeline
 - Provided the skills and courses desired

KCTCS Online targeted the working adult and corporations looking to further their employee's skills with short modules that can be started and completed according to the student's pace



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Target Audience: Examples

“ERAU’s core business is aviation and aerospace, so a large portion of the students are military located on 130 military bases around the world. Since ERAU could not physically be on at all of these locations, online delivery was critical.”

- Dr. Martha Hollis, Dean, Worldwide Online



Central Texas College’s mission is to “provide quality teaching through an accessible learning environment.”

“We quickly realized that we had to follow our soldiers ...they sign up for classes and they don’t stay at Fort Hood...online evolved from there.”

- Sharon Davis, Director, Distance Education and Education Technology



Target Audience: Spotlight

BYU's mission is to *“assist individuals in their quest for perfection and eternal life”*

“We believe that you have to be solving problems, and supporting the core mission of the university while you're trying to do this...we look to create online courses that will do some good and would benefit a large number of people...We will sit down with a department on campus, look at every course they offer and then prioritize them based on a strategic rubric.”

- Justin Johansen, Director, BYU Independent Study



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Target Audience: Spotlight

Ivy Tech's mission talks about *“delivering professional, technical, transfer, and lifelong education...through its affordable, open-access education and training programs”*

Access is highly touted as one of Ivy Tech's favored sayings is *“there is an Ivy Tech within a 30 minute drive of all Indiana residents. So online was looked to as a solution when the physical facilities could no longer handle the growth that the state was demanding.”*

- Kara Monroe, Executive Director, Center for Instructional Technology



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Sales & Marketing

Each online group does some marketing, but with dramatically different rigor

- BYU has 9 FT and 25 PT marketing/sales staff to generate 170,000 online enrollments
- DeL has marketing and business development staff to generate over 6,000 unique students, greater than 250 corporate partnerships
- UTTC employs 3 FT marketing people to generate 14,000 enrollments
- BCO does 90% marketing online to generate 13,000+ enrollments
- Ivy Tech relies largely on word-of-mouth and the high market awareness of the traditional college to generate 22,000 enrollments



Preliminary Findings: Non-Traditional Student Experience



Course Creation

7 of the 9 institutions interviewed have a very controlled course creation process to ensure high-quality courses

- All had a team of content experts and instructional designers to assist in the creation of courses
- 7 out of 9 schools developed institution-wide rubrics to assess course quality
- 7 of the 9 schools interviewed create a master course which is then locked down
- All interviewed felt strongly that their online programs had to be accredited
- There were variations in the amount of control the online group has over the content creation of the courses
 - Some schools left it all up to the traditional college departments
 - Others had their own content experts create the content of the course without any involvement from the traditional departments
 - Most schools fell somewhere in between.



Course Creation: Spotlight

KCTCS Online

- **Program Initiation:** RFP issued for 2 programs/yr
- **Content Creation:**
 - Each module is worth .6-1 credit taking 3-8 weeks to complete
 - Each module was designed with a pre-test and post-test. If a student scores well on the pre-test, they can go immediately to the post-test
- **Quality Assurance:**
 - Check that the design meets the module template; the story board of how the course communicates the information
 - Evaluation of the content
 - Commitment from the lead developing college to on-going course maintenance



Course Creation: Spotlight

Central Texas College (CTC)

- **Program Initiation:**
 - Rely on the academic department for direction
- **Content Creation:**
 - The chair of the department will identify a subject matter expert to create course content
 - Master template for all courses – includes everything the teacher might need to teach the course (syllabus, test, assignments, discussion boards)
 - Courses created are designed to be 8 weeks in length with the same content as the 16 week course, which better suits the lifestyle of the military
- **Quality Assurance:**
 - CTC developed a rubric to assess quality. CTC has one person dedicated to quality control. Upon this person's approval, the online course is released to the department for final signoff by the department chair. Once done, the course is ready to go live.



Course Creation: Spotlight

ERAU Worldwide

- **Content Creation:**

- University-approved curricula is the foundation for online courses
- Worldwide faculty member teams and instructional designers create online content
- Faculty member who develops the course has responsibility for updating the course and for coaching new faculty members teaching this course

- **Quality Assurance:**

- Standard course template created called the “Gold Course”
- This ‘Gold Course’ becomes the master that all instructors use when teaching this topic



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Course Creation: Spotlight

UTTC

- **Program Initiation:** RFP 2/year
- **Content Creation:**
 - Content creation is the responsibility of the faculty at the campuses to create in partnership with the instructional designers and instructional technologists. Once complete, the online course is sent to UTTC for quality review.
- **Quality Assurance:**
 - “CARAT” – Course Appraisal and Review Analytical Tool
 - Assuming that the proposed course graded against the rubric well, there are two additional steps:
 1. Course is printed and sent to the copy editor to review
 2. Technical review



Course Delivery

Institutions emphasized quality course delivery keeping the non-traditional student in mind, and making sure the student-instructor interaction is enhanced by the online format

- All interviewed offer professional development – some require while others just recommend
- All institutions interviewed pay online faculty for their efforts, but the pay structure differs – also see section Financial Models for more information
- Staffing is sometimes a challenge. Course/program origin directly impacts the extent of the possible staffing challenges for the online team.



Course Delivery: Examples

ERAU Worldwide Online



- **Faculty Training:** required to complete and pass 4 faculty development courses
- **Faculty Staffing:** Today, a mix of traditional faculty and adjuncts teach online. When it first started, ERAU Worldwide Online relied largely on adjuncts as traditional faculty weren't as interested.

KCTCS Online



- **Faculty Training:** requires a 2-week training class for facilitators on how to teach online
- **Faculty Staffing:** Facilitator staffing is prioritized according to their online teaching certification scores and their history of teaching online



Course Delivery: Examples

BCO

- Faculty Staffing: BCO recruited and hired adjuncts to teach online
 - *“We offer [teaching online] to the faculty at the campuses, but if they don’t want to do it, we’re not going to let them stand in the way... We’re going to go out and find faculty that want to teach for us and who enjoy it.”*
 - Dr. Julia Teahen, President, Baker College Online



CTC

- Faculty Training: CTC offers training classes for faculty teaching online, but these are not mandated
- Faculty Staffing: The college departments manage all of the staffing issues related to online offerings



Student Services

A successful online program understands the unique needs of the non-traditional student they are serving and provides students services that meet and exceed those needs.

All recognize the necessity of being able to provide interactions in a way that suits the online student:

- Support: technical support, admissions, financial aid, registrar access, advising
- Modalities: Web-based, phone, IM, email

7 out of 9 have direct oversight on the student services for online students.
2 of these 7 outsource some of this support.



Student Services: Spotlight

BCO

“The customer support/student support is just crucial. You cannot have a good quality, reputable, respectable program without providing services to students...At certain points in our operations, we relied on other campuses for support, and it just didn’t work well because our students were so different...Now we house everything.”

“We have our own online registrar, our own academic office, our own advisors, our own financial aid staff that works with students on financial aid and loans. We have a business office staff that helps our students with payment arrangements. We have our own library staff that provides support to students. We have our own bookstore...We have our own career services support, we have our own development ed for students ...We have tutoring and developmental programs both in math and English and reading for study skills online....our own help desk support. All of that is needed to have a good program.”

- Dr. Julia Teahen, President, Baker College Online



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Student Services: Spotlight

BYU's Independent Study

BYU has 12 full-time and 150 part-time students to support student services that answer as many as 5,000 calls/day

“We have a very person-centric support model. If you call our office right now, you’re going to talk to a human in one minute or less, and that human is going to be able to help you or get you to the right place and the next place is going to be a human...our goal is really to provide people supporting people. Not only do we think that this provides a better level of service and a less frustrating experience, but for us it’s less expensive to administer.”

- Justin Johansen, Director, BYU Independent Study



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Student Services: Examples

Ivy Tech and CTC

Both rely largely on the traditional student service entities within the institution to manage student services for the online student

- The student services offices of the individual campuses within Ivy Tech manage their own student services
- CTC has a central student service office



Student Services: Spotlight

KCTCS Online

- Central services team is a cross-functional team that designed the guts of KCTCS Online. “We picked 45 people from all areas – all pieces of student services, from financial aid to admissions. These are the system office folks...responsible for setting processes up for the colleges to follow.
- Examples of problems overcome by central services team:
 - Develop an online application process that gave immediate feedback to the applicant that they were accepted and could directly start registering
 - Financial aid model for this modular approach. Starting, stopping, and progressing quickly, including an automatic payment process.
- No textbooks for KCTCS Online
 - “We have a system-wide deal with Barnes & Noble. We brought in publishers along with Barnes & Noble and said we want electronic version of the textbooks, we want the content chunked down into modules...we want you to not charge more than a fraction of what the textbook would cost; and we want that information embedded within Bb so a student doesn't have to go to the Barnes & Noble website or to the publisher to get a key to access online content.”

- Dr. Jay Box, Chancellor



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Preliminary Findings: Metrics



Metrics

All interviewed stressed the importance of measuring for success beyond enrollment numbers, though this is an area all agreed they could improve

- General metrics to include:
 - Number of enrollments
 - Retention – both course completion and taking additional courses
 - Satisfaction; both student and faculty
 - Qualitative measures
- Questions being asked?
 - Are the above metrics enough?
 - Are these measurements really equaling success?
 - How do we define success?
 - How do we get where we want to be regarding performance measurement?



Metrics: Examples

KCTCS Online



For the first year, KCTCS Online will look at

- Number of new students being brought into the system
- How the community feels about their efforts
- How the students feel about the learning experience

UTTC



“It’s all about quality; it’s about providing access; it’s about getting great course completion rates; it’s about having return students. That’s where we want to focus. It shouldn’t be all about how much money was brought in and how many students have enrolled – though that is important. It’s more about them sticking through the program and completing courses. The way you measure success is by looking at the quality of everything you do – services you offer, courses you offer, the faculty and how well they’re developed and doing this.”

- Dr. Darcy Hardy, Assistant Vice Chancellor Academic Affairs, UT System and Executive Director UT TeleCampus



Metrics: Examples



BYU

“The easy way [to measure success] is we make more money and service more students...but BYU is much more concerned about how you support the mission of the university...How did you support people out there who need another option?...Tell us the good you did in the world? We’re very focused on qualitative measures of success. At the same time, we have to measure enrollments, financial results, student satisfaction rates, faculty satisfaction rates, compare students who participate in a course and then go on to take standardized tests.”

- Justin Johansen, Director

BCO

“To measure success, BCO reviews feedback from individual instructors teaching the course; common assessments that everyone in the system takes – online and on-ground; student success with additional certifications like CPA exam or the nursing exam; survey employers of students asking how our students are doing in your work environment, feedback from students in the program



- Dr. Julia Teahen, President



The Must-Haves Leaders Identified

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Non-Traditional Student Experience

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