Avoiding Common Errors in Leading Online Education

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Who am I?
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Error #1: Doing online for the wrong reason
3 primary reasons for online

Can select only one primary reason:

• Increase enrollment and revenue
• Increase options and decrease barriers for existing students
• Educate new students outside traditional geographic boundaries
3 primary reasons for online

Can select only one primary reason:

• Increase enrollment and revenue
  **Wrong Answer!**
  
• Increase options and decrease barriers for existing students

• Educate new students outside traditional geographic boundaries
Increase enrollment and revenue

- Focus on quality rapid course and program development
- Focus on retaining recruiting students
- Focus on enhancing curriculum, teaching and student services marketing and enrollment
- Why this often fails
  - Ashford University
Error #2: Lack of commitment to the other choices
Primary reason for online

- Increase options & decrease barriers for existing students
  - Hybrid programs w/online courses
  - Existing infrastructure and student services
  - Educating new students outside traditional boundaries
  - Fully online programs
  - Invest in infrastructure and student services unique to online learners
Error #3: It’s all about online courses

Tony, just have the faculty create a bunch of online courses—it’s just that simple!
Beyond online courses

- Leaders and researchers often get this wrong

- What happens outside the online course influences online student retention and attrition

- Too often, online students are 2nd class citizens
Error #4: We can just add online to a decentralized structure
Decentralized structure

- Online ed organizationally marginalized or buried
  - Position and authority of Chief Online Learning Officer
- Not scalable
- Redundant/insufficient resources
- Inconsistent quality
- Staff isolation
- Promotes inequities (haves and have nots)
Error #5 We can use our existing policies and procedures
Policies and procedures

- Developed for on-campus students and faculty
- Can provide barriers for online learners
- “Runaround” promotes attrition
Error #6
Equating course design with teaching
Course design and teaching are not the same

- Faculty increasingly teach courses designed by others
- Course development and teaching are different activities that require different skills
- Evaluating online course design is not evaluating online teaching
Error #7: Expecting faculty to be experts in online
Not fair to expect faculty to be experts in:

- Instructional design for online learning
- Online instructional strategies
- Unique needs of online learners
- Web accessibility
- Title IV/state/federal regulations
- Accreditation requirements for online multimedia design and production
- HTML and LMS configuration
What can leaders do to avoid/mitigate these errors?
How to avoid/mitigate errors

• Determine your primary reason for online ed
  • Make a realistic assessment of the commitment and ability to invest in that reason

• Align online ed with institution mission and vision

• Create a comprehensive strategic plan for online ed
  • Program/course development, teaching and institutional services

• Establish a representative advisory committee
  • Every area that touches an online learner
How to avoid/mitigate errors

• Organize permanent, centralized staff
  • Chief Online Learning Officer with decision-making authority and direct access to Provost
  • Instructional designers
  • 24/7/365 support
• Provide full range of institutional academic and student services geared to the unique needs of online learners
• Conduct an analysis of institutional policies and procedures to make sure that they do not disadvantage online learners and faculty
How to avoid/mitigate errors

• Establish process for online program and course approval
• Establish minimum standards/criteria/expectations for online courses
• Use online master/template courses
• Determine shared intellectual property
• Provide separate training and assessment for online course development vs. online teaching
Wisdom from Mr. Miyagi

walk left side, safe. walk right side, safe. walk middle, sooner or later get squish just like grape.

karate, same thing. either you karate do 'yes' or karate do 'no.' you karate do 'guess so.' squish like grape.
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