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Teaming Up to Transform Last-Minute Course Development Into Lasting Course Design, Milestone 1 [1]

April 9, 2019 by Lainie Hoffman | Office of Digital Education [2]

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As part of the Online Learning Consortium (OLC) Innovate 2019 conference, our team of instructional designers, Sarah North, Lynée Sanute, and myself, led an emerging ideas session around our work in diversifying design partnership options for faculty who are teaching online. Our presentation represents the first milestone in our process, and I want to share some background on what we're doing.

As many of you know, we partner with faculty using a collaborative model that is based on relationship building and the premise of community of inquiry. Ideally, an instructional designer pairs up with an instructor who is moving a course online, redesigning an online course, or creating a brand new course for the online environment. We bring the design expertise, the instructor brings the content expertise, and we combine forces to work out a course design. We use a mapping model that helps reflect transformative course outcomes and demonstrate alignments between student work and those outcomes.

Once mapping is complete, the instructor joins a cohort of other faculty in the eight-week Online Skills Mastery (OSM) course. Each cohort member can do as much course development as they like during the course, but the main purpose is to explore digital pedagogy with a group of peers.

By the end of a three or four month timeframe, instructors have a solid design plan for their particular course, have been given the opportunity to reflect on their teaching strategies, and have formed relationships with us and other instructors.

That's the ideal scenario. But, as we all know, life doesn't always allow for the ideal.

The toughest of the alternative cases are where instructors receive a course appointment weeks to days before the start of a course. It isn't uncommon for these instructors to be in a

mild state of panic, not sure of where to start, and not confident in their ability to take on the course in front of them.

Our first alternative option has long been the one-off consultation. However, these consultations tend to end up focused on tools rather than methods, which doesn't reflect the value we place in pedagogical practices. And one-off meetings rarely result in ongoing partnerships, a mainstay of our work. Additionally, instructors who are rushed and seeking help tend to need more direction and structure, which is difficult to provide on-the-fly.

With this particular audience in mind, we decided that adjustments needed to be made.

Our efforts began with two thoughts: *How do we get a wider array of instructors started in course design?* and *How do we vary our options for partnership?*

To that end, we started with the OLC scorecard suite [4] and the CU Online OSM Course Quality Rubric. After synthesizing the two documents, we customized content, organization, and feedback mechanisms to better reflect our particular institution. Finally, we divided the document, creating the Just in Time Design Checklist and the Course Review Consultation.

The Just in Time Design Checklist focuses on best practices that can be easily addressed without knowledge of instructional design. It also includes resources and guiding questions to help focus on the underlying design of an online course. This resource is quick, easy to use, and promotes further partnership when time is less pressing.

The Course Review Consultation focuses on best practices that are more abstract and might require discussion. It is filled out by an instructional designer in consultation with the instructor. The consultation allows us to explore a wide array of design elements within a developed course. We particularly like this opportunity because it opens the door to partnerships at more points in the design process.

Moving forward, we plan to conduct research on the efficacy of our diversified partnerships, which will help us refine our work at CU Denver|Anschutz, as well as add to the broader field of instructional design. In other words, you'll be hearing more from us about this topic!

collaboration [5], research [6]

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