Ethical Issues in an Online Degree Program: Beyond Netiquette

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• MS in Instructional Design and Technology
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TECHED Conference
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• Background/Overview- J. Carter-Wells -5 min.
• History/Program Overview/Components- J. Carter-Wells -5 min.
• Ethical Problems and Solutions-faculty and students
  – Faculty- K. Ivers- 10 min.
  – Students- B. Glaeser-10 min.
• Developing a Code of Ethics- J. Carter-Wells- 5 min.
• Community Of Learners – research project- J. Schools – 10 min.
• Themes — misassumptions/misperceptions, inflexibility, reshaping the bureaucracy, governance dynamics, territorial or protocol conflicts, creation of team working principles and unique cohort learning expectations
• Discussion/Questions & Answers – 10 min.
Background and Overview

• Large, urban, comprehensive BA and Master’s degree institution (35,000 students, 1,800 faculty); now largest in the CSU system in California

• As part of a 23-campus state system, other sister campuses began launching online degree programs.

• In 2001, Vice President for Academic Affairs set a goal of developing two new online degree programs.

• School (now College) of Education was invited to be the pilot program.

• Now have separate URL/PR for all online MS degrees at CSUF - [http://www.fullerton.edu/onlinemasters/](http://www.fullerton.edu/onlinemasters/)
Chronology of Major Activities

- Faculty workgroup developed curriculum, wrote course proposals (summer 2001), and began campus program approval process (fall 2001);
- Conducted market survey, developed program features, admissions criteria, and assessments; created website; implemented administrative support and infrastructure (fall and spring semesters);
- Secured campus approval (spring 2002);
- Secured Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) accreditation (summer 2002);
- Admitted 23 students who attended the on-campus orientation and began the program on September 13, 2002!
Program Design

• MSIDT Degree is an online cohort program
• Core Classes and Sequence combines theory and practice in Instructional Design so graduates will become experts in designing instructional programs and materials for optimum learning in an electronic environment.
• 30-unit Fully Accredited Program-WASC
• All courses reflect an understanding of how adults learn. Courses are designed to activate students’ prior knowledge and to connect their prior knowledge with the course content.
Course Sequence

- 10 Courses
- IDT prefix
- 20 month consecutive program in 5 term segments
- 2 courses/term segment
- Sequential cohort-based theory and practice courses culminating with a project/practicum
- **Boot Up Camp**- Orientation, program resources, training, advising
- **Midpoint Symposium** -advising, focus groups, project decision point
- Blackboard course management system-Academic Suite -6.3.1.574
- To view the course sequence, visit [http://msidt.fullerton.edu/](http://msidt.fullerton.edu/)
PROGRAM SITE

http://msidt.fullerton.edu/

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Tuesday, March 25th 2003

LATEST NEWS

APPLICATION DEADLINE

For a New Cohort- Fall, 2003.
Unique Features

• Curriculum Design Elements Common To Courses
• Modular Designs
• Student-Centered Instruction
• Constructing Meaning In On-line Discussions
• Ongoing Assessment Using Multiple Measures
• Cohort-Based Structure
• Educational Theory Translated To Practice
Classes

- **IDT 505**-Hardware and Authoring Environments in Instructional Contexts (3)
- **IDT 510**-Research in Instructional Design (3)
- **IDT 520**-Instructional Design Issues for Technology-based Instruction (3)
- **IDT 525**-Instructional Approaches in Learning and Cognition (3)
- **IDT 530**-Planning, Designing and Evaluating Technology-based Instruction (3)
- **IDT 535**-Instructional Strategies for Pre-K through Adulthood (3)
- **IDT 540**-Web-based Teaching and Learning (3)
- **IDT 545**-Emerging Technology and Issues in Instruction (3)
- **IDT 550**-Practicum in Instructional Design and Technology (3)
- **IDT 597**-Project (3)
Course Design

• Weekly discussions or assignments
• Flexibility – asynchronous
• Due dates, assignments posted throughout
  – Weekly announcements
  – Discussion board
• Consistency in design and structure throughout courses
Ongoing Assessment

Course assessments reflect multiple measures (23 different types):

• Group discussions.
• Research/learning application activities.
• Study reports and self-assessment.
• Research papers.
• Mid-term and final exams.
• Small group presentations/peer critiques
• External evaluator-anonymous postings-Blackboard site
Program Strands

• Each course has objectives and activities intertwining and linking the strands throughout the program:
  • Assessment/Evaluation
  • Collaboration
  • Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
  • Media Literacy
  • Research
  • and Written Communication
Faculty Assignments

• Hiring process in interdisciplinary program
• Not aligned with any one department
• Chair agreement and support is key
• Juxtaposition with home department and intermittent teaching in MSIDT program
• Program council separate from MSIDT Team- working group
• Shared values and commitment to quality
Contract Development/Courses

• Course development contract and copyright and portability of content
• Work for Hire Agreement
• Faculty delivery obligations
• Course custodian policy
Ethics Issues

- Faculty and students
- Unexpected situations = no previous experiences nor parameters
- Beyond Netiquette
- Cyberethics, ethical decision making, business ethics with technology - no correspondence or examples
  [http://www.ethicsweb.ca/resources/](http://www.ethicsweb.ca/resources/) - applied ethics on the web and using technology
- Different type – not found in literature
- Multilevel involvement:
  - Faculty - contractual violations and online behavior
  - Students - online professional behavior

  “Shaping social behavior online takes more than new laws and modified edicts.”
Ethical Problem: Faculty - Contract Violations and Improper Online Behavior

- Instructor malfeasance, contract violation and unprofessional conduct
- Course development contract and copyright and portability of content
- Work for Hire Agreement-legal contracts
- Faculty delivery obligations-same teaching obligations as F2F
- Course custodian policy- ownership of curriculum
- Email communication parameters and appropriate language and relationships
Faculty: Ethics Solutions

• Faculty removal policies-college level
• Campus ethics violations and personnel document inclusion-RTP
• Legal counsel involvement
• Collective bargaining agreement policies-impact ethics enforcement?
• Secured outside server space and domain name- www.msidt.org for security and access to curriculum
Ethical Problem: Student -
Online Professional Behavior

• Student harassment and threatening language in online setting
• Program coordinator and campus support services – Business and Financial Affairs
• Worked with campus police and administration
• Corresponding California penal code
• Cease and desist/finish program under watch and rules of conduct
Code of Conduct/Administrative Probation Policy

• Consideration of developing a code of conduct for inclusion in Program Handbook beyond university policies
• Discussion and small group work related to inappropriate behavior – boot-up camps orientation program
• New campus Administrative Probation policy – professional behavior -useful for these type of situations
Students: Problem Solving Solutions and Scenarios

• Used unethical behavior situations as problem solving scenarios
• Intake interview
• Boot-up camp orientation program small group discussion/resolution
• Assess individual behavior to handle own problems/situations with campus services (financial aid, Graduate Studies, etc.) and working in cohort setting with inappropriate behavior in the group
• Private-Counseled with individual students through private messaging
• Public-Proposed new directions for discussions by reminding the group of ethical considerations
• What to do about ethical research related to behaviors discussion forums?
Guidance for Writing a Code of Ethics

by Chris MacDonald, Ph.D.

1. What will be the purpose of your new code? Is it to regulate behavior? To inspire?

2. Different kinds of documents serve different purposes. Is your new document intended to guide people or to set out requirements? Is it really a Code of Ethics that you need? You might consider creating a Statement of Values, a Policy, a Mission Statement, a Code of Conduct...

3. A code of ethics should be tailored to the needs and values of your organization.

4. Many ethics codes have two components. First, an aspirational section, often in the preamble, that outlines what the organization aspires to, or the ideals it hopes to live up to. Second, an ethics code will typically list some rules or principles, which members of the organization will be expected to adhere to.

5. Will your new ethics document include some sort of enforcement? If so, what kind?

6. Often the principles or values listed in an ethics document will be listed in rough order of importance to the organization. The ordering need not be strict, but generally the value or principle listed first will have a natural prominence.

7. Think carefully about the process by which you create your new code. Who will be involved? A small working group? Or all the people affected by the code? How will you distil the needs of your organization and the beliefs of your members into a document? The process may matter as much as the final product.

8. How will your new code be implemented? How will it be publicized, both inside and outside of your organization? What steps, if any, will be taken to ensure that the values embodied in your code get implemented in organizational policies and practices?

9. How / when will your code be reviewed / revised?

And remember that a code of ethics will not solve all ethical problems

http://www.ethicsweb.ca/codes/coe3.htm/W. Maurice Young Centre for Applied Ethics
Community of Learners Research Project

• Under direction of Dr. Joyce Lee, MSIDT Team member
• Designed study to examine various aspects of an online learning community
• Multiple perspectives of team members
  – institutional support
  – students’ prior experiences with technology
  – positive peer and instructor interactions
  – constructivist approaches to teaching and learning
  – cognitive changes generated in the discussion boards through critical discourse
  – accessibility and reliability of web-based technologies
  – perspective transformations engendered through assessment/evaluation activities
Themes

- misassumptions/misperceptions of ethical expectations
- inflexibility-faculty and students
- reshaping the bureaucracy
- University level governance dynamics
- territorial or protocol conflicts
- creation of team working principles
- unique cohort learning expectations
Discussion/Questions & Answers

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!!!

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