

Moving Large-Scale Programs Online: A Case Study and Discussion

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In the fall of 2003, the College of Humanities and Social Science (CHASS) at NC State University made the decision to move a number of the English Department's professional writing courses online by the following fall (2004). The professional writing program involves approximately 800 students a semester in junior-level technical-, business-, and science-writing courses. As a result, approximately ten faculty members faced the prospect of quickly transporting their professional writing classes from traditional classrooms into an online environment. Although several of these teachers had taught online before and several more had at least some experience putting their syllabi online, some were entirely unacquainted with online teaching and most were apprehensive about acquiring the knowledge and time to make the transition work.

In order to meet this challenge, professional writing faculty members at NC State needed three things: administrative support, peer reassurance, and professional development opportunities. A number of key administrative support units and individuals worked collaboratively to ensure that appropriate resources, peer support, and adequate professional development were available for the success of this endeavor. The result was the creation of a triangulated support approach (Figure 1) that recognizes the value of addressing all three of these areas when planning for faculty support.

Figure 1



<http://www.westga.edu/%7Edistance/ojdl/spring81/covington81.htm>

Possible discussion questions:

1. What types of administrative support has your institution found necessary to provide faculty who want to (or as in our case, have to) teach with technology?
2. What kinds of professional development activities are offered to support faculty who are going to teach with technology, either face-to-face or DE?
3. What is the role of peer support in using technology?
4. What other support areas are needed to transition faculty from face-to-face to either hybrid or distance teaching environments?