Title of Session: Faculty Resistance to Online Learning (FROL) - User Design
Moderator: Roger Goodson
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BjB . o O (please read
http://www.cndbusinessprogram.com/systemicchangeuserdesign.html before we begin)

BjB : should we start with introductions, Roger?

RogerMG: Let's do that.

BjB : Welcome to FROL. We usually start the discussions with introductions

BjB : please tell Roger where you are located and what your interest is in the topic.

RogerMG: I am Roger Goodson, and I teach at Notre Dame de Namur University in Belmont CA.

JeffC: I'm Jeff Cooper, on Helpdesk here and in Oregon.

SusanR: I'm Sue

SusanR: K to 8 Sub and facilitator of the K to 3+ Great Resources group and ASO sessions

MerleM: I'm Merle Mason, Academic Technology Manager here at Notre Dame de Namur University. I have read the link, and my phone is now off the hook.

RogerMG :-)

BjB laughs...good!

RogerMG: This article interested me from the standpoint that 'user design' may be a good way to work with faculty resistance to OL . . .I particularly like the part that indicates that user design may be confused with consulting users rather than having them take an active part in the actual choice and design of online learning opportunities.

JeffC: I wouldn't use words like "user design" to faculty... sounds too techy... how about student centered learning? Because... it looks like that's what they're talking about... and teachers would understand that.

RogerMG: I would agree . . .that's just tech talk. The journal is mostly for designers.

MerleM: The article distinguishes between user-designed and user-centered, with the latter having users "consulted but not empowered."

RogerMG: I always tend to think that empowering people is a route to committed action. Your thoughts?

RogerMG: There is evidence that past tech. interventions in schools and colleges failed largely because 'users' were not empowered.

MerleM: I think the difference they're getting at is the users are part of the team, as opposed to someone from whom the design team is seeking input.

JeffC: The question is how do you empower people who feel inadequate? How do you facilitate their using tech without them feeling like they're dumb? Do you expect them to bring ideas to the table, or offer them a number of choices?

MerleM: Certainly agree about "route to committed action'; the more they're involved, the more the buy-in.

RogerMG: The other major aspect of the article, is that any intervention must take the 'system' and 'suprasystems' into consideration. A major point the authors were making was that if schools are to improve, everything from the suprasystem on down through all subsystems must change.

RogerMG: What can create these changes?

MerleM: If the article's point is correct, the changes would have to come from the top.

RogerMG: That's the suprasytem . . .so one thing to consider in this, is 'what are the values' actors in that system use to make decisions?

RogerMG: E.g. Are they traditional values re: education based in industrial sociatal norms, or are they more 'leading edge' values based on 'information society' norms?

MerleM: I think there are decision-makers from each camp, as well as those with their feet in both camps.

MerleM: But involving the users, empowering the users, in this case, means having students involved in efforts to redesign.

RogerMG: Are they (values) based in 'no child left behind' type three 'R's, teach to the test . . . or are they based on 21st century 'needs' our students will and do require to succeed/survive in the information age?

RogerMG: Merle!!! Absolutely!!!

RogerMG: In many cases students are better users and more frequent users of IT then teachers.

RogerMG: For instance . . . I still have no idea how I might integrate IM into my course design . . .but some teachers and profs. are doing it . . .Same with Ipods.

JeffC: But that takes me back to my original question/comments Roger... for "resistant faculty" ... how do you bring them onboard with the decision making process when they don't have an idea as to where to begin?

RogerMG: Perhaps the beginning place . . .is with the students. What do you think?

JeffC: I'm all for empowering them, to give them all the support they can handle as well as a wide array of choices (something that most IT departments are against because it makes *their* lives harder)... but faculty (teachers, etc.) really don't know where to begin (for the most part).

JeffC: I think that at a university, or even at the K-12 level, it might make sense to ask students to put together a list of tools, ideas, in survey form or something... but for the most part, I don't think that this is going to work.

RogerMG: The students are already 'experiencing' IT . . . all research indicates that in adolescents it's really increasing. Of course . . . .that leads us down the merry lane to of 'constructivist' pedagogy.

MerleM: Particularly with the rapid advancement of technology.

RogerMG: Jeff . . .well, maybe it will work, maybe it won't work . . .but what we've got now 'ain't' to great in terms of 'it' working. Right?

JeffC: I'm all in favor of constructivism... but I see several problems here.

RogerMG: Such as . . .?

JeffC: First, those at the top of IT in universities aren't really the types who like to let go of control.

JeffC: Second, those at the bottom (the faculty) don't have ideas necessary for changing tech or approaches.

RogerMG: OK . . .I'll buy that . . .so how can they be 'controlled'?

JeffC: I'm in favor of getting people *involved*... and yes, that often means baby steps.

RogerMG: OK

JeffC: I think that a centrist approach (which is standard) where a school takes on one approach to tech is ludicrous.

JeffC: I agree that virtually every teacher (and student) has different teaching and learning needs.

RogerMG: I would agree . . .and it probably turns off more teachers than not.

JeffC: Therefore, you need to create a hybrid approach to tech.

RogerMG: I like that.

JeffC: You need to be able to say "Look... here is what is out there" and flash up a grid with different platforms, systems, synchronous and asynchronous tools, teaching techniques, etc.

RogerMG: Can you be a bit more specific re: Hybird

RogerMG: OK . . .I like that.

JeffC: And... the "you" here starts with the IT people at the top as a starting point.

JeffC: Then... the "you" evolves as teachers/students/parents etc. add to the grid.

JeffC: Now... this means a rather anarchic approach, since so many people will be going in so many different directions.

JeffC: Which is fine with me, but IT people really are resistant to that sort of change.

RogerMG: OK . I saw V for Vendetta:-)

JeffC: To counter that, what you really need to work on in universities, and school districts, etc. is a *user group mentality*.

JeffC: For example, our school district doesn't "support" macs.

JeffC: Which of course teachers interpret as doesn't "allow" macs.

RogerMG: OK

JeffC: My position to the district is "why do you need to support them, other than purchase? let them have what they want and figure out ways to support each other."

JeffC: centrist top down doesn't work for several reasons, the main one being those at the bottom don't like being told what to do.

JeffC: anarchic doesn't work because those at the top with the power don't want to give it up.

JeffC: therefore, a hybrid solution needs to develop, where everyone can (supposedly) be happy with a variety of solutions.

RogerMG: OK . . .I think I see where you're going with this.

JeffC: I'm just pointing out that the politics of this situation are kind of tricky...

JeffC: And... it's really not likely to happen because it involves *change* ... and change happens extremely slowly in schools.

JeffC: Well... pretty much everywhere I guess.

JeffC: Unless you bring in a change agent with this type of agenda... and actually listen to them.

RogerMG: I would still hold to an assumption that somehow, because the values at different system levels are so different . . .that some critial and important value must cut across all levels . . .say for instance, the 'survival' of the organization.

MerleM: The tools are changing more quickly than the methods.

JeffC: Well... right now *nobody* is happy is your basic status quo... maybe if they all began to understand that by coming up with a hybrid solution that meets the needs of the end users, without overburdening the support staff, that they can make something work for everybody.

RogerMG: But, Merle, the students are adapting to the 'tools' more rapidly than the teachers . . .would'nt you agree.

MerleM: The pedagogies haven't changed as rapidly as the technology.

JeffC: The way I see it though, it doesn't follow a typical flow--chart of decision making.

MerleM: Yes, more students are using ipods and IM than their elder teachers.

RogerMG: Well . . .from what I know of flow charts they are pretty formal, but most changes of any worth occur through 'manipulation' of the informal paths of decision making.

BjB . o O (just a few minutes left, Roger)

RogerMG: Thanks BJ. Let's sum up.

MerleM: What do you mean by the manipulation of the informal paths of decision making?

RogerMG: nasty word Merle . . .politics

RogerMG: I like your thoughts Jeff. And as an activist support their intent . . .I like hybrid as a word to sum up how one finds middle ground between anarchy and top down decision.

RogerMG: I would still hold to more student involvement in design . . .as A.

RogerMG: S. Neill said though,

RogerMG: Freedom is not license

RogerMG: Responsible involvement of responsible students.

RogerMG: We're out of time.

MerleM: Thanks for the discussion.

RogerMG: See you round the campi Merle

BjB : Thanks, Roger.

RogerMG: Thank you BJ

BjB waves goodnight