Title of Session: Faculty Resistance to OL-Institutionalized Resistance
Moderator: Roger Goodson
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Room: Faculty Resistance to Online Learning Group

BJB2: any particular topic you want announced, Roger?

RogerMG: Yes. Institutionalized Resistance . . .A Tough Customer

BJB2: Welcome to today's FROL discussion.

RogerMG: Let's start with introductions.

RogerMG: I am a professor at Notre Dame de Namur University with an interest in online learning and technological innovation in teaching and learning.

GeorgeK: I am from Notre Dame de Namur University- I teach management and business-related subjects

SondraGst4: I am in West Virginia and I am Director of Personnel. This is my first experience with online communities

ChristianW: hello my name is Christian and I'm in Houston, TX. currently I'm a student teacher

RogerMG: I think George missed your intro last time Patricia. Where is your University?

GeorgeK: I used to live in Vienna WV-- great state

PatriciaLe: To Sondra: Are you with West Virginia University?

GeorgeK: Belmont, California

SondraGst4: No. I am with the WV Schools for the Deaf and Blind

PatriciaLe: I am the Instructional Designer for our 1400 faculty at Western Washington University - 2 hours north of Seattle, 30 minutes south of the Canadian border

PatriciaLe: To Sondra: so you have very specific needs for alternate access to online content

PatriciaLe: To Sondra: It will be very interesting to hear your experiences with captioning and video narrative

SondraGst4: Yes, with strict standards for highly qualified teacher under NCLB it would be beneficial for our students to access online content.

RogerMG: Topic: In education the classroom has become like a sacred place where various institutional, cultural rituals occur daily. Over the years they have become so embedded in the day to day life of the school, college, university that they operate largely beneath the level of most peoples awareness. It is only when something 'new' comes down the pike that these 'rituals' become threatened and teachers, administrators, school boards et als typical response is to 'resist'. Would you agree with this statement?

PatriciaLe: To Christian: Are you K12? What age group and subject(s)?

GeorgeK: Yes, Roger

PatriciaLe: To Roger: Yes

ChristianW: yes

RogerMG: Could you give some examples of typical reactions?

SondraGst4: Some "seasoned" teachers at our schools are very resistant to new technology and plan to retire to avoid learning new teaching techniques.

PatriciaLe: Administrative as well as faculty groups become very territorial and the essential multi-disciplinary collaboration can be challenging

ChristianW: Patricia: actually I'm ec-4. right now I'm in 4th grade

GeorgeK: That would be ok if you could actually get them to retire.

RogerMG: I think many only 'threaten' to retire:-)

PatriciaLe: To George> what a cynic <smile>

SusanR: These teachers need some kind of "hook" to get them engaged in terms of technology

LeeM: when the teachers flat out refuse to learn and use technology the kids lose out on great real life experiences.

GeorgeK: Very cynical over time-- Is there anything in the Spelling Commission's recommendations that could give us some leverage?

RogerMG: Consider the institution a 'belief system' like a religion . . .how do people 'behave' when a belief is threatened?

SondraGst4: Yes it is the students who are losing out on this ongoing battle!

ChristianW: they retaliate, the method of retaliation here is just a flat out refusal to incorporate technology in their classrooms

RogerMG: OK Retaliation is one response. Others?

GeorgeK: Verbal sabotage

PatriciaLe: To Roger: At my institution, in response to community and student requests for more online opportunities, top administrators have drawn a hard line in the sand - basing the universities reputation on F2F teaching and describing OTL as "inferior" and a threat to the quality of our academic mission

RogerMG: Backbiting

ChristianW: I think that ignorance also plays a role here. Many teachers just don't have any ideas of HOW to incorporate tech, in the classroom

SusanR: focus on just one area where they can achieve success and see results in terms of their curriculum

GeorgeK: Yes, when I arrived six years ago, my place said we were "high touch" not high tech.

RogerMG: Patricia. So, Administrators are like the Pope and Cardinals in the RC church.

PatriciaLe: Certainly key administrators can very negatively influence motivation by not allowing release time and stipends, or considering OTL in tenure and promotion decisions. This makes it very tough for overworked and/or untenured faculty

RogerMG: If we stick with the metaphor for a bit, perhaps we can 'see' something a bit differently. For instance, once the line is drawn in the sand, one must have 'faith' in that line. Right?

PatriciaLe: Can you explain a bit more - not following you

GeorgeK: I do not necessarily buy into a police model, but one of the requirements of a typical police department-- from the lowest level police officer to the chief-- is that they go to the firing range and make sure they can still hit the target. I note that many of the administrators I work with have been out of the classroom for a long time. They have a romanticized memory of what teaching was like and no experience in the new venue.

ChristianW: that's true George

SondraGst4: Good point George!

PatriciaLe: To Roger: If I'm understanding your statement correctly, this means that administrators who say that only F2F has value must clearly demonstrate that this is true?

RogerMG: Patricia: OK. Let me try. I am attempting to use metaphor to get to the roots of the 'beliefs' of admins. that you mentioned for instance. If we used the metaphor of 'Church' for instance, we see a belief system based on faith alone, that the (admins) are making the right decisions for the institution.

PatriciaLe: True

RogerMG: OK. So 'how do we 'challenge' a belief system based on faith?

GeorgeK: In non-metaphorical settings even data does not convince the believer.

RogerMG: OK . . .and?

BJB2: Build a new church?

ChristianW: hmmm...

RogerMG: Possible . . .there are alternative religions just like schools

PatriciaLe: Having friends of many different faiths, I've learned not to be judgmental, not to evangelize, to truly listen, understand the importance that everyone's personal faith has for them, to be open-minded. Problem comes when I run into people for whom it's never an open-minded respectful discussion amongst equals

GeorgeK: Make the old church so inconvenient, uncomfortable, and unattractive that going to the new one appears to be a better idea.

GeorgeK: Problem is that on-line takes more work.

RogerMG: OK . . .how do we deal with those, Patricia and George . . .the ones that are never open minded and the ones who will not look at data.

GeorgeK: I hate to say it, but when frustration sets in, I just don't deal with them.

RogerMG: ?

RogerMG: OK. (George and I posted at the same time . . .hooked the same fish too:-)

RogerMG: Not dealing with them is one response . . .I suppose the earlier post is another, hoping they retire soon.

GeorgeK: Using Roger's fish metaphor...I sometimes change fishing spots.

GeorgeK: Sometimes change bait/lures; sometimes take time-out for lunch.

RogerMG: Again, the topic is Institutionalized Resistance . . .some people are not even aware they are 'resisting'

ChristianW: just like you can't force your religious beliefs on someone, how do u show someone the light. Right now it's opinion vs. opinion

PatriciaLe: To Roger: I'm going to build on your metaphor. When I was working for the University of North Carolina in Appalachia, I found it tremendously difficulty to deal with colleagues who believed in the Rapture and who insisted that I was doomed to hell unless I was born again - regardless of how much good I might have done with my life. Their faith gave them certainty and security in comparison to the inevitable doubts and challenges experienced by those who thought differently. I see the same thing at work in OTL. The administration provides certainty - their decisions have kept the academy "safe" for decades; in comparison, unless a group of equal stature and credibility provides another perspective it's entirely too risky for the congregation or the faculty to think or act more broadly

ChristianW: I completely agree

PatriciaLe: To George: Yes swimming upstream can be exhausting and sometimes that's what's needed.

GeorgeK: I always preach: read Lachmann's article- Elite Self-Interest and Economic Decline in Early Modern Europe...basic thesis: established elites stifle entrepreneurial behavior and thereby doom their countries to economic decline as the entrepreneur sees the environmental change and deals with it where as the elite remain dependent on a past reality.

BJB2 . o O (which also refers back to last month's discussion about taking care of yourself first, so that the swim doesn't kill you)

RogerMG: It is possible to start another 'sect' inside a number of institutions . . .and these can grow with the right nurturing into full-fledged belief systems of their own.

GeorgeK: The other "sect" needs to be populated...should we be speaking to faculty population or student/customer population?

PatriciaLe: To Roger: I agree with your statement "some people don't even realize that they're resisting". I'm sure that our top administrators don't see their disdain for OTL as

resistance but as a good business decision for a university that regularly turns away 5 times as many students as they accept. there is no financial gain in OTL and, as administrators, this is something on which they focus . . . . .question is, are they right to do so?

RogerMG: Probably start with the 'doubters' and 'undecided'. . .they could be in any and all populations. For instance, what can the students teach us about technological innovation and communications.

GeorgeK: Patricia, the business case is a good one, but remember that the chief resistors do not believe data.

RogerMG: George. Let's do Hegel . . .how do you 'set up' and antithesis?

RogerMG: There has to be something to 'shake' them up.

GeorgeK: In history, it usually happens with great violence and upheaval...I want no part of that. The figurative equivalent may be a chapter 11.

PatriciaLe: Certainly the students take the lead in wanting to use technology - the irony here is that the students frequently think of the technology AS the education, so a division arises between students who would like to use everything (but without attendant analysis, synthesis and application of knowledge) and faculty who view technology as an approaching freight train

RogerMG: WOW . . .great metaphors there!

GeorgeK: I recently attended a class in which a very clever prof made the content and the delivery technology almost one and the same....

PatriciaLe: can you tell more...

GeorgeK: The class was "Virtual teams" in a masters program. The students were working adults, some of whom had to travel. The class teams did their work mixing f2f and virtual meetings. The final presentation included one student presenting from Tokyo via VOIP. Very impressive.

RogerMG: How could that sort of thing be 'recorded' and 'shown' to other faculty?

PatriciaLe: To George: and I think that here you've gotten to the heart of the challenge. Clearly demonstrating the UNIQUE benefits that technology-supported teaching and learning can provide. Web conferencing and VoIP offer so much additional opportunity

GeorgeK: I asked the class about that. They were nervous about being recorded. We have the equipment to do it, though.

RogerMG: That's the sort of thing (attacks several senses at once, plus intellect) that is better than 'data'.

GeorgeK: Patricia--they really nailed it. Their team work was content-rich, the use of technology was a byproduct. If I had employers there to see this, the students would have been hired away from their current jobs on the spot.

PatriciaLe: At my university, I always try and partner with a faculty member or an academic program to develop and present a best-practice model to others on campus. It's slow going, but faculty inspire one another while also squelching the concerns about "not enough time", "no money" etc. It becomes more a case of "if they can do it, so can I" . . . . .but finding those partners is slow going

RogerMG: The doubters and fence sitters could be drawn into IT if they 'see' something that works and could make their classes more effective.

GeorgeK: I have also seen some classes that ork just as hard but are less effective. If the right partners are there, the right timing needs to be there too.

RogerMG: A lot of great things go on in classrooms and online all the time. Most of them are 'lost.' Is there a way to 'structure' capturing some of them?

PatriciaLe: that's why it's an art as well as a science. I've seen brilliant programming and beautiful multimedia miss the mark because the understanding of how people learn and interact was not considered.

GeorgeK: I have learned much today, but must sign-off to get to my class. Thank you all. Til next month...

GeorgeK left the room (signed off).

RogerMG: Actually, that would be an interesting topic for next time . . .we are almost out of time here.

PatriciaLe: Bye George

BJB2: Thanks, Roger

ChristianW: bye George

SondraGst4: Thank you everyone. Bye!

ChristianW: thanks for your insight

PatriciaLe: To Roger: I am working very hard with our faculty to offer them opportunities to archive their students exemplary work and presentations into a Learning Object Repository - their very own reference resource for all classes

PatriciaLe: Goodnight Sandra, Christian

BJB2: Patricia,

BJB2: I hope you will join the ePortfolios discussion and tell us more about the repository

SusanR . o O (a thought provoking discussion!)

SusanR: Thanks to all for allowing me to lurk and listen

ChristianW: I agree, but our facilitator seemed to have signed off on us

PatriciaLe: Off to supper - goodnight BJB . . . .and managing our campus-wide e-portfolio Initiative is another of my project responsibilities so would love the o0pportunity to share ideas with others

BJB2 . o O (ePortfolios is November 15)

ChristianW: goodnight

PatriciaLe: See you all then if not before