

# **IS ONLINE LEARNING FOR YOU?**

*A LOOK AT FACULTY  
and ADMINISTRATIVE PERSPECTIVES*

**PRESENTED BY**

***FLORIDA COMMUNITY COLLEGE AT JACKSONVILLE***

**AND**

***WebCT***

**Edited by**

**Jack A. Chambers, Ph.D.  
Director, program Development for Instructional Technology  
Florida Community College at Jacksonville**

**Associate Editors**

**John Q. Mullins, M.S.  
Professor of Biology  
Florida Community College**

**Kenneth L. Whitten, M.S.  
Professor of Computer/Information Systems  
Florida Community College at Jacksonville**

**Kevin M. Oliver, Ph.D.  
Instructional Designer & Evaluator  
Educational Technologies  
Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University**

**William D. Milheim, Ph.D.  
Campus Executive Officer & Associate Dean  
Penn State Great Valley**

## INTRODUCTION\*

The major purposes of this brochure and CD ROM are to discuss issues in online learning relevant to faculty and administrators, as well as to suggest strategies which may be utilized by these groups to facilitate the successful use of this learning format. The discussion of these strategies is particularly relevant at this time given the growing interest in providing quality education to students who are not easily able to travel to a traditional campus or school location, mounting pressure on educational institutions to be cost effective in their delivery of instruction and the significantly increasing interest of students to avail themselves of this type of instruction.

Over the past several decades, technologies applied to the higher education learning environment have included 16mm films, 35mm slides, educational television, and computer-based instruction, to name a few. Within the past several years, however, there has been a birth of one specific mode of education--distance education through the use of the Internet. Such *online learning* typically allows students to study at their own pace, at their own chosen time and using materials that are specifically designed for learning at a distance.

Online learning is reasonably well-established as a continuing form of higher education and is not expected to follow in the path of instructional television or any of the other "technology-based educational miracles." This is borne out by the increased numbers of courses and students involved since its initial usage in the mid-90's. As an example, in 1995, Florida Community College enrolled 223 students in 13 online course sections, while in 2000-01, both

---

\*Much of the introductory material may be found in Millheim's (in press) article to be released in 2001/2002 in the *British Journal of Educational Technology*

local students as well as those studying under contractual agreements with the U.S. Navy and the federal IRS, numbered 4,044 in 233 online course sections. Similarly, at Virginia Tech, online student registrations in 2000/2001 numbered over 16,000 in 1,047 course sections. As of March, 2001, an estimated 42,951 online courses were available throughout the world, hosted by 1,299 institutions in 31 countries (McGreal, 2001). The large majority of these courses were in the fields of applied sciences and technology, business and economics, social sciences and health and medicine.

### **Description of Distance Education**

Historically, distance education has been used to provide instructional access to adult students living in remote areas where traditional education was not available (Hawkins, 1999). Although this continues to be a prime reason for online course offerings, the trend in the U.S. is for regularly-enrolled students, many living on campus, to enroll in online courses as well as face-to-face courses. For example, the University of Central Florida has estimated that in 2000/2001 more than 90% of their regularly enrolled students participated in both online and traditional classes (Frank Juge, personal communication, October 31, 2000).

Faculty members have always had a significant, but unique, role within this form of education. Beaudoin (1990) and Cini & Vilic (1999), for example, have described the following instructional activities for faculty involved with distance education--and note that these are the kinds of activities prescribed by applied learning and motivation theory:

- Coaching students throughout the learning process;
- Focusing on the instructional process in addition to the educational content;
- Encouraging students to be active learners;
- Designing and guiding experiences and activities; and

- Providing explanations, references, and reinforcement.

While many of these activities can provide motivation or incentives to faculty interested in working within distance education, they can also be threatening to graduates of traditional education programs or those who need to be more in control of the overall educational process (Beaudoin, 1990; Cini & Vilic, 1999).

### **Advantages of Online Learning**

Faculty, administrators and students each have a number of reasons for becoming involved with online learning (Billings, et al., 1994; Dillon, 1989; Landstrom, 1995). In reference to faculty, it permits them to update and redesign courses using a variety of creative approaches to facilitate learning. It allows them to offer courses beyond their traditional classroom walls without having to be in class at specific times each week. It can also provide a new challenge or change of pace, and may also permit faculty to bring in "top names" from within their own disciplines through various technology options. Finally, it often allows faculty to work on a more equal basis with their students, since distance-based learners tend to be more disciplined, motivated, and mature than their traditional student counterparts.

Administrators, like faculty, see online learning as a way of improving the quality of learning through a creative approach to application of research findings in learning and motivation theory. Fortified by increasing emphasis on evaluation of online courses by accreditation agencies, higher education administrators envision a "new beginning," which hopefully will then spread from online courses to the face-to-face classroom. In addition, of course, the reality of competition from various emerging private educational institutions provides a very strong reason for many, if not most higher education institutions, to view online courses as a means of survival, if not advancement.

There are several specific advantages for students involved with this form of education (Daugherty & Funke, 1998). These include factors related to instructional convenience (e.g., 24-hour access, no required traveling to class, no scheduling conflicts, etc.), increased exposure to technology-based applications (e-mail, listservs, etc.), as well as the potential for an improved education through a higher degree of independent learning and increased amounts of available information. Distance education may also allow participating students to become stronger members of the global community through information exchange, access to numerous external sites, and increased communication with other class members who may be dispersed throughout the world.

### **Disadvantages of Online Learning**

There are also a number of disadvantages related to faculty, administrative and student involvement with this field (Billings, et. al., 1994; Martin, 1999). For example, for both faculty and administrators, effective courses offered via this format involve increased planning and preparation time as well as significant changes in teaching style, instructional strategies and institutional support. Significant increases in costs of instruction (technology hardware, software, training and support services) must be borne by the administration. Courses usually result in decreased interpersonal contact between faculty and students, with students often developing feelings of isolation.

From the learning perspective, at Florida Community College a statistical analysis of the success rate of students in paired online and classroom courses taught by the same instructor concluded that students learning via classroom delivery had a statistically significantly higher success rate ( $p < .05$ ) than those taking classes delivered online. (James Mirabella, personal communication, April, 2001). Also at the College, student withdrawal rates were found to be higher in online courses (11 percent of students

enrolled) than in classroom courses (7 percent). Other colleges report online course completion rates varying from 50 to 87 percent--not a good sign (Carr, 1990).

How can these concerns be overcome and online learning facilitated? With discussions and illustrations drawn from the experiences of the editors and the sponsors, Florida Community College at Jacksonville and WebCT, we encourage you to read on...

## **THE FACULTY PERSPECTIVE**

### **Why Should I Bother?**

*Is it wise to change from the traditional classroom lecture?... I know times are changing, but...What are the rewards for changing?* These questions may be heard within ivy-covered walls at most any time of day. They reflect real concerns on the part of individuals who have taken their undergraduate and graduate courses from faculty who taught them in the same way most of them still teach--the face-to-face traditional classroom lecture. Even when faculty adopt contemporary approaches to teaching and learning such as cooperative learning or group activities, surveys show they may lack an inherent understanding of how students learn (Lazerson, Wagener, & Shumanis, 2000).

Although cooperative learning, mastery learning, and especially interactive learning in the constructivist mode have made inroads into higher education, the face-to-face lecture still predominates. Why? Not only because most faculty themselves have been taught that way, but more importantly, because they have received no training in the applied uses of human learning and motivation research in their advanced degree programs (Palmer, 1998). In addition, the reward systems in higher education have not rewarded transition from the lecture mode. The emphasis on and rewards for research as opposed to teaching at most universities is well known. Although community colleges emphasize teaching over research, the basic rewards of promotion

and tenure too often have been based on longevity, high student evaluations and accolades by peers, rather than for improving the learning process as measured by evaluation of student outcomes.

To facilitate change and thus to improve the online as well as face-to-face learning environments, faculty must be interested in changing. How to accomplish this? Well thought out programs of incentives and rewards for faculty provide one possible solution. Higher education did not provide the high discovery rate now produced by many leading research universities by ignoring incentives and rewards for faculty (tenure, promotion, travel, high status in academia, et al.). The same kind of thinking now needs to be applied to the identification of incentives and rewards which will interest faculty in restructuring the higher education learning environment. The persons most capable of identifying the most effective incentive/reward systems are, of course, the faculty.

### **What are the Problems If I Decide to Try Online Teaching?**

*The time problem.* Developing and teaching online courses requires a great deal of upfront consultation with colleagues and technical staff, training, planning and concentrated work. All of this takes time--especially time prior to offering the course. In general, faculty may want to consider starting online course planning and development at least six months prior to expecting to offer their first course online.

*Where can I go for help?* The place to start is with colleagues. Who have already been there and done that? Who are teaching really successful online courses? These individuals can probably give the best advice regarding what the institution offers in the way of hardware, software and Internet connectivity, training in technology areas and online pedagogy, technology support, mentoring and the like. Peer support and mentoring appear to enable teaching

innovation and technological integration through the assistance and feedback of the local representatives (Boyden, 2000; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000). Some educators also recommend forming cohorts of peers (Bullough, 2000) or faculty study groups (Wildman, Hable, & Preston, 2000).

In addition to contacting colleagues, other major contact sources include the Help Desk, the Distance Learning Office, the Academic Computing Center, the Instructional Design Center, the Professional Development Office and the Center for Teaching and Learning. If none of these offices exist, or if they provide little or no support for online learning, contact the Academic Vice President's Office and tell him or her about it...

***How do I design online courses?*** One of the first steps after deciding you want to develop an online course is to discuss your course with an instructional designer (if your campus has one). Then decide on the courses you need to take to get started, which should include one or more in use of technology support tools such as WebCT (assuming your campus supports this tool), and one or more courses in pedagogy such as that provided by the CREating Optimum Learning Environments (CREOLE) software. Both WebCT and CREOLE will be discussed in greater detail later in this publication and on the CD ROM. Further discussion of online course design is also provided below.

***How do I teach online?*** The glib answer is "very carefully". A major problem in online teaching is that the personal attributes of sitting in the same room with a faculty member and other students is gone. In addition to providing quality content presented in a pedagogically correct way, the online faculty member also has to make every effort to humanize the course--to help students overcome a feeling of isolation and become a part of a learning community. You can attack this problem in a number of diverse ways--through having pictures and brief bios

online of both yourself and your students, involving students in both chat sessions and threaded discussions which encourage personal discussions in addition to discussions of course content, forming student teams to work on course-related problems using e-mail and phone communication among team members and the like. Excellent discussions of the many ways to build online learning communities are provided by Paloff & Pratt (1999).

### **Is This Going To Require Planning?**

*If planning is essential, who should be involved?* The simple answer is yes, online course development and teaching require extensive planning to ensure success. The people who should be involved in planning, in addition to yourself, are other colleagues in your department who have taught online, an instructional designer and a technical support person. Some of these people may play double roles, but do not confuse the instructional designer and the technical support person--they are usually cut from a different cloth. The former will help you think through your pedagogical approach to the course and indicate how this may be translated online using various tools. The latter will actually write the computer commands or train you to do so.

*Changing from individualism to the team approach.* It should be clear from the above that online course development, and quite often online teaching, is a team approach as opposed to the profession's historical individualistic approach. And interestingly, this seems to give faculty members the most trouble. Is an individually developed and taught course more creative than one that is team developed? Although this seems to be inherent in the thinking of many faculty (almost to the point of feeling that team development and team teaching are somehow *cheating...*), higher education faculty need to look outside their profession and recognize that in many scientific fields, team work, especially when combined with the use of technology, is now leading to highly creative discoveries which would be impossible without the team and the tools.

The development of *faculty learning communities* could possibly help considerably in alleviating the stress caused by this change in professional style.

***What is coaching and mentoring all about?*** Another change in the *new learning paradigm* which most faculty are quite familiar with by now is the need to serve as coaches and mentors to students if learning is to be most effective. This interactive system is in contradistinction to pouring knowledge into students heads via the lecture. In this instance, however, in addition to serving as coaches and mentors to students, we're suggesting that faculty become coaches and mentors to other faculty who are attempting to learn how to develop and teach online courses. This is the primary role experienced online faculty can play as part of the development and teaching team.

***Where can I get good course content materials?*** Online learning can be greatly enriched through effective use of media. There are many sources of good course content on the Web, but they have to be evaluated carefully. Similarly, multimedia simulations, verbal descriptions and assessment tools and techniques are readily available through many of the well-known textbook publishers. The MERLOT project ([www.merlot.org](http://www.merlot.org)), spearheaded by the California State University, offers a wealth of course materials free from copyright restrictions for faculty use. In brief, there is no need to continue to build online courses from the ground up. They can be as creative, and perhaps more so, by the judicious use of pre-existing course content materials.

***How do I maintain control in online classes?*** A better question might be, "How much control is required in online classes?" A good discussion of this may be found in the Paloff & Pratt (1999) book on online learning communities. They advise considerable freedom for learners, with faculty tackling difficult situations head-on with students on an individual rather than a group basis.

*How can I keep students from dropping out?* This is one of the most serious problems in online learning. Research has shown that when faculty lack teaching and learning skill, their students are less likely to persist; retention is lost. Effective faculty teaching skills such as preparation, organization, and instructional clarity have been found to be positively related to student persistence in colleges (Braxton, Bray, & Berger, 2000). When teachers are perceived as highly skilled, students tend to express more commitment to an institution and increased intent to re-enroll. Further, classes that emphasize active learning over passive learning or learning by doing average higher retention rates, near 90% (Potter, 1999).

Training faculty to employ specific distance education strategies has been shown to impact retention. After implementing faculty training on distance education design skills, Simpson and Head (2000) recorded a 78.7 percent completion rate and a 78 percent decline in student complaints for distance classes. Student-to-student interaction is cited most frequently as a key instructional element needed to retain students in distance courses (Flottemesch, 2000; Miltiadou & McIsaac, 2000; Wagner, 1997). The integration of tools that promote interaction, such as audioconferencing, have also been found to promote student retention (Henderson & Putt, 1999).

Practical methods that may help increase retention include advising students during orientation or early in their academic careers regarding expectations for successful completion of online courses, developing and placing online a detailed course syllabus, providing technological assistance early in the course, humanizing the course as much as possible and attempting to build learning communities through frequent interactivity (e-mail, chats, etc) with students, and providing incentives and rewards for online participation. In brief, be well prepared,

communicate well and often with students, keep them interactively engaged and reward participation and intellectual achievements.

*Who owns the online course you developed?* This is a question each faculty member should discuss with his/her department chair and administrators **PRIOR** to developing the course. Academic institutions throughout the country are struggling with this problem and each will develop policies and procedures to meet their needs. A good discussion of the many ramifications in this area has been provided by Carol Twigg (2000). In the meantime, until these issues are settled, don't take anything for granted. If you wish to make sure you have the right to teach the course you've developed elsewhere or take it with you if you move to another institution, make sure your agreement is in writing with the institution where the course is developed before you start the development process.

*How effective is online learning? How can it be evaluated?* Assuming we can keep students from dropping out of online courses, how can we be assured that effective learning has taken place? This is another one of the significant issues in online learning--one in which accreditation agencies are taking a great deal of interest. The main points here are that we need to look at student outcomes and to develop well-controlled studies involving control groups if meaningful answers to these questions are expected to be forthcoming.

### **How Can I Design Effective Online Courses?**

*What courses are most easily adapted for online delivery?* Courses that profit most from readings and discussion are obviously those that are lend themselves most easily to online delivery. Examples might include courses in psychology, philosophy, education, and business. Laboratory courses in the natural sciences pose special problems. Although lab experiences through simulations can meet some needs, many faculty feel that hands-on laboratory

experiences are required for all students in the sciences. In these cases, weekend or other periods of time may be required on campus, or alternatively special arrangements may be made with labs at colleges and hospitals in the geographical areas concerned.

***What kinds of software support are available?*** Recently a number of quality products have emerged which make online course development and delivery much easier for interested faculty. These include the major course development platforms such as WebCT, the capabilities of which will be described later in this brochure. Other online development tools are described in the CREOLE software module “How to Develop Web-based Courses”.

***WebCT capabilities.***

***Online Pedagogy-- CREOLE.*** CREating Optimum Learning Environments (CREOLE) is a major online project currently under development jointly by Florida Community College at Jacksonville and Virginia Tech. The initial module, “How to develop Web-based Courses”

provides faculty development training in the areas of interactive, constructivist learning; mastery learning; development of learning communities; and tools for online course development. It requires a capstone project consisting of the development of an online course, and provides online mentors for support during development and critique of the completed course. Now in beta test at 38 colleges and universities across the country, it will be available for acquisition in fall, 2001 through WebCT, Blackboard, Inc. and the PBS Adult Learning Service. The initial CREOLE module may be previewed online at [www.edtech.vt.edu/fcc/grantreview.html](http://www.edtech.vt.edu/fcc/grantreview.html).

***Training in Online Course development--The International Conference on College Teaching and Learning.*** Both training in online course development--Blackboard, WebCT, CREOLE and other tools--may be obtained at the annual International Conference on College Teaching and Learning, sponsored each spring by Florida Community College and held in the city of Jacksonville. The conference attracts about 1,000 faculty from over 20 countries each year and provides over 350 faculty sessions, mostly concerned with the uses of technology and innovative learning strategies to improve the learning process. The 13<sup>th</sup> annual conference will be held April 9-13, 2002, with the theme "Teaching, learning and Technology: Thinking out of the Box...No Boundaries...No Limits". Conference programs, fees and registration are available online at [www.teachlearn.org](http://www.teachlearn.org).

***General Observations.*** There are a number of good sources for getting started in developing and teaching online courses. The Paloff & Pratt (1999) book mentioned earlier is a good place to start, along with a small but very well-done book by DeNigris & Witchell (2000). There's also an interesting study you may want to consult by Alley & Jansak (2001).

## THE ADMINISTRATIVE PERSPECTIVE

### Is there a Need for Planning?

*Is comprehensive long range planning essential?* One of the most common problems encountered by well-meaning administrators is the realization that the institution has spent a great deal of money--mainly on computer hardware--in order to compete in online learning, and it isn't working. Why? No one has bothered to develop a long range plan to guide the development and use of the new learning medium. Research data indicate (Dillon & Walsh, 1992), for example, that institutions have been described as being somewhat indifferent, inconsistent, and even skeptical of this form of education, while providing resources in a piecemeal fashion. Schifter (2000) adds to these concerns, suggesting that there is a lack of technical support, release time, training, and grants for materials and expenses for distance education initiatives--clearly a lack of planning.

The plan should take into account the goals of the institution, the needs of the faculty, the needs of the target student audience for online learning, the required hardware, software and people resources necessary both to implement and to maintain online learning, and the resources available to support the activities required for success. In other words, the plan must take into account purchasing/leasing hardware and software, providing support staff to maintain the equipment and to staff the Help Desk, replacing the equipment every two-three years, providing ongoing faculty development programs related to online course development and online teaching, providing instructional design staff to support faculty in their efforts, providing a well developed plan of incentives and rewards to stimulate faculty participation and providing ongoing institution-wide communication channels regarding all of these activities.

***How long is long range?*** In dealing with technology, long range is not a long time. Overall goals and objectives along with a detailed one year plan should be considered as an essential basis with extended but less detailed planning for an additional two years.

***Who should be involved in planning?*** The size of the organization is likely to influence this decision, but it's important to understand that this kind of planning cannot be done by any single person or administrative unit. A planning group consisting of representatives of the Academic Vice President, faculty from the various academic colleges or major units, the campus Technology Committee, Academic Computing, the Teaching and Learning Center and the Professional Development Office should be considered as a minimum.

***How can we compete with the new private institutions?*** Perhaps a better perspective on the problem would be to carefully define the target student population, identify their major needs and attempt to meet them. In the case of community colleges, it may even be advantageous to examine the possibility of cooperating with some of the private institutions in two plus two programs.

***Why do faculty need incentives and rewards related to online learning?*** Even though many faculty choose their careers for altruistic reasons, it is sometimes hard for them to see the advantages of using a new medium that on the face of it lacks the personal contacts and closeness associated with classroom learning--much of which many faculty feel is essential to the learning process. Add to that the fact that developing online courses and teaching online require extensive training, planning and extra work for faculty, many of whom have very heavy teaching loads. And, of course, tenured faculty have no contractual obligation to take on this additional burden. Considering these factors, a well developed program of incentives and rewards appears to be a critical component in any long range plan for online learning. An

example of this in practice can be found at the University of Cincinnati, where developmental grants awarded to faculty were found to increase technology usage and interdisciplinary collaboration (Camblin & Steger, 2000).

There are, of course, a number of strategies that may be employed in this area. Chief among them is the use of compensation, which may take a number of forms, including payment for all direct instructional costs such as release time for course development or other related purposes (Daugherty & Funke, 1998); payment for training and other related activities (Sedlak & Cartwright, 1997); and travel support for distance education conferences (Olcott & Wright, 1995). Along these lines, Saba (1998) indicates that compensation as an incentive or reward should be clearly specified as to when it should be provided, (during the development phase of a course and/or during its delivery to students), how it should be given (direct payment, course release, and/or a percentage of royalties), and finally a timeline for the negotiation of these items should be determined (during faculty recruitment and/or at a change of contract).

***Who owns the online course?*** Another issue of interest to faculty who develop and teach online relates to intellectual property rights and the specific ownership of the materials developed for this type of instruction. Current institutional policies are somewhat unclear in this area, with distance-based materials sometimes compared to inventions (where universities own patent rights), or textbooks (where faculty deal directly with publishers), or journal articles (where faculty often give copyrights directly to journals) (Guernsey & Young, 1998; Hawkins, 1999). This is a very complex issue since faculty worry about their potential loss of control over course content as well as their general academic freedom, even though the materials may actually be produced using some university systems and personnel (Guernsey & Young, 1998; Saba, 1998).

Generally speaking, unless there are policies to the contrary, if a faculty member has accepted an incentive or reward for developing online courses, the institution is likely to identify the course as its own. As indicated earlier, if faculty wish to “own” the online course, they need to develop a written agreement with the institution prior to beginning development.

*What policies and procedures are required to support effective online learning?* As a minimum, higher education institutions will be well advised to develop written policies concerning the development and maintenance of long range planning in this area, the organizational structure for online learning, the support services to be provided to support it, the required procedures for evaluation of online courses and the institutional stance on intellectual property rights.

### **What Support Services are Necessary for Online Learning?**

*Communication.* Providing a central point for faculty, staff and students to call if they need technical or related types of assistance has been an accepted part of campus life for a number of years. Help Desks can support central communication to answer general questions about services, resolve minor technical problems, dispatch staff to repair or replace technical equipment, report network problems to the appropriate sources, etc. Unfortunately, as a money saving device, many of these centers have been staffed by relatively untrained persons, and a common name for these communication points has become the “Helpless Desk”. Institutions can avoid this dilemma by providing the necessary training to these staffs, while ensuring that a full-time trained supervisor is present, especially during normal work hours. In addition, since online learning indicates there are probably students needing help around the clock and on weekends, providing Help Desk support for extended and weekend hours can avoid many problems. Also, providing online faculty and student handbooks to support and provide answers to questions in

this area can be greatly beneficial. As an example, a copy of the recently developed Faculty Handbook for Online Course Development and Teaching at Florida Community College has been included in the attached CD ROM.

***Computing, Network and Instructional Design Assistance.*** Sufficient staff to maintain the computing resources and networks, including high speed Internet connectivity, is a necessity if online programs are to flourish. The size of this staff and whether maintained by the institution or outsourced, is a local decision. Most colleges and universities have recognized and resolved this problem by now. One that is not universally recognized, however, is the need for instructional design assistance--i.e., help for faculty in choice of delivery platform and use of other software tools, and selection of appropriate pedagogical approaches as well as student assessment strategies. Such help is not likely to be forthcoming from the regular technology staff, nor should it be expected. However, such assistance is needed if high quality online courses are to be developed.

***What kind of training is needed to support online learning?*** Many educators agree it is no longer sufficient to train faculty to use technology, but rather, to apply effective principles of learning across multiple learning environments (Rogers, 2000; Oliver, 2000). Faculty are not trained in pedagogy nor are they rewarded for such concentrations. An edited volume of conference papers focused on faculty development suggests several possible solutions to this problem. These solutions include technology and pedagogy seminars, individual consulting between faculty and instructional design experts, faculty cooperative learning groups or action research teams studying teaching and learning techniques, shared or archived educational resources or materials such as digital cases that allow faculty to easily adopt and integrate new approaches to teaching, and release time to design new lessons (Gillan & McFerrin, 2000).

Overall, faculty development programs will be required in the areas of platform of delivery (such as WebCT), related online course development tools (such as Dreamweaver and Flash), innovative pedagogical strategies (such as CREOLE), and online teaching techniques (perhaps best taught by campus faculty already experienced in online teaching). Experience at Florida Community College suggests that monthly faculty luncheons with topics related to online course development and teaching, led by campus faculty experienced in these areas, provide stimulation and communication to keep programs moving ahead and improving in quality. In essence, peer coaching and mentoring approaches seem to yield very good results.

***Does the institution need library support, counseling, advising and tutoring online?***

This depends on the extent of online programs. If students are predominately local, you probably don't need all of these services online. If however, you envision in your plan an extensive use of online learning encompassing students from distant locations, then it would be wise to consider the possibility of offering all of these services online. It should be kept in mind, however, that your institution does not necessarily have to develop and offer all of these services yourselves. For example, *Smarthinking* is an organization that provides online tutoring, especially in the basic skills areas. It is reasonable to assume that a number of different online services in these areas may be available on an outsource basis in the near future. An example of a company that provides connectivity to outsource groups in these areas is *Eduprise*.

**What's a Good Organizational Pattern?**

***“Champions” and Centralized vs. Decentralized Organizations.*** The type of organizational pattern for online learning that works best will depend on the makeup of the institution, and especially the persons who serve in key roles on the faculty and administrative staff. Above all, there must be at least one or more “champions” who believe in the value of

online learning and who strive to advance it on a daily basis. Hopefully such persons will be in leadership roles in the institution, for without such champions in key positions the program is not likely to be highly successful.

Within this context, institutions have tended to take two different organizational approaches to support online learning. The earlier approach grew out of Offices of Continuing Education which simply expanded their distance learning efforts to include online learning. This centralized approach has served many institutions well, especially small institutions that do not see online learning as a major part of the institutions' missions. Others, identifying online learning as a major role of all of their academic schools or units, have decentralized the approach, with support services provided within each academic unit and/or through centralized offices such as Distance Learning Offices, Provost's Offices, Academic Computing, Professional Development, or Teaching and Learning Centers. The TLT Affiliate of AAHE provides consultation on organizational facilitation of online learning, and the University of Central Florida provides a good example of the successful integration of online learning throughout the institution, with high quality centralized support units.

### **What about Costs?**

*How can we afford the costs involved in online learning?* A more meaningful question might be--*Can we afford not to meet student needs despite the cost?* Students nation-wide are indicating by their registrations that they want online courses. It's therefore incumbent on educational institutions to either find new sources of funding for these programs, or to redirect funds now allocated for other purposes.

Many institutions have convinced their legislatures and trustees that specific allocations and/or special student fees are necessary to support the uses of technology in general, and these

arguments can well be expanded to online course costs. Granting agencies, especially the National Science Foundation (NSF), Title III and Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) at the federal level, and the Pew Charitable Trusts and the Sloan Foundation in the private sector, provide a number of different programs to support innovative programs in online learning.

The reallocation of existing funds is never easy, but institutions would be well advised to examine other historical uses of technology which are costly, but which may not be currently attracting students as had been true in previous years.

### **Are There Accreditation Issues?**

The answer is “yes”. Accrediting agencies have begun a vigorous examination of online courses in the light of student outcomes. Carnevale (2001) reported that representatives of six U.S. regional accrediting agencies finalized a set of recommendations for building and evaluating online programs. The full report detailing the recommendations are available on the enclosed CD ROM; they also may be reviewed on the Chronicle Website at <http://chronicle.com/free/2001/03/2001032301u.htm> .

What the above implies is that faculty in U. S. higher educational institutions will need to become familiar with these recommendations in order to recognize what is expected of them in the online course development process. Academic administrators, especially deans and chairs, also need to be cognizant of these recommendations as they review faculty’s online courses and prepare for visits by their accreditation agency.

## **REFERENCES**

Alley, L. R., & Jansak, K. E. (2001). Applying the principles of learning science to Web-based instruction. [On-line]. Available: [www.WorldClassStrategies.com](http://www.WorldClassStrategies.com) .

- Beaudoin, M. (1990). The instructor's changing role in distance education. *The American Journal of Distance Education*, 4(2), 21-29.
- Billings, D., Durham, J., Finke, L., Boland, D., Smith, S., & Manz, B. (1994). Faculty perceptions of teaching on television: One school's experience. *Journal of Professional Nursing*, 10(5), 307-12.
- Boyden, K. M. (2000). Development of new faculty in higher education. *Journal of Professional Nursing*, 16(2), 104-11.
- Braxton, J. M., Bray, N. J., & Berger, J. B. (2000). Faculty teaching skills and their influence on the college student departure process. *Journal of College Student Development*, 41(2), 215-27.
- Bullough, R. V. (2000). Teacher education reform as a story of possibility: Lessons learned, lessons forgotten: The American Council on Education's Commission on Teacher Education (1939-1942). *Teaching & Teacher Education*, 16(2), 131-45.
- Camblin, L. D., & Steger, J. A. (2000). Rethinking faculty development. *Higher Education*, 39(1), 1-18.
- Carnevale, D. (2000). Accrediting groups issue recommendations for distance-education programs. [On-line]. Available: <http://chronicle.com/free/2001/03/2001032301u.htm> .
- Carr, S. (2000). As distance education comes of age, the challenge is keeping the students. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 46(23), A39-41.
- Cini, M. A., & Vilic, B. (1999). Online teaching: Moving from risk to challenge. *Syllabus*, 12(10), 38-40.
- Daugherty, M., & Funke, B. L. (1998). University faculty and student perceptions of Web-based instruction. *Journal of Distance Education*, 13(1), 21-39.
- DeNigris, J. & Witchell, A. (2000). How to teach and train online. Needham heights, MA: Pearson Custom Publishing.
- Dillon, C. (1989). Faculty rewards and instructional telecommunications: A view from the telecourse faculty. *The American Journal of Distance Education*, 3(2), 35-43.
- Dillon, C. L., & Walsh, S. M. (1992). Faculty: The neglected resource in distance education. *The American Journal of Distance Education*, 6(3), 5-21.
- Flottemesch, K. (2000). Building effective interaction in distance education: A review of the literature. *Educational Technology*, 40(3), 46-51.

Gillan, B., & McFerrin, K. (2000, February). *Faculty development*. Papers presented at the Society for Information Technology & Teacher Education International Conference, San Diego, CA. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 444 497)

Guernsey, L., & Young, J. R. (1998). Who owns on-line courses? *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 44(39), A21-A23.

Hargreaves, A., & Fullan, M. (2000). Mentoring in the new millennium. *Theory into Practice*, 39(1), 50-56.

Hawkins, B. L. (1999). Distributed learning and institutional restructuring. *Educom Review*, 34(4), 12-15,42-44.

Henderson, L., & Putt, I. (1999). Evaluating audioconferencing as an effective learning tool in cross-cultural contexts. *Open Learning*, 14(1), 25-37.

Landstrom, M. (1995). The perceptions and needs of faculty in distance education courses in a conventional university. *Canadian Journal of Educational Communication*, 24(2), 149-57.

Lazerson, M., Wagener, U., & Shumanis, N. (2000). What makes a revolution? Teaching and learning in higher education, 1980-2000. *Change*, 32(3), 12-19.

McGreal, R. (2001) *Best practices in online learning, 2001*. Jacksonville, Florida: TV Dept., Florida Community College at Jacksonville.

Milheim, W. D. (In Press). Faculty and administrative strategies for the effective implementation of distance education. *British Journal of Educational Technology*.

Miltiadou, M., & McIsaac, M. S. (2000, February). *Problems and practical solutions of Web-based courses: Lessons learned from three educational institutions*. Paper presented at the Society for Information Technology & Teacher Education International Conference, San Diego, CA. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 444 471)

Olcott, D. Jr., & Wright, S. J. (1995). An institutional support framework for increasing faculty participation in postsecondary distance education. *The American Journal of Distance Education*, 9(3), 5-17.

Oliver, K. (2000). Methods for developing constructivist learning on the Web. *Educational Technology*, 40(6), 5-18.

Palmer, J. (1998). *Enhancing faculty productivity: A state perspective*. (Education Commission of the States Rep. No. PS-98-4). Denver, CO: Center for Community College Policy.

Paloff, R. M., & Pratt, K. (1999). *Building learning communities in cyberspace*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Potter, K. (1999). Learning by doing: A case for interactive contextual learning environments. *Journal of Instructional Delivery Systems*, 13(1), 29-33.

Rogers, D. L. (2000). A paradigm shift: Technology integration for higher education in the new millennium. *Educational Technology Review*, 13, 19-27, 33.

Saba, F. (1998). Faculty and distance education. *Distance Education Report*, 2(1), 2-5.

Schifter, C. C. (2000). Faculty motivators and inhibitors for participation in distance education. *Educational Technology*, 40(2), 43-46.

Sedlak, R. A., & Cartwright, G. P. (1997). Two approaches to distance education: Lessons learned. *Change*, 29(1), 54-56.

Simpson, J., & Head, L. (2000, October). *Red hot tips: Improve retention in your distance education courses*. Paper presented at the League for Innovation International Conference, Chicago, IL. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 444 617)

Twiggy, C. A. Who owns online courses and course materials? Intellectual property policies for a new learning environment.

Wagner, E. D. (1997). Interactivity: From agents to outcomes. *New Directions for Teaching & Learning*, 71, 19-26.

Wildman, T. M., Hable, M. P., & Preston, M. M. (2000). Faculty study groups: Solving "good problems" through study, reflection, and collaboration. *Innovative Higher Education*, 24(4), 247-63.

## **CD ROM MATERIALS**

Pictures of FCCJ and Jacksonville area

PowerPoint presentations of Handbook materials

FCCJ's Faculty Handbook for Online Course Development and Online Teaching

Carnevale, D. (2001). Accrediting Groups Issue Recommendations for Distance-Education programs. *Chronicle of Higher Education*.