PENNSTATE World Campus

Effective Workload Management Strategies for the Online Environment

A Report Funded by a Grant from The Alfred P. Sloan Foundation to The Pennsylvania State University World Campus

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

"Effective Workload Management Strategies for the Online Environment" is a report outlining research conducted by The Pennsylvania State University's World Campus, funded by the Alfred P. Sloan foundation. A selection of the most effective workload management strategies, chosen by experienced online educators from national and international institutes of learning, are divided into the following four categories: (1) Authoring Strategies, (2) Teaching Strategies, (3) Course Improvement and Revision Strategies, and (4) Institutional Strategies. All four of these areas are important to the success of an online teaching program, and institutions interested in using the strategies are encouraged to customize them to their own needs, and cultivate flexibility, creativity, and teamwork in this effort.

These strategies serve as the basis of an evolving process to collect and catalog a variety of feedback from experienced online educators in how they reduce the amount of time and energy in the online environment. It is expected that the original four categories identified through this project will expand as will the number of strategies identified in each category. As new information becomes available, workshops are conducted, and experienced is gained, the subsequent editions will reflect growing knowledge about how to manage the online workload. The desire is that new practitioners of online education can benefit from this recorded expertise.

The most effective authoring strategies collected from faculty experienced in online teaching include adopting a course development model, identifying and acquiring existing learning resources, establishing and distributing reusable templates, providing the course author with a sample online course, providing students with specific instruction for assignments, applying project planning and management methods to the course development process, establishing a course development team, designing balanced instructional activities, finalizing one module or unit before developing the remainder of the course, developing rubrics for each graded student assignment, and creating a learning object database. Depending on the type of institution and the resources available, some of the recommended strategies for reducing faculty workload during the course development period may be preferred over others. The institution, by no means, has to use all of the strategies. In general, a combination of strategies customized for the particular institution will work best, and with each new course under development further customization and flexibility will help to streamline the process.

The most effective strategies for reducing faculty workload during the teaching phase of online instruction include clarifying and enhancing students' technical skills before registration, providing a detailed syllabus, defining the operating parameters of the course, creating feedback rubrics, establishing a routine, incorporating a learning management system for recording course transactions, fostering group dynamics within the course, beginning the course with an activity that encourages interaction, and establishing consistent, effective methods of electronic communication. Teaching strategies focus on making sure the audience is ready for the material (and helping them to hone their technological skills if not), providing high quality communication in both the instructional and the interactive aspects of the course, and developing streamlined methods for managing course events and transactions. Here again, depending on the type of institution and the course material itself, some teaching strategies may prove more useful

than others, and flexibility and customization are recommended to create optimum workload efficiency.

It is easy to overlook course revision and improvement strategies while in the throes of new development, but as the institution progresses through development of a selection of courses and programs the inevitability of course revision becomes apparent. Proper management of resources includes projecting the volume and frequency of revision necessary and budgeting accordingly. Recommended strategies to reduce faculty workload and avoid the pressure of overcommittment include conducting multiple evaluations of the courses, conducting a pilot run or initiating an expert internal review before release of the course, managing the revision cycle as an integral part of the course, developing methods for managing dynamic course elements (updates), inviting student feedback at the close of the course, developing and maintaining a course history, involving the original course author in the revision process, and rewarding students for reporting errors in the course material.

Institutional strategies form the foundation of successful development of online instruction. Without the support of the institution, faculty struggle under unmanageable workloads, prohibitive costs, isolation, and time-consuming learning curves involving new technologies. Successful strategies for institutional support of faculty include ensuring faculty access to instructional design and systems support, providing adequate faculty development opportunities, providing technical support for faculty and students, providing an adequate learning management system, establishing institutional parameters for online operation, integrating institutional administrative systems and tools, providing clear institutional policies on intellectual property rights, defining the role of online education in the mission of the institution, developing institutional policy for compensating and rewarding faculty and academic units, and providing copyright and permissions support and policies.

Careful application of these strategies to the needs of online educators can significantly enhance the success of the online education program. “Effective Workload Management Strategies for the Online Environment” is an evolving set of such strategies, a work in progress, and new strategies will be added as the history of online education progresses.

INTRODUCTION

Faculty report an increase in the time and energy required to design, develop, and deliver online course instruction as opposed to traditional on-site instruction. Unlike the learning curve for traditional course instruction, which can be facilitated through the study of a wide selection of publications, participation in courses, seminars, and workshops, or through interaction with more experienced colleagues, mastery of the online learning environment is relatively new and undocumented. Not quite a decade old, this mode of teaching has yet to accrue an organized base of shared experiences and history.

The technology that makes learning at a distance possible provides a vast array of capabilities and each presents a learning curve. Bulletin and discussion boards, online collaborative projects, a wealth of quizzing and testing capabilities, and direct personal interaction with each student provide a rich assortment of design options to add to the online educational experience. These same capabilities also require faculty to expend additional time and energy during all phases of online activities, including initial design of the course, as well as delivery, management, and revision.

Many educational institutions are now establishing systems and services to support student and faculty use of electronic communications, and they are also discovering the associated learning curves. One unfortunate outcome of these systems and services is an increase in faculty workload, sometimes due to misapplication of the systems, and sometimes due to poor integration of the systems.

Because the adoption of online technologies holds great promise for improving the educational process, it is important to resolve issues surrounding the perception of unmanageable workloads. As these systems become more commonplace (as either enhancements to an on-site instructional environment or as delivery methods for an online course) it is imperative that information be collected and shared with novice and experienced users alike on how to harness the power of the technology without creating unmanageable workloads for either the faculty or the student.

PURPOSE

Recognizing early on that a primary key to the success of an online teaching and learning program was a skilled and competent faculty, Penn State's World Campus established an active Faculty Development Program in 1995. The primary goal of the Faculty Development Program was to build a community of faculty who could effectively author, design, develop, and deliver online courses via Penn State's World Campus. The Faculty Development Program was designed to provide a wide range of opportunities to serve the varying faculty interests and levels of expertise in online education.

The World Campus also recognized that the sustainability of the Asynchronous Learning Network (ALN) environment extended beyond limited numbers of early faculty adopters. Inclusion of the broader faculty community was necessary to ensure success and longevity. In

order to address the workload concerns of that broader faculty base, techniques, tips, and strategies would need to be shared to enable all faculty members to effectively manage their workloads.

With a grant provided by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, the World Campus conducted a research project, the goal of which was to survey and catalog proven strategies developed by experienced educators for managing the online workload. Penn State brought together a diverse group of distance educators from institutions around the world in positions of administration, faculty, and instructional design, to work together to establish guidelines on the effective workload management strategies. The guidelines and strategies were chosen to meet a certain level of generalization and usability. Penn State's World Campus initiative culminated in this report, entitled: Effective Workload Management Strategies for the Online Environment. Defined within this report are proven strategies divided into four primary categories. These categories include:

1. Authoring Strategies
2. Teaching Strategies
3. Course Revision and Improvement Strategies
4. Institutional Strategies

The research project included an online threaded discussion survey and an Effective Strategies Workshop conducted at Penn State. Throughout both primary components of the project, peer review played a substantial role in defining and refining the categories and strategies. Further activities are planned to develop and refine effective workload management strategies. It is the hope of the staff and participants of this initiative that the strategies offered in this report provide faculty members with an effective array of methods to manage and reduce their online workload.

PROCESS

This section provides a brief overview of the process used to develop effective workload management strategies for faculty involved in online learning activities. More than forty online distance educators participated in the collection and refinement of these strategies over the course of the research project from February 2002 through December 2002. The primary activities of the process can be divided into two phases:

Phase I: Online Threaded Discussion Survey
Penn State invited individuals from national and international colleges and universities to participate in an online threaded discussion survey. Forty-six individuals responded and participated during this phase.

- The online threaded discussion consisted of a demographic survey and nine open-ended questions, which were posted within an online bulletin board. All of the participants posted their responses to each of the nine questions. Some also responded to postings by other participants.
- The results from the online survey were compiled and categorized resulting in a raw data document and an executive summary.

- The executive summary was sent out via e-mail to all online survey participants for review and revision. The submitted revisions were incorporated into the final raw data document and executive summary. The document from this phase was used as the basis for the second phase of the project.

Phase II: On-Site Workshop at The Pennsylvania State University

Thirty-three of the forty-six survey participants attended the Effective Strategies Workshop held at Pennsylvania State University October 20–23, 2002. Using the raw data from the online survey, strategies were extracted and formulated into the four categories mentioned above.

During the first part of the workshop, participants were placed into strategy teams. Each strategy team, consisting of administrators, faculty members, and instructional designers, was assigned one of the four categories. Each team was asked to review their strategies and choose the top ten most effective workload management strategies according to three criteria:

- Generalizability—strategies that faculty at many different types of institutions could use to manage their online workload
- Potential Impact—strategies that would have the strongest impact on managing online workload
- Minimal Ramifications on Others—strategies that would inflict the least amount of additional responsibility on others

Once the strategy teams selected their top ten list, they were asked to fill in a table with the following information for each strategy:

- Explanation of Strategy
- Benefits to Implementing Strategy
- Limitations to Implementing Strategy
- Rating of Estimated Effectiveness of Strategy in Reducing Online Workload (Strategies were rated 1–5, 5 being the most effective)
- Brief Rationale for Rating

The work from the strategy teams was compiled and formatted for the second part of the workshop.

During the second part, the participants were placed into review teams. Each review team, consisting again of administrators, faculty members, and instructional designers, was assigned one of the four categories. No participant reviewed the category which they had worked on in the strategy teams. The tasks for each review team included the following:

- Treating the process as though it were a peer review of the top ten strategies chosen and developed by the strategy teams
- Validating the strategies developed by each strategy team by providing input, feedback, and suggestions to facilitate further refinement and advancement

All of the work completed by the strategy and review teams was compiled, culminating in the publication of this report.

PARTICIPANTS

A group of forty-six faculty members, instructional designers, and administrators from twenty-national and three international institutions participated in the online survey along with an advisory team of seven faculty members from The Pennsylvania State University. Teaching experience among the participants ranged from 2 to 34 years. The ranges of student population in online courses were 8–55 students in undergraduate courses, 8–35 students in graduate courses, and 10–75 students in non-credit courses.

AUDIENCE

The audience for this report is educators and supporting staff participating in the design, development, and delivery of online instruction. The participants involved in the creation of this document come from a variety of institutions ranging from community colleges to research universities. Depending on the type of university or instructional environment, personal skill levels, and teaching styles, some strategies may be preferred over others for usability and effectiveness in a given context.

EFFECTIVE WORKLOAD MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR THE ONLINE ENVIRONMENT

The effective workload management strategies for the online environment are organized into four categories. The first three categories emphasize the instructional aspects of an online course. They are (1) Authoring Strategies, (2) Teaching Strategies, and (3) Course Revision and Improvement Strategies. The final category emphasizes the role of the institution in assisting faculty members with managing their online workload. This category is entitled (4) Institutional Strategies. The following chart illustrates how each strategy is organized and presented in this report:

I. CATEGORY: (Authoring Strategies)

A. Strategy 1:

1. Explanation

The strategy is described to provide focus, definition, and context.

2. Benefits

a) Benefits of using the strategy are listed here.

3. Limitations

a) Limitations of using the strategy are listed here.

4. Rating

a) The strategy rating on a scale of 1 to 5 is presented here. This rating represents the estimated effectiveness the strategy has in managing and reducing workload. A rating of 5 is the highest for a strategy with excellent effectiveness while a rating of 1 is good, but in some cases less effective or applicable.

b) In some cases, teams had time to outline the rationale behind the rating they chose, and this is included where available.

B. Strategy 2:

Note that within each category, the strategies are listed in order from highest estimated effectiveness to least estimated effectiveness in managing online workload. Those with equivalent ratings were not placed in any particular order.

I. AUTHORING STRATEGIES

Unlike classroom-based education, online distance education often encompasses an authoring phase prior to course delivery. Authoring is a time intensive endeavor, with some institutions allowing one year or more for the development of an online course. However, processes, procedures, and products developed during the authoring phase can have a significant impact on reducing the online workload during the teaching phase. Many times, a faculty member must balance the cost of increased time during the authoring phase with the benefits realized during the teaching phase. For some institutions, authoring occurs individually, with faculty members developing their own courses. Other institutions offer course development teams to assist faculty members during the authoring process.

A. Strategy 1: Adopt a Course Development Model

1. Explanation

The course development model serves as a blueprint specifying the primary components of the course. The course development model should include the following:

a) A definition of audience, objectives, learning outcomes, and exit competencies
b) A media analysis, which delineates the extent to which multimedia, text, graphics, etc., are to be used throughout the course
c) A rationale for how the delivery mode best meets the course objectives
d) An explanation of how the learning process will be implemented
e) An explanation of how the learning process will be evaluated
f) An estimation of the revision process (how frequent, how extensive)

2. Benefits

a) Establishes scope of project
b) Develops a shared understanding of the product
c) Highlights and discovers problems at an early stage
d) Saves time by defining what is going to be worked on and when
e) Provides the structure for a reusable model

3. Limitations

a) Requires an initial period of reflection since faculty cannot proceed with the authoring process until the development model is resolved
b) Requires analysis of audience to ascertain best delivery methods, which may be difficult for faculty due to lack of data
c) Conceptualizing course as a whole from the beginning may be difficult
d) Requires more structured process than faculty are used to in traditional teaching
e) Requires an understanding of online terminology

4. Rating

a) 5
b) By generating a course development model at the beginning of the course authoring process, faculty can avoid inconsistencies in content presentation, misapplication of technologies, and confusion regarding roles and responsibilities. This strategy reduces workload by cutting down on confusion and delay, and by helping faculty apply themselves effectively.

B. Strategy 2: Identify and Acquire Existing Learning Resources

1. Explanation

Identifying and acquiring existing learning resources reduces faculty workload through the incorporation of existing materials rather than writing new content. Existing learning resources include the following:

a) Web site links
b) Content from textbooks, periodicals, library, or government materials
c) Learning objects (PowerPoint presentations, graphics, etc.) organized so that they can be archived for easy access and reusability

2. Benefits

a) Requires fewer content development resources
b) Provides a means for addressing the missing elements of a course
c) Ensures stability and reliability
d) Reduces copyright problems
e) Enhances longevity of the course

3. Limitations

a) Copyright permissions may be unavailable or prohibitively expensive
b) Faculty may not be able to identify original source of resources previously used in face-to-face instruction
c) Timeline for tracking down sources and clearing permissions may be too short
d) Existing resources may not be in satisfactory form
e) Existing resources may not account for disability considerations (i.e., accessibility)
f) Existing materials such as Web-based resources frequently change and must be monitored and updated

4. Rating

a) 5
b) Incorporating existing learning materials requires time and thoroughness at the course development stage but when materials are archived (with proper permissions system in place), the long-term benefits are worth the initial investment. Faculty workload can be substantially reduced by using existing materials since development time is reduced.

C. Strategy 3: Establish and Distribute Reusable Templates

1. Explanation

The use of templates for course development, administration, orientation, and evaluation reduces faculty workload by automating tasks and implementing familiar methods. These reusable templates can cover the following:

a) Instructor guidelines, course development style sheets, development schedules
b) Evaluation questionnaires
c) Tracking methods for course details (frequently asked questions, etc.)
d) Study guides, student guides, supplemental readings booklets, etc.
e) Portfolio guidelines, lesson structure

2. Benefits

a) Standardizes course development and course delivery tools
b) Allows information sharing

c) Supports updating
d) Allows pooling of expertise
e) Helps novice instructors
f) Provides information clearly to students
g) Enables system solutions to be created

3. Limitations

a) Requires a good understanding of course development process and course content structure
b) Requires technical expertise
c) Requires time to update and distribute information
d) May limit new ideas for tools
e) Faculty may prefer an individual presentation format
f) Requires customization of templates; not all pieces and parts of templates apply to every course

4. Rating

a) 5
b) Using reusable templates takes time at the development stage but substantially reduces workload during delivery, helps streamline complex processes, and helps faculty with non-teaching tasks. In particular, this strategy assists novice online educators by providing frameworks for the development process.

D. Strategy 4: Provide Author with a Sample Online Course

1. Explanation

Providing the author with access to a successfully designed and developed course facilitates the development of a new course. Web-based "mirror sites" can be effective as well as print-based samples.

Several suggestions for selecting the sample course may be:

a) Similar course learning outcomes; similar course content is secondary consideration
b) Similar length and design model of courses
c) Similar structure and target audience of courses

2. Benefits

a) Encourages authors to follow successful design model
b) Reduces author anxiety or feelings of being overwhelmed
c) Helps authors avoid "reinventing the wheel"
d) Encourages effective use of authors' time and energy

3. Limitations

a) Time spent in construction of mirror courses to use as examples
b) Costs of providing print-based materials
c) Formulaic course design may result

4. Rating

a) 5
b) Providing faculty with examples of successfully designed and developed course materials reduces faculty workload by expediting the development of the new course.

E. Strategy 5: Provide Specific Instruction for Assignments

1. Explanation

Providing specific and detailed instruction significantly reduces faculty workload by reducing student queries and instructor intervention. In particular this strategy supports the asynchronous learning student working within a limited timeframe. Some examples of this strategy include:

a) Specifying word and/or page count and qualitative expectations in assignment criteria
b) Establish grading rubrics and make them available to students (This is considered a best practice.)
c) Providing or directing students to established style guidelines (such as *APA, CMS,* etc.)

2. Benefits

a) Reduces the number of phone calls and e-mails
b) Enables student to self-monitor and instruct
c) Establishes parameters for student success

3. Limitations

a) Time-consuming during development

4. Rating

a) 5
b) Quality instructions and reference materials are a tremendous resource for students who do not have ready access to faculty (weekends or late at night). Well-designed and articulated instructions reduce the number of student support calls and e-mails.

F. Strategy 6: Apply Project Planning and Management Methods to Course Development

1. Explanation

Applying project planning and management methods ensures that the authoring process is completed effectively and efficiently. It involves the process of implementing a design and development framework. Appropriate project management provides a basis for:

a) Understanding the scope of the project
b) Establishing division of labor
c) Monitoring and managing deadlines and progress

2. Benefits

a) Clearly establishes how much time and effort should be devoted to each part of the authoring process
b) Establishes a method for clear communication
c) Enables team to view progress easily
d) Clearly defines roles of all participants
e) Defines role of author, which significantly reduces workload over the life of the project

3. **Limitations**
   a) Person(s) accountable for project management and tracking must be identified
   b) May not allow ample time for each part of the authoring process
   c) Creates pressure due to deadlines
   d) Potential lack of flexibility
   e) Most effective when based on successful past experience
4. **Rating**
   a) 4–5
   b) Applying project planning and management methods to course development streamlines the complexity of online course development. Breaking the process down into manageable steps helps reduce faculty workload by simplifying the procedures.

G. Strategy 7: Establish a Course Development Team

1. **Explanation**
   Establishing a course development team provides benefits throughout the course development process. Work is distributed across a team of experts, effectively reducing the time it takes for faculty to learn skills necessary to the various aspects of online course development.
2. **Benefits**
   a) Faculty members do not need technical or graphic skills to participate in online course development
   b) Cost savings can be realized via lower cost of labor and more efficient work
3. **Limitations**
   a) Faculty may prefer working alone
   b) Institution may resist investment in team structures for development of online courses
   c) Team approach may complicate communications and project management
4. **Rating**
   a) 4
   b) Few faculty members have the time to devote to the learning curves associated with all the tasks of online course development. Establishing course development teams substantially reduces faculty workload by redistributing labor. A course created through the efforts of a development team is cost-effective and more likely to meet high quality standards.

H. Strategy 8: Design Balanced Instructional Activities

1. **Explanation**
   Designing balanced instructional activities addresses the issue of balance between the learning activities designed into the course and the amount of time and energy required to monitor and maintain them. Some suggestions include:
   a) Using self-graded assignments for the review of concepts
   b) Using peer evaluation as a way to share assessment workload
   c) Using self-evaluation

d) Limiting the number of activities designed into course
e) Thoroughly assessing the impact of instructional activities on instructor workload prior to implementing them

2. Benefits

a) Reduces workload by shifting monitoring and assessment tasks to class participants
b) Supports variety of learning experiences
c) Facilitates student's meta-cognitive learning skills
d) Accommodates different learning styles
e) Keeps things interesting by varying roles of student and instructor
f) Provides parameters for the breadth and depth of the course equal to but not exceeding the face-to-face model

3. Limitations

a) Some faculty may resist adopting unfamiliar styles
b) Must be advantageous for students as well as faculty
c) Collaborative tasks may have limitations including:
   (1) Students not being rigorous enough with each other
   (2) Tasks poorly defined and therefore ineffective
   (3) Students feeling out of touch with instructor
   (4) Students feeling too removed from the process
   (5) Asynchronous courses being more difficult for collaborative designs

4. Rating

a) 4
b) Designing balanced instructional activities takes little time at the authoring stage but needs a good understanding of issues. The use of peer review, self-assessment, and collaboration can considerably reduce instructor workload since student participation relieves instructor of some tasks and reduces others to supervisory levels rather than interactive levels.

I. Strategy 9: Finalize One Module or Unit before Developing Remainder of Course

1. Explanation

Finalizing a representative module or unit allows early guidance and adjustment so that subsequent units follow with minimal adjustment. A representative instructional module or unit may include some or all of the following:

a) Statement of goals
b) Objectives
c) Key terms
d) Textual content
e) Self-tests
f) Assignments
g) Graphics, audio, or video elements
h) Tone and level of treatment for content

A representative module or unit can be reviewed by the development team and suggestions for improvements made prior to further course development.

2. **Benefits**
   a) Provides representative and parallel structures
   b) Formulates tone of presentation
   c) Provides model that can be helpful for collaborative design
   d) Identifies problem areas early so they are not further integrated into the course
3. **Limitations**
   a) Implies all components will be parallel and assumes a particular model
   b) Limits versatility in dealing with various topics
   c) May be too formulaic
4. **Rating**
   a) 3
   b) The use of a representative module may not generalize to all courses and/or disciplines, which reduces the effectiveness of this strategy. If, however, the course content lends itself to the use of a representative module, faculty workload is reduced in the process of streamlining further development.

J. Strategy 10: Develop Rubrics for Each Graded Student Assignment

1. **Explanation**
   Building in rubrics (formatted explanation or instruction) provides students with the criteria they need to meet, which reduces the number of questions the instructor receives and reduces grading time by using consistent criteria across assignments submitted by different students. Rubrics also provide an order of importance for evaluation criteria and allow for more precise evaluation of student work.
2. **Benefits**
   a) Allows for consistent assessment within and across sections of the course
   b) Provides opportunity for ease of feedback
   c) Reduces time spent on student support
3. **Limitations**
   a) Involves a lot of work initially, which is difficult for new online instructors (This is only true for initial course development.)
   b) May encourage resistance to change once rubric is developed
   c) Increases authoring workload (although decreases teaching workload)
4. **Rating**
   a) 3
   b) Rubrics are an effective tool to streamline grading in larger classes. In addition, rubrics may be better for lower level undergraduate courses. Rubrics help students to work more effectively in self-paced environments.

K. Strategy 11: Create Learning Object Database

1. **Explanation**
   Creating a database of learning objects and resources such as images, PowerPoint demos, and Web site links, facilitates later course development. This strategy is also beneficial when the need arises to move learning objects between delivery modes, for example between distance learning and resident instruction environments.

2. **Benefits**
   a) Enables easy access to existing materials
   b) Enables items to be reused in multiple formats
3. **Limitations**
   a) Requires substantial work to set up and maintain
   b) Requires significant level of technical expertise
   c) Cost may be high
4. **Rating**
   a) 2
   b) Creating a learning object database requires substantial time initially, and requires maintenance. This strategy may be most useful for large courses with multiple delivery venues. The benefit in terms of workload applies most specifically to the development process.

II. TEACHING STRATEGIES

A wide variety of teaching strategies are available using the technological resources of the online environment. This medium requires a new approach to teaching strategies in order to promote high quality learning and educational value, without exerting undue time constraints on faculty. As with authoring strategies, faculty must balance quality education provided to students and time management of online teaching activities. The following strategies were chosen to help faculty achieve this balance.

A. Strategy 1: Clarify and Enhance Students' Technical Skills before Registration

1. **Explanation**
   Clarifying and enhancing prerequisite technical skills before course registration reduces faculty workload by decreasing time spent teaching students technology or associated information. The creation of a free online orientation tutorial facilitates student technological capability. The online tutorial might cover technical skills, support services, document and file management, netiquette, time management, study skills, resources, and policies concerning academic integrity and intellectual property.
   a) Include information directing students to orientation tutorial in a letter welcoming students to course
   b) Initiate technological orientation prior to the start of course and properly integrate and reinforce in course material
   c) Invite some level of institutional involvement
   d) Enable students to self-test technical skills
2. **Benefits**
   a) Allows faculty to focus on teaching content
   b) Allows students to be more efficient in the completion of assignments
   c) Enables students to self-test technical skills, increasing their confidence
   d) Brings in better prepared students
   e) Provides opportunity for faculty to be more aware of distance education issues and make referrals if questions arise
   f) Resolves technical issues a student may have prior to beginning a course

3. **Limitations**
    a) Development time
    b) Insufficient resources
    c) Requires student time
    d) May take away from content class time, especially at the beginning of the course
    e) Difficult to tailor to diverse needs of students
4. **Rating**
    a) 5
    b) By directing students to the orientation tutorial, technological skills are built or refined before the course begins, reducing faculty time spent teaching non-content specific material. Matching the mode of delivery with the technical capabilities of the targeted audience eliminates student dissatisfaction and frustration with their experience and reduces faculty workload by limiting the number of support calls.

B. Strategy 2: Provide a Detailed Syllabus

1. **Explanation**
   Providing a detailed syllabus serves as a valuable tool to communicate assignments, supplemental readings, grading, ethics, prerequisites, schedule, goals, and learning objectives to the student. In particular the student can identify activities that may require new skills or extra time.
2. **Benefits**
    a) Clearly communicates course expectations
    b) Addresses questions and creates a balanced set of expectations
    c) Allows students to plan as well as identify areas in which they may need additional skills or time
    d) Serves as a "contract" and reference source for students
3. **Limitations**
    a) Takes planning
    b) Limits flexibility
    c) Can be intimidating as "contract"
4. **Rating**
    a) 5
    b) A detailed syllabus reduces faculty workload by limiting the number of student queries on an assortment of issues including the schedule, assignments, supplemental readings, grading, ethics, prerequisites, goals, and learning objectives. It provides a central area where this information is located, and students can easily refer to it throughout their course experience. Sometimes it is easier to create the syllabus as a final step in the course development process.

C. Strategy 3: Define the Operating Parameters of the Course

1. **Explanation**
   Defining the operating parameters of the course including interactions between students/students and students/faculty is important for emphasizing timelines and responsibilities in order for students to effectively manage their workload and successfully complete all assigned interactive tasks. Establishing and communicating

these parameters and expectations facilitates both student and faculty workload management.

2. **Benefits**
   a) Proactively addresses requirements for students
   b) Establishes rules for group work and pacing
   c) Enables students to plan ahead
   d) Shifts responsibility of monitoring and managing course work to students (i.e., faculty are not chasing after students)
3. **Limitations**
   a) More useful in cohort courses than self-paced courses
   b) Limited generalizability as a strategy across different distance education models
   c) May limit flexibility in teaching
   d) Requires self-motivation and self-direction from students
   e) Requires faculty planning and commitment
4. **Rating**
   a) 4
   b) Defining the operating parameters of the course eliminates many questions surrounding the frequency, response time and quality of the interactions between students/students, and students/faculty, thereby reducing faculty workload.

D. Strategy 4: Create Feedback Rubrics

1. **Explanation**

   Feedback rubrics (formatted explanations or outlines) can be created during course development and they can be added during the teaching stage. Feedback rubrics are used to respond to common issues or questions. For example:
   a) Rubrics can cover administrative and orientation information
   b) Rubrics in the form of e-mail templates can direct students to appropriate resources (tech support, orientation tutorial, etc.)
   c) Feedback rubrics can be personalized for each use
   d) Rubrics can be used in the compilation of a Frequently Asked Questions archive from which to cut and paste responses to students
2. **Benefits**
   a) Rubrics save time, since they can be reused and shared between faculty
   b) Rubrics support consistency across groups of students
   c) Rubrics help in revision process as each element is discrete
   d) Rubrics can streamline various tasks (administration, facilitation, assessment, evaluation)
   e) Rubrics are especially useful for larger groups of students
3. **Limitations**
   a) Requires time in development but can also be constructed on an ongoing basis
   b) Relies on an understanding of content and student expectations
   c) Could discourage changes to content
   d) Database archiving or reuse between faculty may dilute individual customization
   e) May not be as effective with higher level courses requiring individual feedback and reflection

f) Developing effective feedback rubrics depends upon the experience of the instructor
g) Responses may seem impersonal if not carefully worded

4. Rating

a) 4
b) Creating feedback rubrics requires time during the authoring process but saves faculty time during implementation, especially in the long term. This strategy has additional learning quality benefits, such as consistent feedback across students, clear expectations provided to students before assignments are due, and higher quality student output because students fully understand the assignment criteria beforehand.

E. Strategy 5: Establish a Routine

1. Explanation

Establishing a routine for regular and planned interaction within the online course and with students helps faculty to remain in control of their workloads. Specifically, shorter but more frequent course interactions prevent an overwhelming backlog of activity. Faculty should attempt to conduct work that requires concentration (e.g., feedback on assessed activities) at times when they are at their performance peak. Using the full capabilities of the learning management system can assist in many of the tasks required to operate the online course.

2. Benefits

a) Ability to make your own schedule and streamline personal effectiveness
b) Easier to manage workload
c) Physically healthier (i.e., ergonomics)
d) Eliminates overwhelming backlog of activity
e) Builds student confidence

3. Limitations

a) Requires commitment and discipline
b) Requires good time management

4. Rating

a) 4
b) Establishing a routine regarding time and location assists in the management of the online workload and builds student confidence in the instructor.

F. Strategy 6: Establish a Learning Management System for Recording Course Transactions

1. Explanation

Establishing a system for recording course transactions allows faculty to access information quickly and reduces time spent searching for answers to student queries. Most learning management systems provide significant capability for faculty to track and record student activity. The system should include some or all of the following features:

a) Standardized, centralized, and electronic system available in shared environment
b) Student assignment section
c) Online gradebook

d) Capability for electronic, quantitative and qualitative comments
e) Security features

2. Benefits

a) Helps instructor to stay oriented to each student's individual progress, as well as to the students as a group
b) Monitors progress of all students efficiently
c) Helps to identify problems and facilitate intervention at critical times
d) Provides documentation of student performance
e) System security instills student confidence

3. Limitations

a) Requires appropriate tools
b) Requires skills training for faculty
c) System must be kept up-to-date
d) Not all records may be kept within learning management system
e) Institutions need to develop efficient, secure tools

4. Rating

a) 4
b) Having sufficient knowledge of the learning management system streamlines management of faculty workload. Many operational tasks can be conducted automatically by the LMS. Recordkeeping within the LMS enables faculty to more effectively manage their workload.

G. Strategy 7: Foster Group Dynamics

1. Explanation

Fostering group dynamics where educationally appropriate encourages students to interact and learn from each other. If designed correctly, student interaction can reduce faculty intervention and participation. Aspects of this strategy may include:

a) Establishing a method of peer review on projects, etc.
b) Involving students at the start of the course in peer review activities
c) Establishing ground rules for peer review in order to support an atmosphere of trust
d) Having a large-group activity prior to small-group activities
e) Providing opportunities for student training without the weight of grading

2. Benefits

a) Promotes the type of environment where students learn from each other (as well as from the instructor)
b) Promotes high quality work
c) Builds a sense of community
d) Increases student completion
e) Prepares students for teamwork out in the workforce

3. Limitations

a) May take some direct communication with students about the type of environment being promoted
b) May involve increased e-mail and discussion board postings at the beginning of the semester to foster this type of environment
c) Timing may be a challenge

d) Faculty must model behavior expected of students
e) May take training and practice on part of students
f) Should be moderated to ensure appropriate behavior and academic integrity

4. Rating

a) 4
b) Fostering group dynamics takes time and energy on the part of faculty, but goes a long way in reducing online workload. Generic communication created to orient students to the group environment may be reused during subsequent course offerings. Peer feedback and interaction cannot replace regular individualized feedback and guidance from the instructor; students may grow frustrated if faculty member interacts infrequently and fails to provide an expert opinion on topics being discussed.

H. Strategy 8: Begin the Course with an Activity that Encourages Interaction

1. Explanation

Designing an activity at the start of a course that encourages interaction between students and faculty helps to create for the student a sense of community and confidence. This strategy serves as a course orientation and highlights potential technical problems that can be dealt with before they become significant barriers. Activities may include:

a) Using each of the appropriate communication tools and having students post introductions or bio
b) Setting course expectations for interactions and developing a sense of community
c) During the initial course period, ensuring that students have the confidence, communication, and commitment to be successful in the course

2. Benefits

a) Retention of students
b) Builds community
c) Confirms for students that they have the skills they need
d) Provides immediate success for students and builds confidence
e) Models behavior expected from students

3. Limitations

a) Takes time
b) Students are resistant to engage unless dialogue is part of their grade
c) Faculty must be technically proficient
d) Faculty must have required skills to model behavior
e) If designed improperly, may set up unrealistic response expectations

4. Rating

a) 3
b) Building a sense of community between and among students significantly reduces faculty workload later in the course, as students communicate more between themselves, rather than querying the instructor. Involves extra time to set up during the development process.

I. Strategy 9: Establish Consistent, Effective Methods of Electronic Communication

1. Explanation

The use of public posting areas, discussion forums, and/or e-mail announcements for questions of general interest to the entire class reduces the need for individual e-mail responses to commonly asked questions. Students come to rely on accessing announcements posted in a general format if used consistently.

a) Use the right communication tool for the right task. For example, if the question requires a simple announcement, use e-mail. If the question requires discussion between the students and faculty member, use a public discussion board.

2. Benefits

a) Helps to build community or group awareness in the course
b) Maximizes communication to group (i.e., students feel as though the faculty member is connecting with the course more frequently)
c) Channels individual e-mails into group communication
d) Models appropriate use of communications tools

3. Limitations

a) Requires facilitation skills
b) Requires understanding of media attributes
c) Requires a balance or filter to determine efficient dissemination of information (don't overload students with information)

4. Rating

a) 3
b) Establishing effective use of electronic methods of communication reduces the workload generated by individual questions of a similar nature. Establishing effective communications models requires appropriate use of tools and eliminates redundant communications between participants.

III. COURSE REVISION AND IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES

A natural dynamic in creating and delivering educational materials online is the desire to continually revise and improve the course design and materials. Revisions to a course of any sort can complicate and increase the work required by faculty to keep the course current. Some revision of course content is necessary to keep the course current and accurate or to improve the instructional effectiveness of the course. However, continual revision to course structure and operation may unnecessarily increase costs and may not contribute significantly to the quality of the course.

A. Strategy 1: Conduct Multiple Evaluations of Course

1. Explanation

Both formative and summative evaluations should be designed to gather information from students, support staff, and course guests. Additional information on course improvement can be gathered from students who did not successfully complete the course.

2. **Benefits**
    a) Allows for mid-course corrections, which reduces workload at the end of the course
    b) Provides students with opportunities to address problem areas and suggest additional resources
    c) Provides for input from all levels of staffing on project in order to improve course
3. **Limitations**
    a) Current students may not benefit
    b) Requires time to design evaluation instrument(s)
    c) Requires time to gather and analyze feedback
    d) Raises expectations that improvements will be forthcoming
    e) Faculty may be sensitive to outside criticism of the course
4. **Rating**
    a) 5
    b) Constructive feedback serves to identify the weak components of a course that can be addressed through moderate revision. Although this is initially a time-consuming task, improvements ultimately create a smoother, less time-consuming delivery.

B. Strategy 2: Conduct a Pilot Run or Initiate an Expert External Review

1. **Explanation**
   Conducting a pilot run or having a particularly technical course reviewed by a faculty expert (additional to the author) helps to identify and correct potential problems or inaccuracies.
2. **Benefits**
    a) Reduces student confusion
    b) Reduces margin for error
    c) Relatively inexpensive strategy to implement
    d) Quality control increases student confidence in the university
3. **Limitations**
    a) Requires time and resources
    b) Requires considerate negotiation between expert reviewer and original course author
4. **Rating**
    a) 5
    b) Requires additional resources but can serve to identify and eliminate problems before the student experiences them, thereby reducing faculty workload in error management and correction.

C. Strategy 3: Manage the Revision Cycle as an Integral Part of the Course

1. **Explanation**
   The course revision cycle is a real and necessary process that assures the course is maintained through continual improvement. Planning for the process enables better allocation of resources of both faculty and staff.

2. **Benefits**
   a) Provides defined process and parameters of revision cycle
   b) Identifies resources and funding structure required for revision process
3. **Limitations**
   a) Requires time to develop initially
   b) Requires estimation of averages or ranges for budgeting since revisions vary widely
4. **Rating**
   a) 5
   b) Busy faculty schedules do not leave much room for commitment to an unplanned course revision, which may come about because of a revised text, outdated supplementary materials, or any number of reasons. In order to avoid overloading faculty unexpectedly, it is essential to discuss the revision process and build in time and budgetary projections.

D. Strategy 4: Develop Methods for Managing Dynamic Course Elements

1. **Explanation**
   Dynamic course elements are those details within a course that are likely to change frequently, such as references to textbook pages, Web links, and external resources. Some dynamic elements can be removed from the textual content of the course and placed together in a separate area which directs students to specific resources or information. Other elements can be referred to in ways that allow more room for change (such as substituting headings or subheadings for specific page references).
2. **Benefits**
   a) Supports immediate and accessible review and revision of dynamic course elements
   b) Reduces time spent combing the content for changeable elements
   c) Contributes significantly to the longevity of the course
   d) Is cost-effective
3. **Limitations**
   a) New instructors may find it difficult to identify these particular elements
4. **Rating**
   a) 4
   b) Reduces faculty workload by combining changeable elements in easily accessible areas of the course (i.e., the syllabus, a single Web links page, etc.). Expedites revision tasks.

E. Strategy 5: Invite Student Feedback at Close of Course

1. **Explanation**
   Inviting student feedback on the course content and delivery strengthens the course if data is carefully evaluated and improvements judiciously incorporated. Methods need to be considerate of the students' real or perceived concern for impact on their grade. If feedback contributes to the development of answers to frequently asked questions, develop a list for presentation to students. Methods of information gathering may include:

a) An electronic "suggestion box" available during the course
b) Use of discussion board for an informal series of questions posted at mid-term and/or at the end of course
c) Chat rooms set up for specific information gathering purposes

2. Benefits

a) May capture information students would not reveal in standard evaluations
b) Provides responses that may be archived
c) Enables immediate revisions and adjustments to course
d) Provides faculty a method for collecting details for course revision
e) Provides students a medium through which to submit questions
f) Provides immediate as well as long-term reduction in workload

3. Limitations

a) Feedback Mechanism Limitations:
   (1) Time involved in organizing and evaluating the responses
   (2) Anonymity may be an issue relative to how much students will reveal
b) Discussion Board and Chat Room Limitations:
   (1) Difficulty in making sure students understand the rules of engagement
   (2) Difficult to communicate clearly to students when the board will be reviewed (e.g., during or at the end of the course). If students believe grade will be affected, their comments may not be representative
c) Frequently Asked Questions Limitations:
   (1) Requires faculty to understand what types of questions should be put into the system
   (2) Requires a planning process as to when the revisions will occur and by whom

4. Rating

a) 4
b) Used effectively, this is a useful tool for gathering information that assists the operation of the course and reduces the faculty workload once issues are addressed.

F. Strategy 6: Develop and Maintain a Course History

1. Explanation

Developing and maintaining a course history covers archiving course improvements including student feedback, narrative by the course author or instructor, as well as keeping on file information related to third-party software, supplementary reading materials, exams and answer keys, permissions records, and other external elements of the course. This strategy also includes provision for keeping the original author in the revisions loop in order to provide insights and guidance.

2. Benefits

a) Reduces repeat errors on part of faculty
b) Aids correction of technical issues according to patterns
c) Aids revision process (including budgetary projections)
d) Contributes to the development of distance education history and best practices
e) Helps when course information is needed from various departments involved in online education (i.e., student services, marketing, etc.)

3. **Limitations**
   a) Archived materials may take up prohibitive amounts of storage space
   b) Archived materials must be updated (cleaning out old materials is necessary)
   c) Time involved may be prohibitive
   d) Database structure must be well-defined, including data elements, and metadata capabilities
4. **Rating**
   a) 3
   b) Developing and maintaining a course history can be handled on several levels. The most useful levels require higher technology use, which introduces some technical and logistical concerns.

G. Strategy 7: Involve Original Course Author in Revision Process

1. **Explanation**
   Involving the original author in revision of the course demonstrates respect for intellectual property rights and reduces workload of other revising faculty.
2. **Benefits**
   a) Ensures consistency in course material
   b) Demonstrates respect for the original creator
3. **Limitations**
   a) Possible pedagogical differences between faculty members if collaborating on revision
   b) Availability of author
   c) Cost (A budget plan should be included for the revision process during course development as an incentive for the original author to participate.)
4. **Rating**
   a) 3
   b) Involving the original author in the revision process reduces faculty workload since the original author is already familiar with the content and can quickly ascertain the extent of revision necessary. If the original author collaborates with current instructor(s), there is the potential for pedagogical differences of opinion.

H. Strategy 8: Reward Students for Reporting Errors in Course

1. **Explanation**
   To ensure that courses are responsive to rapidly changing technologies and applications, challenge students to discover substantive errors, and award a modest (i.e., 10 points out of 500 total) “finder’s fee” to those who discover and report such errors.
2. **Benefits**
   a) Provides students with an incentive to aid in the improvement of course material
   b) Enhances student self-esteem and sense of appreciation and contribution
3. **Limitations**
   a) Faculty may resist rewarding students for locating errors
   b) Academic culture may be a barrier

c) Strategy may trivialize the learning process and may be inappropriate for upper-level courses
d) May create a bias judgment

4. **Rating**
   a) 2
   b) Soliciting the help of students in finding course errors and rewarding them for submission of errors reduces faculty workload in course review and updates.

IV. INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGIES

The role of the institution in creating a supportive and encouraging environment for online learning is crucial to faculty involvement. From providing a robust technological infrastructure to ensuring that faculty and students have immediate and ready access to support services, to faculty reward and compensation, institutional resources play a major role in helping faculty manage their online workloads. The following strategies address issues in the area of incentives and rewards, faculty and student support, faculty development, and administrative systems and policies.

A. Strategy 1: Ensure Faculty Access to Instructional Design and Systems Support

1. **Explanation**
   Provide faculty with support services for creating and delivering online instruction. These support services and resources may include:
   a) Instructional design support
   b) Technical support
   c) Graphic and multimedia development
   d) Financial assistance for material development
   e) Copyright clearance support
   f) Marketing support
   g) Software, hardware
2. **Benefits**
   a) Enhances quality of course content and presentation
   b) Frees faculty to focus on the intellectual aspects of the course
   c) Enhances faculty sense of appreciation
   d) Provides better use of institutional resources
3. **Limitations**
   a) Cost
   b) Coordination between and within departments and units
4. **Rating**
   a) 5
   b) Constructing a consistent and coherent plan for providing core support services at the institutional level alleviates, for faculty, unmanageable learning curves associated with online delivery methods, decreases course development time, and better utilizes institutional resources.

B. Strategy 2: Provide Adequate Faculty Development Opportunities

1. Explanation

The institution should accommodate for faculty development needs in the area of new skills for the design and delivery of online course material. This strategy involves several micro strategies, including:

a) Provide written clarification of faculty teaching and institutional roles as related to the online environment
b) Provide an opportunity for faculty to go through an online training program, consistent with the program that students taking an online course go through
c) Develop faculty skills in the pedagogical demands of the online learning environment
d) Provide comprehensive benchmarks of quality for online teaching and learning

2. Benefits

a) Provides faculty with the skills they need for the online environment
b) Offers faculty the opportunity to learn from colleagues
c) Uses resources (faculty) effectively
d) Uses resources (institutional) effectively

3. Limitations

a) Initial commitment of faculty time for training
b) Staffing resources for faculty development
c) Terminology

4. Rating

a) 5
b) Having a skilled and competent faculty is a critical component of a successful online program.

C. Strategy 3: Provide Technical Support for Faculty and Students

1. Explanation

Since the online learning environment is based upon a technical infrastructure, it is critical to provide support services for both faculty and students to guarantee success in the online learning environment.

a) Evaluate student usage and need for technical support and staff
b) Prescribe procedures and timelines for response by technical support staff
c) Provide orientation to online learning tailored to student needs
d) Provide a coordinated and comprehensive system of academic and technical supports for students (including adequate library services)

2. Benefits

a) Faculty are free to focus on course content
b) Faculty stress is reduced, allowing for more focused teaching
c) Student stress is reduced, allowing for more focused learning
d) Provides expectation management

3. Limitations

a) Cost may be prohibitive
b) Training is necessary
c) Retrofitting existing systems may be difficult

d) This strategy may be valuable for only a few years with technological proficiency of students on the rise, therefore, budgetary considerations for developing the necessary support structures to implement this strategy need to be examined carefully.

4. Rating

a) 5

b) Adequate technology support is one of the critical areas of success for online learning programs. Long-term success of students in the online learning environment is dependent upon their skills and competencies as learners. The institution's obligation to provide student orientation to the delivery environment is paramount to that success. Faculty workload is best applied to course content, rather than technological skills unrelated to course content.

D. Strategy 4: Provide Adequate Learning Management System

1. Explanation

Faculty workload can be significantly reduced through the selection and implementation of a user-friendly learning management system. The institution should consider the investment value of selecting an adequate learning management system to serve the educational needs of faculty and staff.

2. Benefits

a) A consistent format affords faculty, as well as students, a familiar learning environment

b) Faculty are able to engage in peer technical support if a single learning management system is employed

c) Faculty time devoted to course related tasks is reduced due to familiarity with technological system

3. Limitations

a) Standardization reduces time, but may also reduce creativity

b) Requires institutional commitment of resources (money and staffing)

c) LMS needs regular evaluation; eventually may need to upgrade to new LMS

4. Rating

a) 5

b) Having a single LMS reduces the learning curve for both faculty and students. As part of institutional support for online learning, it encourages easy adoption and use by faculty and students.

E. Strategy 5: Establish Institutional Parameters for Online Operation

1. Explanation

Creating institutional policies and procedures for managing course delivery reduces faculty administration tasks. These institutional policies may address:

a) Appropriateness of course for online delivery

b) Frequency of course offering

c) Maximum and minimum number of course participants accepted

d) Number of courses offered per semester

2. **Benefits**
   a) Allows faculty to plan in advance
   b) Helps manage faculty expectations
   c) Streamlines administrative procedures (such as adding additional instructors)
3. **Limitations**
   a) Institutions may be inclined to increase number of registrations to offset cost of development
   b) Courses may be cut at the last minute (establishing a minimum number of registrations necessary to course opening may reduce the chances of specialized courses running)
   c) Ramifications of marketing and promoting courses that might be cancelled if minimum registrations are not accrued
4. **Rating**
   a) 5
   b) Defining institutional policy for administrative decisions surrounding course offerings relieves faculty of related course management issues.

F. Strategy 6: Integrate Institutional Administrative Systems and Tools

1. **Explanation**
   Integrating institutional administrative systems and tools such as registration and grade reporting, and student supports such as advising, is effective in reducing faculty workload and streamlining procedures. This strategy emphasizes the need to offer a wide range of services and make sure systems tie together. Engage in planning of systems to determine the ability to handle the addition of online demands. Repetitive services should be automated.
2. **Benefits**
   a) Reduces potential duplication of work
   b) Provides a user-friendly course management system where professors can automatically monitor and track student activities
3. **Limitations**
   a) Time-consuming
   b) “Turf” issues (related to previous accountability and new roles)
   c) Cost
4. **Rating**
   a) 5
   b) Establishing institutional management services for student access and administration significantly reduces faculty workload.

G. Strategy 7: Provide Clear Institutional Policies on Intellectual Property

1. **Explanation**
   Intellectual property, that is, the ownership of materials created for use within an online course, has clearly become a major problem at institutions across the country. Ideally, institutions should implement an enterprise-wide courseware system and articulate this policy within the institution.

2. **Benefits**
   a) Some faculty are reluctant to develop and teach online without a clear understanding of who owns the course material
3. **Limitations**
   a) None cited
4. **Rating**
   a) 5
   b) Clearly articulated policy eliminates confusion and misunderstanding between the faculty and the institution

H. Strategy 8: Define the Role of Online Education in the Mission of the Institution

1. **Explanation**
   It is vital to emphasize a culture of online distance education across campus and to define that role in relation to resident environments.
2. **Benefits**
   a) Enables institution to move cohesively in the same direction
   b) Increases cooperation within the institution
   c) Reduces conflict within the institution
3. **Limitations**
   a) Can take quite a while for an institution to go through the process of developing and finalizing their mission
4. **Rating**
   a) 5
   b) Removes barriers of confusion and misunderstanding regarding the role of online learning within the institution and brings together disparate units and departments.

I. Strategy 9: Develop Institutional Policy for Compensating and Rewarding Faculty and Academic Units

1. **Explanation**
   A clearly articulated faculty compensation policy for participation in online education eliminates confusion and misunderstanding between the institution and faculty. This strategy emphasizes the role that incentives and rewards play in managing faculty workload. The policy may include:
   a) Incorporating distance education participation into the promotion and tenure system—guidelines counting technology-mediated teaching as an integral component of faculty contribution in terms of teaching, research and service
   b) Providing clear procedures and timelines for faculty to request and receive course load reduction (or other compensation) for a specific amount of time
   c) Providing clear incentives for faculty to develop, deliver, and/or revise online course materials (work from home, funds, grants, limited committee assignments, etc.)
   d) Offer a course load reduction to faculty members to offset development time required for a new online course (redistribute the workload)

2. **Benefits**
   a) Provides incentive for faculty to develop or revise a course for the online environment. Without workload redistribution, faculty are understandably reluctant to commit to development or revision of online courses.
   b) Provides guidelines for faculty as to how they can develop the scholarship of teaching online
3. **Limitations**
   a) Course release time is a resource allocation issue for institutions
   b) A sense of equity among faculty must be built into the policies concerning when release time is awarded and to whom
   c) Not realistically possible in many institutions (non-research institutions may not have resources or a tradition of supporting faculty with teaching assistants)
4. **Rating**
   a) 4–5
   b) A clear set of policies supporting faculty participation in online education reduces confusion and misunderstanding and uses institutional resources (faculty) more effectively.

J. Strategy 10: Provide Copyright and Permissions Support and Policies

1. **Explanation**
   With the increasing concern regarding copyright issues, faculty need clear guidelines regarding what they can and cannot use and procedures for obtaining permissions clearance. This strategy emphasizes the need for institutions to think about the kind of support provided for faculty in obtaining permissions clearance, which is time-consuming but essential for legal conformity.
2. **Benefits**
   a) Provides faculty with support and guidelines on obtaining copyright permissions
   b) Protects institution from legal problems
   c) Reduces learning curve associated with proper procedures for obtaining permissions
3. **Limitations**
   a) Without clear policies, faculty may be reluctant to utilize resources
   b) Without clear policies, faculty may use resources illegally, resulting in legal problems and possible fines
   c) Institutions providing a resident "expert" in the dynamics of copyright law can avoid related legal problems (does *not* have to be a lawyer)
4. **Rating**
   a) 4
   b) Faculty and staff need clear guidance in the use of copyrighted materials in order to effectively make use of these materials as part of the online learning experience. With permissions clearance complicated by the online environment, having support staff trained in copyright law protects the institution and reduces faculty workload.

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