Lessons Learned

A mandatory tutorial for online learning prepares students to ‘hit the ground running’

Spencer Tower – Associate Professor – College of Business
Deb Thalner – Executive Director Online Learning, Extended and International Operations
Melissa Nuckles – Faculty/Advisor – College of Business & Extended and International Operations
Impetus for Change
2011 Survey of Online Faculty

473 Online Faculty Surveyed

• **Student Capabilities**
  – Require an orientation before students can begin an online course
    - **81.8% agree/strongly agree.**
  – A student orientation should be standard across the university
    - **78.5% agree/strongly agree.**

• Policy created and approved by faculty senate, deans

Faculty who responded 37.4% response rate
Pilot Development

• Requirements: Flexibility (waivers); not for credit; no cost to student, not too time consuming; do not hold up student progression.
  – Within the LMS system, instructor facilitated, authentic assessments
  – Inclusion of LMS specific skills most often used (uploading documents, discussion board use, etc).
  – Inclusion of vendor-developed self assessment (life factors, technology, personal attributes, learning styles, reading skills, typing skills)
812 students asked to participate – 178 participated

Pilot Demographics
- 18 – 24 years old (56%)
- Female (67%)
- Seniors (34.8%) and Freshman (24.7%)
- 3.5-4.0 gpa (45%)

Post Pilot Survey Demographics
- 65% had at least one prior online course
Pilot Survey Findings

Student Feedback

Is an orientation needed for students who have not had an online course?

- 87.30% answered yes
- 12.70% answered no

What to include?

- All sections considered somewhat to very helpful
- Sections considered ‘very important’ to include:
  - Discussion boards (75%)
  - Uploading attachments (66%)
  - Grades area (56%)
- Some sections not included due to limited audiences (journaling, etc)
Lessons Learned – Part One

• Definite need to implement an orientation for the campus
• Issues:
  – Cost of faculty facilitation
  – Cost of vendor-provided self-assessment
  – Technical issues with LMS use
    • Integration of student information system and LMS would require a manual registration process
    • Adding/Purging of student data
    • “Grading” and completion status
    • Students needed tutorial to get into LMS
  – Interest in use of orientation for non-students

Change from Pilot: web-based program, self-paced tutorial with quiz, free self-assessment
What Does It Look Like Now?

• Self-paced tutorial
  – Web-based
  – Use of LMS-designed videos/help (ondemand.blackboard.com)
  – Some videos / captivate videos created at Ferris (point and click interaction)
  – Multiple choice test at completion - 7/10 is passing
  – ~ one hour to complete tutorial

• Online course sections
  – Readiness ‘test score’ is a pre-requisite

• Completion is manually entered into Banner as a ‘test score’

• Ability to Opt Out:
  – Departments/faculty choice
  – Student waiver
The Launch

• Lots of communication on the change
  – emails, targeted portal announcements, articles, etc.

• Summer 2013 first ‘live’ semester

• WHOOPS
  – Not all students ‘caught’ by pre-requisite
  – Class sections had students who
    • Completed waiver
    • Completed tutorial
    • Did not do either
  – Great time for a survey!
Survey of Summer 2013 Faculty

Online Faculty Surveyed

- 70 did not respond
- 38 responded (35%)
Survey of Summer 2013 Faculty

Is the tutorial beneficial?

- Not beneficial: 2.63%
- Somewhat beneficial: 15.79%
- Mostly beneficial: 39.47%
- Very beneficial: 39.47%
- Missing: 15.79%

Overall Comparison to Prior Year

Overall

- Less Skilled
- Same
- More Skilled
Survey Results – Up Close: t-Tests

- Tutorial vs. Waiver vs. Neither
  - Mean skill level of students in each group
  - using composite variables
    Cronbach’s alpha >= .90

- Neither (2.37) > Neither vs. Tutorial: .000 significance
- Tutorial (2.73)
- Waiver (2.66)
Survey Results – Up Close: t-Tests

• Tutorial vs. Waiver vs. Neither
  – Mean skill level of students in each group
  – using composite variables Cronbach’s alpha >= .90

• Neither (2.37)  
  Neither vs. Tutorial: .000 significance

• Tutorial (2.73) 
  Neither vs. Waiver: .001 significance

• Waiver (2.66)
Survey Results – Up Close: t-Tests

• Tutorial vs. Waiver vs. Neither
  – Mean skill level of students in each group
  – using composite variables Cronbach’s alpha >=.90

• Neither (2.37) Neither vs. Tutorial: .000 significance
• Tutorial (2.73) Neither vs. Waiver: .001 significance
• Waiver (2.66) Tutorial vs. Waiver: .186 significance
Survey Results – Up Close: t-Tests

• Tutorial vs. Waiver vs. Neither
  – Mean skill level of students in each group
  – using composite variables Cronbach’s alpha >=.90

• Neither (2.37) Neither vs. Tutorial: .000 significance
• Tutorial (2.73) Neither vs. Waiver: .001 significance
• Waiver (2.66) Tutorial vs. Waiver: .186 significance
Comparing faculty ‘beneficial’ scores

Median split

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean “Beneficial” Score</th>
<th>Orientation (=0) Below Median</th>
<th>Orientation (=1) Above Median</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 = not beneficial</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 = very beneficial</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waiver (= 0) Below Median</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waiver (= 1) Above Median</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Comparing faculty ‘beneficial’ scores
Median split

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean “Beneficial” Score</th>
<th>Orientation (=0) Below Median</th>
<th>Orientation (=1) Above Median</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 = not beneficial</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 = very beneficial</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waiver (= 0)</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>3.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below Median</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waiver (= 1)</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>3.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above Median</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Survey Results – Up Close

Comparing faculty ‘beneficial’ scores

Median split

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean “Beneficial” Score</th>
<th>Orientation (=0) Below Median</th>
<th>Orientation (=1) Above Median</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 = not beneficial</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 = very beneficial</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither (= 0) Below Median</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>3.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither (= 1) Above Median</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>3.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Survey Results – Up Close

Comparing faculty ‘beneficial’ scores . . . .

Overall, how beneficial do you think it is for students to complete an online tutorial before participating in an online course?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not beneficial</th>
<th>Somewhat beneficial</th>
<th>Mostly beneficial</th>
<th>Very beneficial</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 to 4 scale
### Survey Results – Up Close

Comparing faculty ‘beneficial’ scores

Median split

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean “Beneficial” Score</th>
<th>Neither (=0) Below Median</th>
<th>Neither (=1) Above Median</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 = not beneficial</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 = very beneficial</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waiver (= 0) BelowMedian</td>
<td><strong>3.86</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.20</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waiver (= 1) AboveMedian</td>
<td><strong>3.25</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.89</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Limitations

• Did not differentiate survey results
  – by course level
  – by student level
  – by instructor history
• Survey response rate
• Only one semester
• Results may be influenced by new LMS
• Difficult for faculty to differentiate within a group
• Recency bias in survey
Lessons Learned

- Faculty support critical
- Build in flexibility to the process (waivers, departmental flexibility)
- Have a champion to keep it moving
- Be willing to adapt
- Spend time training staff
- Over communicate
- Include staff who understand Banner, Blackboard, IT
- Designate time/resources
  - Development
  - Ongoing changes
  - Ongoing test entry
Questions?

- You can try our orientation as a guest at
  - [www.ferris.edu/online](http://www.ferris.edu/online)
  - (you will not get the test as a guest)

Spence Tower  towers@ferris.edu
Deb Thalner  thalnerd@ferris.edu
Melissa Nuckles  nucklem@ferris.edu