

Diffusion of Innovations: Is there life after the Tipping Point?

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This presentation will encompass the continuous analysis, design, implementation and evaluation of a Virtual Lab for faculty collaboration on course media enrichment, created on the principles of Everett Roger’s Diffusion of Innovations model. After reaching the “Tipping Point” the project aims at cementing institutionalization and guaranteeing sustainability. The instructional design team applied a systematic approach to synergistically use their limited resources and create an instructional design Virtual Lab. Collaboration between the team and selected faculty (Champions) resulted in the creation of the Virtual Lab. The artifacts produced were shared by cross-curricular faculty to media enrich their courses. Projected institutionalization includes: recruitment of additional Champions; development of procedures to assure a systematic work flow; strengthening collaboration between key departments in the institution; and sealing of the new culture that resulted from this project.

1. Summary:

The scope of this presentation will encompass the continuous analysis, design, implementation and evaluation of a Virtual Lab for faculty collaboration on course media enrichment, created on the principles of Everett Roger’s diffusion of innovation model. After reaching the “Tipping Point” the project aims at cementing institutionalization and guaranteeing sustainability.

A selected group of ten faculty members, Called “Faculty Champions”, were originally selected to act as change agents to improve distance education and promote faculty collaboration and higher engagement. Media-enrichment Champions literally became the virtual lab at the Abraham S. Fischler School of Education (FSE), Nova Southeastern University, and enriched distance learning while generating a positive change in academic culture.

The group of selected faculty, in collaboration with the instructional design team, facilitated a “ripple effect” which promoted the “naturally-happening” diffusion of innovation wave.

The Title V-B “instructional design team” applied a systematic approach to synergistically use their limited resources and create an instructional design Virtual Lab.

The resources initially available were two-fold: human resources, which were very limited, and technology resources, which were more available. Human resources originally consisted of three instructional designers and ten faculty, called “Champions”. The technology resources available consisted of 16 MAC Book Pro (laptop computers) and various instructional design software.

The media-enrichment Champions were tasked with the responsibility of becoming

ambassadors of the Course Enrichment project. They were granted a laptop computer on loan, and support from the instructional design team, which in turn enabled them to reach the objective of collaborating with a second group of selected faculty, called “Pioneers”. Pioneers were identified by the Academic Directors at FSE, as opinion leaders and change agents, as delineated by the instructional design team. Pioneers received training and course media-enrichment services from the instructional design team and the “Champions”.

The collaboration between the instructional design team, the Champions, the Pioneers and other professionals resulted in the origination of the Virtual Lab. More specifically, the activities produced several artifacts to be used and shared by cross-curricular faculty to media enrich their courses. As part of the process, there were different collaborations and training sessions for faculty led by the instructional design and by faculty Champions; peer-to-peer planning, development and training among faculty in face-to-face and/or virtual settings; video production services for faculty led by Champions; video production services for faculty led by the instructional design team; and ongoing faculty support, among other strategies.

As the Virtual Lab Coordinator and the Instructional Designer at the Title V-B Grant at the Abraham Fischler School of Education (“The Team”) analyze the immediate future of the project, which appears to steadily advance towards achieving the Tipping Point (as posited by Roger Everett in his Diffusion of Innovation Theory), the Team is planning the final leg in the project. The projected progression towards the institutionalization of the system developed includes: recruitment of additional faculty Champions; development of procedures and structures that can assure a systematic work flow; strengthening the collaboration between key departments within the institution; and cementing of the new culture of collaboration that resulted from this project.