

Supporting Institutional Change – The Learning Innovation Centre at Lambton College

Opportunity

Lambton College recently announced its goal of building on its recent achievements in hybrid learning to become a mobile learning college. All programs that adopt the mobile learning model will require students to have a mobile device and will offer two hybrid courses each semester and a wide integration of tools, such as podcasts, e-textbooks, learning objects, and animations, into all courses. Programs in Business, as well as Practical Nursing and Developmental Services Worker, are now developing mobile offerings for the fall of 2013.

An essential component of this initiative is the training provided by the Learning Innovation Centre (LInC) to support professors in the development and integration of both hybrid/online and mobile learning into their teaching practice.



Innovation

Hybrid/Online Learning: To provide training for professors converting their courses for hybrid delivery, LInC offers a hybrid course that involves two hours of online and one hour of face-to-face contact for 14 weeks. Participants are introduced to the many options

available in online learning so that they can assess what would work best for them and apply the strategies and tools directly to the courses they are re-designing. The course is structured as a best practices model as the faculty learn about online learning through experiencing its structure, challenges, benefits, and impact.

In addition, LInC offers workshops, links to resources, and one-on-one support. The Learning Studio was launched in 2010 as an innovative learning space to support both the integration of educational technology and the utilization of active learning. Faculty join on a semester basis and develop learning communities to look at aspects of creating learning environments that positively impact student learning. They can also use the room for teaching and have access to the latest technologies and support, including participating in some technology try-outs.



Mobile Learning: The professors in the programs which volunteered to pioneer mobile learning at Lambton were given iPads in May 2012 and searched for appropriate apps over the summer. Starting in September 2012, the Learning Innovation Centre has been organizing focus groups with the faculty to discuss their processes in moving to mobile, their preferences and challenges. The hybrid classes envisioned as part of the mobile learning are already developed or in development; the use of mobile tools such as iPads and smart phones is the focus of the training and discussions. Topics include the use of Facebook in the classroom and how to ensure it is tool for learning and not a distraction.

Individual support is also provided in finding and integrating tools into classrooms and assignments.

Outcomes and Benefits

Hybrid, online, and mobile are seen as key in reaching new students and the response to the introduction of hybrid has been positive. As the professors are better prepared for adapting to new ways of teaching, they have become better at accessing the possibilities and matching their teaching styles to the tools available. With over 100 courses developed

over the last three years, Lambton has made considerable progress in hybrid/online learning.

Mobile learning is seen as an essential step in serving students who already use mobile devices in large numbers. Learning becomes more accessible, flexible, and individual as students find their own sources and tools and as they learn how to incorporate mobile devices into their education. There is a considerable learning curve for both students and faculty but the skills and outcomes equip students more effectively for success in their careers.

Challenges and Enhancements

The faculty response has varied from the champions and the curious to the more reluctant and resistant. Participation in hybrid learning and the move to mobile have been on a voluntary basis. One of the most successful strategies for encouraging wider participation has been peer-to-peer influence with professors who have made the adaptation encouraging and inspiring their colleagues. Some of the more influential professors, such as Anna Lucy Robinson, Greg Shortt, and Angela Barclay, are featured in Contact North's [Pockets of Innovation](#) series.

Adept as younger students may be at using their cell phones for their own purposes, they require considerable support and coaching before they are ready to use them for online learning. First-year students particularly require face-to-face training in technology use and considerable reinforcement on the essential nature of the hybrid component of their courses.

For the evolving mobile classrooms, faculty see the biggest challenge as the integration of phones and tablets into the classroom and self-directed learning and keeping the students on task. The myriad distractions offered by mobile devices create new challenges for classroom and out-of-class focus and concentration.

Potential

Hybrid/Online Learning: Modules are currently under development in cooperation with Fleming and Algonquin Colleges on effective engagement and interaction for online teaching and learning. The training is being designed for hybrid delivery with some preliminary use of tools, then face-to-face sessions for modelling behaviours, and then more online activity to experience and assess potential learning.

The proposed development of fully online courses in General Education would benefit all students as these courses are part of all diploma and certificate programs.

Mobile Learning: As faculty find, assess, integrate or even develop applications for mobile learning, LInC is looking to develop a repository of learning objects that can be adapted for other courses, as well as a library of best practices to guide further implementation. More extensive training plans and offerings will be designed for the next few years as more faculty adopt mobile teaching.

For Further Information

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