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Final Exemplary Technology Educator Vision Assignment

In approaching the revision of my initial Exemplary Technology Educator Vision statement, I asked myself what changed between then and now. My first and instinctual response was “not much.” However, I don’t feel this is acceptable. Something over the course of a semester *has* to change. But what then?

At the outset of the semester I wrote about Adam Wandt, a colleague of mine at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice. I noted that while we have collaborated in the past, it hasn’t always been on Blackboard. Truth be told Prof. Wandt is not a big fan of Blackboard, but that hasn’t prevented us from working together in the courses Adam has taught and we continue to look for projects on which we can partner. In the initial statement I discussed the innovative ways Adam challenges his students and actively integrates technology into his teaching. At the time I wrote, “I would describe Prof. Wandt as an exemplary user of technology because of his openness and willingness to try new things. He is not satisfied with the tried and true. He doesn’t always assume things are going to work, or that projects will be accomplished without difficulties. But that doesn’t ever prevent him from pursuing new ways to further student learning.” I still believe all of this to be true and I believe the materials we read in this course support elevating these qualities to the level of an exemplary educator.

Looking back at the semester however, what I would add, or move to a particular level of prominence in a vision of an exemplary technology educator is the *pursuit* of new ways to teach, of new technologies to employ, of new avenues through which to educate oneself in the use of technology in teaching. As part of my Literature Review, I read Lackey (2011). I was struck by how the underlying assumption on the part of the instructors Lackey interviewed seemed to be

that training was someone else's responsibility, rather than something they should be emphasizing or more importantly, initiating. The fact that the instructors felt they weren't properly trained or supported was interpreted as a failure of the institution's training program rather than the instructors who chose not to pursue the resources they admitted were available to them. This could be contrasted with Crede, Borrego, and McNair (2010), who reported the results of a training program that guided the development of graduate students into effective instructors while pursuing their doctoral degrees. The students in Crede, et al., appeared to be comparatively more satisfied with their careers as educators, and I would argue, more oriented toward being proactive in seeking the assistance they need (both studies included interview data, so this is an overall impression I had from the participants comments rather than specific questions asked by the respective researchers).

Although I must be honest and admit that my background as a Blackboard Administrator and trainer is coloring this response, I believe what changed for me over the course of this semester was that I gained a deeper appreciation for educators who actively seek to add to their skill sets as teachers. I believe that along with the disenfranchised instructors interviewed by Lackey (2011) there is something to be learned from these highly motivated and engaged instructors, that if properly identified, may guide the development of effective faculty technology training programs. There may be a spectrum present when considering an orientation toward faculty development for use of technology. Lackey (2011) may illustrate one end of that spectrum. However, Crede, et al. (2011) may be a midpoint, in demonstrating how we can encourage proactive behavior in our future higher education faculty. Lastly, instructors like Adam Wandt possibly represent the opposite end, faculty who, when faced with a teaching challenge, actively investigate what solutions technology may have to offer, self-educate themselves, and ask questions. It is instructors like this who through their own use of technology

not only bring something special to the classroom for their students, but challenge colleagues to push their own boundaries, even their Blackboard Administrators.

References:

- Crede, E., Borrego, M., & McNair, L.D. (2010). Application of Community of Practice Theory to the Preparation of Engineering Graduate Students for Faculty Careers. *Advances in Engineering Education*, 2(2), 1-23.
- Lackey, K. (2011). Faculty Development: An Analysis of Current and Effective Training Strategies for Preparing Faculty to Teach Online. *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration*, 14(5). Retrieved from <http://distance.westga.edu/~distance/ojdla/>

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