Teaching and Learning Center

Roundtable

March 12, 2015

Moderator: Norah Kerr-McCurry, Director TLC

Attendees:

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| Edward, Katherine  Hartzell, Larry  Shaloum, Jonathan  Wang, Linda |

The topic for today’s Roundtable is Competency-Based Learning and the challenges and opportunities this personalized learning strategy presents. The U.S. Department of Education defines competency-based learning as, “Transitioning away from seat time, in favor of a structure that creates flexibility, allows students to progress as they demonstrate mastery of academic content, regardless of time, place, or pace of learning. Competency-based strategies provide flexibility in the way that credit can be earned or awarded, and provide students with personalized learning opportunities.”. (See attachments)

Attendance was low at this roundtable because of the number of other meetings scheduled for the same time slot.

Here are the highlights of the meeting:

* Years ago the college was using mastery learning as noted by Katherine.
* Larry noted that competencies must be set for the students and Norah questioned whether students need to be taught or do they teach themselves.
* When telecourses were a part of the curriculum, the completion rate was a 40 – 50%. The completion rate increased to 60 – 68% when the college moved to online courses. Norah explained that 10 – 20% take online courses because of personal reasons such as medical issues, in the military, unable to travel, small children, etc.
* Online courses provide a “social aspect” to learning. Linda has experienced students that do not want to associate with other students and this makes discussions difficult.
* Linda noted that math is correct or incorrect as opposed to courses like psychology or sociology. Math does not have a good completion rate and she feels that online students need interaction to reinforce learning. She also noted that low completion rates may be influenced by courses that are not up to par, students may lack skill sets needed to be successful or the student is not disciplined in time management.
* Larry asked, “How do you keep them out if they are not capable?” It was suggested that a self-paced competency based course might be an answer. Katherine said this could work for graduates looking for advanced credentialing.
* Online courses must be improved and the college could investigate “testing out” of courses. Norah noted that alternate scheduling should be available for adult learners.
* With the high school population shrinking, Norah explained that it is imperative that Brookdale expand its market.

The next Roundtable is scheduled for April 9th.