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EdLab Technical Report



Teaching and Learning Network

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PURPOSE

The Teaching and Learning Network (TLN) blog is created as an online community to address some of the above challenges. It aims to leverage the existing resources at the teaching centers and connect expertise among the professionals who are interested in the future of teaching in higher education. Every participant in the network is an expert as well as a novice, a teacher as well as a learner. The following are some specific goals:

- To make tacit knowledge explicit
- To connect fragmented knowledge
- To tell stories
- To share and broadcast the latest news in higher education
- To demonstrate effective teaching practices
- To showcase innovative technologies in teaching and learning
- To leverage existing resources
- To read excerpts of articles on teaching
- To promote expertise in teaching and learning
- To network

In addition, we are interested in improving and refining the network in the culture of use through quality content as well as innovative technological and social software potentials.

CONSIDERATIONS

Several issues challenge the professional development efforts in higher education institutions:

- There are hundreds of teaching centers in the U.S. and around the world (<http://www.ku.edu/~cte/resources/websites.html>), each of which provides a variety of resources and technologies to help faculty and teaching assistants to teach better. However, as admirable as some individuals' efforts are, their efforts are not known or shared beyond the served institutions. Consequently, it is difficult for the centers to build on each other's knowledge and experience.
- The teaching centers are traditionally marginalized in the institutions they belong: lack of administrative support, personnel, resources, and faculty involvement. This makes the individual teaching centers less effective than they could be. As much as an institution recognizes the usefulness of such a center, the center itself is usually isolated from rather than integrated with the departments or programs.
- The teaching centers usually provide support for a limited numbers of faculty members or teaching assistants. This in turn reduces the benefits a teaching center can have for an institution.
- The teaching centers are not seen as leading the direction of the future of teaching in higher education. They are historically perceived as "remedial" places for people who are less experienced, or as places where faculty look for

administrative or technical assistance. Both of the above reduces the effectiveness and impact of teaching centers.

References:

Drupal:

Ask Philosophers: <http://www.amherst.edu/askphilosophers/topic/All>

Digg: <http://www.digg.com/>