Embracing the Mission

A CASE STUDY FROM AN ONLINE ORIENTATION FOR ADJUNCT FACULTY

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In an hour you will be able to…

- ▶ Evaluate the problem-based learning model as a tool for faculty development.
- ▶ Consider how you might create for your institutions interactive online orientations for faculty development.
- ▶ Remember salient themes about the PBLOnline experience from the adjunct professors' point of view.

Harding University – The Case

- ▶ Private liberal arts university in central Arkansas.
- ▶ Roughly 4200 residential students and 1300 graduate students.
- ▶ Campuses and sites in Searcy (main), North Little Rock, Rogers (NWArk), Memphis, Australia, Chile, England, France, Greece, Italy, Zambia.
- ▶ About 180 adjunct professors per semester.
- ▶ Desire of the Board of Trustees for all faculty, full time and adjunct to integrate the mission of the university in their courses.

- ▶ (The numbers here are current, but the full report from the 2011-13 case study were slightly different.)

What is the problem at UIB?

- ▶ **University of Indiana Ballroom mission statement:** The mission of this institution is to integrate discovery, experience, and ethical reasoning in such a way that prepares students for a diverse and innovative work force.

- ▶ HLC: Mission 1.A.2. "The institution's academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission."
- ▶ As faculty of UIB, you are commissioned to devise some way to assure that all 150 of your adjunct faculty (located on site and off site) consider how to incorporate this mission in each of their disciplines.
- ▶ Step: 1 – Describe the problem.

Harding's problem

- As a faith-based institution, we were charged to assure all classes integrated faith and learning, including those taught by adjunct professors.
- Solution: Design an online orientation with Problem-Based Learning Model.
  - Ill-structured problem of student apathy toward religious activity.
  - Group work to try to figure out how to define and solve the problem.
  - Individual journaling about integrating faith and learning.
  - Group discussions about integration of faith and learning.
 - Group recommendations about how to inspire students to engage in religious activity.

What do we need to know about UIB to solve the problem?

- Step 2: Analyze the problem and the issues surrounding the problem.

- What do we gain from this step?

Harding University: The Case Study (2011 and 2013)

▶ Research questions:

1. How do adjunct faculty evaluate the PBL model in faculty development?

2. How do faculty evaluate using PBLonline in faculty development?
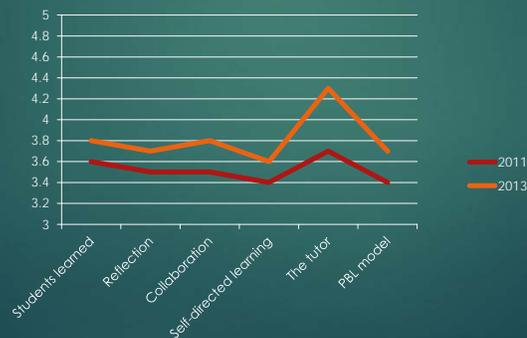
Adjunct faculty "themes"

▶ **Collaboration–** success depended on the level of collaboration (frequent, committed, and timely communication in groups).

▶ **Multi-disciplinary–** valued differing perspectives and interdisciplinary interaction.

▶ **The Facilitator–** positive feedback from participants depended on the level of participation of the facilitator (communication and guidance).

▶ **Usability–** success of the orientation was affected by the degree to which the participants could navigate the online course.

▶ **Time as Commodity–** Time was the primary way participants measured the value of the orientation. "Waste of time" v. "worth my time."

▶ Overall quantitative and qualitative responses indicated that the adjunct faculty did benefit from the PBL model and that they were able to learn more about the mission of Harding with the online medium.

From UIB to Your UNIV

- ▶ Step 3: Discuss what you would create for your UIB adjunct faculty.

- ▶ Step 4: What methods of faculty development would work at your institution?

Recommendations for PBLonline Faculty Development

- ▶ Design online orientations in such a way that all resources and tools are easy to use.
- ▶ Commit to frequent communication and facilitation.
- ▶ Scaffolding, scaffolding, scaffolding.
- ▶ Compensate participants.
- ▶ Accommodate to the schedules of your adjunct faculty.

- ▶ For the full report see "Embracing the Mission" on NET

Problem-Based Learning Comparative Matrix

Tan's model (2003, 35)	Amador et.al. (2006, 10)	Wee Keng Neo (2004, 8) FILA
Meeting the problem	Present students with a problem.	*Facts:* What are the facts stated in the problem?
Problem analysis and learning issues	Determine what aspects of the problem they do not understand.	*Ideas:* What are some of the ideas that you can propose based on the identified facts?
Discovery and reporting	Rank learning issues in order of importance.	*Learning issues:* What are some of the learning issues that you would like to find out in order to manage this problem?
Solution presentation and reflection	Explore previous learning issues and integrate new knowledge in the context of the problem.	*Action plan:* How do you intend to obtain the information to manage this problem?
Overview, integration and evaluation		

ETM course design:

Module 1: Present the problem. What do we do about spiritual apathy among Harding students?

Module 2: Analyze the problem. What do we need to know about the students, the mission of Harding, and integrating faith and learning in order to reduce spiritual apathy? Is spiritual apathy really the problem?

Module 3: Solve the problem and report the solution. What creative solutions can we create that encourage Christian thinking and integrative learning?

ETM learning outcomes:

- Appraise how well Harding's current mission statement represents the goals of Harding and Christian education of the twenty-first century.
- Create one or more strategies of how to integrate Christian ideals into academic disciplines of higher learning.
- Reflect on your own spiritual journey and integration of faith with your discipline.
- Evaluate the efficacy of group collaboration and problem solving exercises through the online learning management system.

Perceptions of the Embracing the Mission Adjunct Orientation (2011-2013)

Survey Items	Mean Responses* (N=67)
1. My understanding of Harding's mission increased because of this course.	3.9
2. I have new ideas about how to integrate Christian values.	4.1
3. This course challenged me to grow spiritually.	3.7
4. My group collaborated effectively.	3.6
5. The textbooks provided by Harding helped me understand how to adapt my teaching to the Christian context of Harding University.	3.6
6. Resources provided in Moodle helped our group create ways to solve our group's problem.	3.6
7. Forum discussions enhanced my thinking about integrating faith and learning.	4
8. Journal questions challenged me to reflect on my own spiritual journey in Christian education.	4.1
9. The facilitator guided our group through our problem-solving process.	4
10. The facilitator provided appropriate feedback for personal my personal growth and learning.	4.2
11. The problem-based learning model helped our group think deeply about integrating faith and learning.	3.7
12. Our group created one or more options for integrating Christian values in teaching.	4
13. Group members demonstrated effective communication skills within the group.	3.6
14. Each member actively contributed to the learning process.	3
15. I know the members of my team better now than I did before the course began.	3.4
16. Our group produced a better solution to the course problem than I could have created alone.	3.7

*Response variables: Strong Disagree=1, Disagree=2, Neutral=3, Agree=4, Strongly Agree=5