Our Journey Into Learning Innovation and Competency-Based Education

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WHY INNOVATE LEARNING? WHY CBE?

• Why Innovate?
  • Nature of work is changing – How to prepare graduates to be more adaptable
  • 2013 Hart research study – “It takes more than a major”
  • Criticism of the value of a college education (access, cost, etc.)
  • Academia failing to respond to the wide range of external stakeholders

• Why CBE?
  • Outcomes and assessment aligned with 21\textsuperscript{st} century needs
  • Transparency – learners and instructors know the outcomes
  • Adjustable pace of learning
  • Student Agency, Ownership of learning
    – Add program of study flexibility
    – Add faculty mentoring
2012-2013: Small faculty groups meet on disrupting higher (STEM) education
  - 2013 - Spring-Summer: Purdue Move proposal/award for transforming the College of Technology
2013 – Aug.: Faculty application process to create an education “incubator”
2013 – Sept.-Dec.: Evening meetings facilitated by experienced education disrupter and leadership coach
  - Focus on Individual
    - Vulnerability, Letting go of expertise to more effectively communicate across disciplinary boundaries and mindsets
2014 – Jan.: First meetings to design a program
2014 – Feb.-July: (Very) Early design of learning experiences
  - Seminar
  - Design Studio
2014 – Aug. 25: First cohort of 33 students enter experimental learning experiences
2014 – Sept. Incubator wins President's award for design of CBE program
  - Tentatively titled "Transdisciplinary Studies"
KEY TAKEAWAYS

• Disruption is Hard
  • Systemic inertia
    – Institutional value and reward system
    – Values (STEM vs. Humanities)
  • Faculty Experts
    – Biases thinking and placement of values
    – Convergence in thinking is challenging

• Err on the side of Observation (Monitor the disruption)
  • Both learning experiences monitored (faculty and students)
  • Necessitated quick adjustments in real time

• Ability to handle independence
  • Student and faculty readiness and responsiveness

• Disruption is HARD
December 10, 2014: College of Technology approves CBE degree program

January 2015: Application to C-BEN approved
  • Attended first convening March 3-5 2015

March, 2015: Higher Learning Commission (HLC) stops accepting substantive change for CBE programs retroactive to January 1, 2015

April 10, 2015: Purdue Board of Trustees approves "Transdisciplinary Studies in Technology" degree
  • 1st undergraduate CBE program at major university

May 2015: ICHE request – OK from NCAA

June 2, 2015: Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (C-RAC) announcement of common framework for CBE programs

June 11, 2015: ICHE approves degree
  • Letter received June 12, 2015

August 31, 2015: HLC begins accepting substantive change approval requests for CBE programs

September 15, 2015: Substantive change approval requested

September 30, 2015: US Office of Inspector General issues final report critical of HLC policies and procedures for approving CBE programs

March 22, 2016 HLC approves Transdisciplinary CBE program
  • Program appears on "Common App" for fall 2017 new beginners
**KEY TAKEAWAYS**

- Disruption is Hard
  - Systemic inertia
    - Institutional
    - Regional (HLC)
    - National (C-RAC, DOEd)

- Learn the Landscape of Higher Education
  - Internally (College, University)
  - Externally (Approvers, Accreditors, Policy Makers in [your country])

- Patience
  - Institutional, regional, federal Inertia
  - Approvals do not generally happen overnight

- Disruption is HARD
TESTING AND GROWING THE PROGRAM

- March 2016 – Implementing Lessons Learned and Preparing for Fall 2017 Cohort
  - Revisiting Competency Language
  - Creating Assessment Framework
  - Creating Instructional Scaffolding
  - Recruiting New Students
LESSONS LEARNED

• Encourage innovation in a protected environment
• “Don’t let the perfect be the enemy of the good” – Voltaire
• Demonstrate viability but also maintain long-term potential
• Tolerate Risk
• Expect Resistance
• Know when to Compromise
• Choose decision-making and organizational practices wisely
• Effective Communication through a variety of Channels is Critical
• Perseverance and Grit are Essential
• Know how things get done at your institution
• New TST majors and collaborations across schools

• National standards being developed for CBE

• Open ended future?
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