Development of a Competency-Linked Online Graduate Program

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Session Objectives

• Determine\(^{(3)}\) the importance of competency-linked education
• Identify\(^{(4)}\) pros and cons of implementing competency-linked education practices
• Develop\(^{(6)}\) own strategies to align competencies in own course or program

(parenthetical # is the level of Bloom’s Taxonomy order of thinking)
Overview

• Project Goals:
  – Link curriculum and course activities with competencies from accepted international organization
  – Provide students with increased labor market outcomes upon graduation
Program Background

• First fully online degree program at NC State
• Program coordinator worked with well-known training organization
• Desire to align required program courses with ATD Competency Model
• Design courses to be synchronous or asynchronous
Definition of Competency-Linked Education

• Falls in the spectrum of competency-based education
• Book (2014) - no definitive definition of competency-based education; several models exist
• Faculty members
  – Identify competencies
  – Select content, readings and assignments to help students meet identified competencies
  – Engage students in learning process
Why Link Competencies?

• Allow students to master skills at their pace while meeting course objectives
• Deliver content at 5- or 15-week pace
• Improve labor market outcomes for students
• Prepare students with skills needed for workforce
• Provide students list of competencies in which they are proficient
Competency Alignment Process

- Courses
- Activities and assignments
- Modifications
- Entire program curriculum

### Course vs. ATD Competency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>ATD Competency</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Designing Instructional Systems</td>
<td>Instructional Design</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Advanced Instructional Design</td>
<td>Instructional Design</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Organization Operation of T&amp;D Programs</td>
<td>Managing Learning Programs</td>
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<td>4. Needs Assessment and Task Analysis</td>
<td>Performance Improvement</td>
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<td>5. Evaluating Training and Transfer</td>
<td>Evaluating Learning Impact</td>
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<td>6. Integrating Technology in T&amp;D</td>
<td>Learning Technologies</td>
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<td>7. Methods and Techniques of T&amp;D</td>
<td>Training Delivery</td>
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<td>8. Research in AHE</td>
<td>Knowledge Management</td>
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<td>9. Organizational Change in HRD</td>
<td>Change Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Adult Learner</td>
<td>Training Delivery</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Special Topics: Leadership</td>
<td>Coaching</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Capstone</td>
<td>Integrated Talent Management</td>
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Total 36 credit hours
What Does Our Program Look Like?

• Emphasis on building community
• Faculty engage with students through variety of modalities
• Focus on building practitioners with knowledge, skills, and abilities to enter training and development workforce
Challenges

• Developing competencies or finding existing competencies
• Linking the competencies
• Obtaining faculty buy-in
• Training faculty
• Transitioning all course(s) to the new model
Successes

• Graduates finish course(s) with a set of skills obtained throughout the course.
• Courses close the gap between course content and job-related skills.
• Higher program enrollment during and after the project.

Note: Green shaded area represents the enrollment growth during the years of linking curriculum and deliverables to competencies.
Relevance to Teaching & Learning in Higher Education

- Competency-linked education
  - Student success definition
  - Labor market outcomes
  - Apply skills outside classroom
Questions
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