Living and Learning with College LiveText: Lessons from a Self-study

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Abstract: For teacher preparation programs to continue in the business of preparing pre-service teachers for licensure, they have to be accredited by a reputable professional body such as (1) the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), developed over 50 years, and (2) the newer Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC), which got its final formal approval in 2003. Accreditation spells alignment of learning outcomes with standards as well as accountability. In this paper, a self-study is presented addressing how one mid-southern university lives and learns with College LiveText in preparation for NCATE accreditation fall 2009.

Introduction and Background

For the past four years, College LiveText was adopted as the web-based tool for students to prepare their e-portfolios as well as for instructors to assess students' work and collate needed data for NCATE accreditation purposes. In response to the many sweeping changes in America's educational system including the No Child Left Behind initiative, teacher education programs have had to become even accountable in showing empirical measures of student learning. To support these reform efforts, state, federal, and accreditation agencies have issued many standards and guidelines. College LiveText education solutions™ (CLT™) www.livetext.com features a repository of these various standards and benchmarks to help higher educational institutions assess, measure, and report their standards usage, linked with student competencies, to the respective accreditation agencies. The CLT™ portal is designed to assist colleges and universities in achieving their goals, having a comprehensive suite of web-based tools, a supportive community, and experienced support staff.

Prerequisite Skills for Using CLT™

- Basic word processor skills
- Web browser navigation skills
- Ability to access files on a computer
- Proficiency with a personal computer
- Like other electronic portals, CLT™ enables the users to
  1. Create document in CLT™
  2. Create and edit pages and sections of documents
  3. Add text, images, and attachments to a document

- Additional features important for accreditation but not available in other portals such as BlackBoard.com, include but is not limited to:
    1. Sharing documents with other CLT™ users in a safe environment only accessible to selected users (not on the web)
    2. Performing document review and assessment
    3. Creating personal report based on assessment data generated (most important for NCATE reports)

Lessons Learned

Based on the expressed needs of faculty regarding assessment and reports the following lessons learned include:

1. Not under-estimating the power of marketing of CLT™ to administrators, faculty, and students as primary stakeholders.
2. Adding CLT™ fees to students' registration process (vs. purchase on line in class) helps to reduce the 'balking' many students do when they learn they have to purchase access to CLT™ portal.
    a. Negotiating with CLT™ with regarding the purchasing of access for students then the university is billed must be considered
    b. Helping students realize they can continue to access CLT™ after graduation
3. Focus must be placed on training both faculty and students
    a. This can impact the final evaluation negatively because many students will not attend and will not know how to use the features efficiently
    b. This training in classes also has implications for faculty evaluation
    c. When students see that faculty know how and utilizes CLT™, they are more motivated to use it
4. Thinking 'rubrically'—what data does the college really need for NCATE?
    a. Faculty or program directors create the rubrics
5. Do not roll out a new assessment rubric at the same time you roll out other requirements because students will blame CLT™ not the assessment
6. Create multiple rubrics to keep accurate data
7. Develop generic administrator account
8. Identify who or what is accountable for the hold-outs who don't or won't use CLT™ and address those concerns
9. Utilize the educational videos in CLT™. They are downloadable to a CD

Reference

www.livetext.com