

# Instructional What Works? Design

- ➔ **Alexandra M. Pickett** - Assistant Director, SLN  
Faculty Development & Course Design

<http://SLN.suny.edu/developer>

# What works?

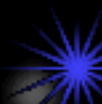
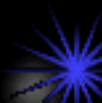
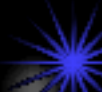


- ▶ Share stuff we know works . . .
  - ▶ Learn from you -what you find works . . .
-

# Introduction

## What WORKS

?

-  One question you have about online course design.
-  One cool thing you know or have observed in the design of an online course.
-  One strategy or ID tip you would share with the group.

# Background

## Introduction: 2000 - 2001 academic year



47 SLN campuses participating

1000+ faculty trained to date

35+ full online degree programs

1500+ courses this academic year

20,000+ enrollments this academic year

SLN was referenced in testimony to the Kerrey Commission in Congress as one of the top 3 largest online programs in the country!

# Background

## Introduction



Large-scale production required that we develop ways to support & train large numbers of faculty and produce large numbers of courses of consistent quality.

Using a comprehensive faculty development and course design approach, we avoid cookie cutter mass production by working with individual faculty and allowing them and their content to drive course design.

We have the opportunity to influence and share best practices across the design of all courses.

# What works?

“our mission is to help SUNY faculty create technically and instructionally robust learning environments in which to teach and learn.”

- **Share stuff we know works . . .**
  - **Learn from faculty -what they find works . . .**
- 

Instructional design is about creating rich robust teaching and learning environments with opportunities for interaction with course content, between students, and with the instructor.

# What works?

## In general . . .

What we have learned from working with over 1000 SUNY faculty, from 47 SUNY institutions, and thousands of students since 1994.

- Good online instructional practices are independent of software.
- Just because you can, doesn't mean you should.
- A well-designed course creatively leverages the options AND recognizes the limitations of the online learning environment.
- Assume nothing.
- If you do something, and it doesn't work (or it breaks something) . . . Don't do it again.
- Just because a course or a part of a course is online doesn't mean it ALL has to be online.
- Online learning, or web-enhanced learning doesn't mean "self-paced."
- First make it work, then make it pretty.

# What works?

## In general . . .

What we have learned from working with over 1000 SUNY faculty, from 47 SUNY institutions, and thousands of students since 1994.

- Successful online courses have effective designs and effective instructors. **This requires support.**
- Faculty need to understand the nature of the online environment.
- Faculty need to be able to concentrate on teaching, students need to be able to focus on learning-- technology must be as transparent as possible.
- Faculty must convert instruction, rather than try to duplicate the classroom online. Conversion requires “rethinking” how to achieve learning objectives & how to assess learning within the options and limitations of the new learning environment.

# What works?

## Specifically . . .

You are NOT  
recreating your  
classroom online.

You are converting  
the materials,  
content, and  
learning objectives  
to a new learning  
environment

- Create opportunities for interaction with students and between students.
- Create/use activities that build a sense of class community.
- Think literal.
- Talk don't write.
- Use the structure of the course to convey information about the course, content, task.
- Provide explicit instructions cues and signposts for students.
- Be flexibly firm.
- Be consistent, redundant, and complete in the structure and creation of your course.

# What we've learned and what we know...

## Interaction

Expectations

Collaboration

Simplicity

Support

Flexibility

- It is about creating teaching and learning opportunities and environments where students can interact with students AND where students can interact with faculty.

- Virtual community
- New learning environments
- Technology-enhanced teaching and learning

**SLN student satisfaction surveys:** the biggest contributing factor to student satisfaction and perceived learning is student/teacher interaction. Second is student to student interaction.

# What we've learned and what we know...

Interaction

Expectations

Collaboration

Simplicity

Support

Flexibility

- It is important that faculty create and communicate to the student a reasonable set of expectations for the level and kinds of interactions in an online course.
  - logon schedule
  - explicitly set expectations for interactions and completion of all learning activities.

# What we've learned and what we know...

Interaction

Expectations

Collaboration

Simplicity

Support

Flexibility

- Since student to student interaction is such a significant factor in student satisfaction, any opportunities created in a course that involve collaboration to construct knowledge is an important component of an online course.

- Discussion
- Small group activities/projects

# What we've learned and what we know...

Interaction

Expectations

Collaboration

**Simplicity**

Support

Flexibility

- **Computer skill or sophistication should not be a barrier to technology enhanced/online teaching and learning.**
  - Keep it simple.
  - Vanilla!
  - Templates.
  - Organization of materials and learning activities.

# What we've learned and what we know...

Interaction

Expectations

Collaboration

Simplicity

Support

Flexibility

- **Provide support and a structure and framework to scaffold both faculty and students.**
  - FACULTY: MIDs, all faculty conference, courses for observation, training, Faculty Center, template, handbook Faculty development process, Course design process
  - STUDENTS: permanence of artifacts, resources and interactions, helpdesk, Bulletin board in a course, Commons in a program, tutorial

# What we've learned and what we know...

Interaction

Expectations

Collaboration

Simplicity

Support

Flexibility

- “Any where any time” teaching and learning for faculty and students requires flexibility and commitment.

- FACULTY: passion for teaching.
- STUDENTS: responsibility for their own learning.

# What works?

**SLN Best Practices:** an effective well-designed course has. . .

Course design factors that influence learning effectiveness are. . .

1.

Comprehensive Orientation & Syllabus documents - explicit expectations

2.

Consistent and complete course "chunks"/ module structure

3.

Redundant and consistent instructional cues and detailed explanations

# What works?

**SLN Best Practices:** an effective well-designed course has . . .



4

Meaningful and consistent course section & document titles to organize and convey info. about the activities, content, and structure of course.

5

A detailed orientation to each course module.

6

Detailed instructions for each learning activity: expectation, timeframe, navigation, etc.

# What works?

**SLN Best Practices:** an effective well-designed course . . .



7

Makes course information accessible and redundant.

8

Provides students ample opportunities for interaction with the instructor and with others in the course.

9

Provides students with opportunities to engage and interact with the content actively. - Directed learning activities.

## What we've learned and what we know...

Reflection

Ownership

Empowerment

Evolution

- The importance of the role of the instructional design partner in helping faculty determine where teaching goes on in the classroom and how can that be converted to the online classroom.
  - **Committed support of faculty.**

## What we've learned and what we know...

Reflection

Ownership

Empowerment

Evolution

- Faculty must “own” their course.
- Students must “own” their learning.
- Campuses must have ownership of faculty and programmatic issues.
  - **Creating autonomous teachers and learners.**

## What we've learned and what we know...

Reflection

Ownership

Empowerment

Evolution

- Faculty, students, and campuses require empowerment.
  - Processes, models, information, resources, to inform and support choices.

## What we've learned and what we know...

Reflection

Ownership

Empowerment

Evolution

- Develop, test, pilot, evaluate & revise.
  - Ability to deal with change.

# What works?

**SLN Best Practices:** effective online instructors. . .



1

“Assume nothing” and anticipate and address student questions in the design of the course.

2

Are responsive and present in the course.

3

Use directives, first person voice, conversational tone.

# What works?

**SLN Best Practices:** Effective online instructors.



4

Are sensitive to the student's perspective.

5

Create complete well-explained online and off line activities. - instructional cues!


6

Encourage a sense of class community & provide community building opportunities & interactions.

# What works

## Faculty selection . . .

---

- 
- Passion for teaching!
  - Willingness to “rethink” how they teach.
  - Commitment and time to develop.
  - Institutional support.

**The majority of SLN faculty are not early adopters or technophiles. Some of our best online instructors had limited technical skills and experience.**

# What works

## Faculty support . . .

- 
- Faculty-driven course design-- pedagogy not imposed by the course management application or the instructional designer
  - Faculty must develop the course themselves
  - Opportunities for participation in online courses or discussion
  - Observation of live online courses
  - Access to experienced faculty, opportunities for interdisciplinary networking, peer support/training
  - Individual instructional design support and technical support
  - Reliable stable network & technology
  - Template that makes technology transparent
  - Collecting and sharing best practices
  - Resources and support in a variety of media
  - Opportunities for reflection, evaluation, and revision

# Any questions



# Thank you!

**Alexandra M. Pickett**  
**apickett@sln.suny.edu**

<http://SLN.suny.edu/SLN>