



3 ways to get faculty more engaged in learning innovations

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Colleges and universities face increasing pressure to innovate, but a bold strategic initiative requires buy-in from a range of stakeholders.

For many campus innovation leaders—and instructional designers, in particular—forming meaningful partnerships with campus stakeholders and raising awareness about the multitude of services offered are the hardest parts of the process, writes David Rath for *Campus Technology*.

That's in part because faculty don't have a clear idea of what instructional designers do, suggests Rath.

For instance, many faculty members see instructional designers as IT support staff, he writes. That's why "[w]e call ourselves learning designers here," says Erin DeSilva, the Assistant Director of Learning Design and Technology at **Dartmouth College**. "We really wanted to indicate that the student was the center of our focus and not the material development. We have some learning experience design training, but we also have training in motivational interviewing, which is a therapy technique and which is probably used in our work as much as the design stuff."

Here are three more ways to engage faculty in learning innovation, from DeSilva and two other instructional designers:

1: Make connections

Sara Davis shares that when she first arrived at **Pennsylvania State University** to work as the Instructional Designer in the Teaching and Learning with Technology Department, she was tasked with helping faculty migrate to a new learning

management system. "Because we were migrating to a new platform, it opened up the door to have conversations about the way the course was designed—because we had to restructure them anyway," she says.

Davis then realized that, to best manage the project, she needed to connect with people she could learn from both within and outside of her department, including project managers in IT, OER experts, and researchers. "There is so much technology in use now that it is impossible to be an expert on all of it, so you need to find people who are experts and build a network," she says.

2: Meet faculty where they are

Todd Conaway, an Instructional Designer in the Office of Digital Learning & Innovation at the **University of Washington Bothell**, suggests that instructional designers haven't traditionally done a good job of approaching faculty with learning innovation ideas.

Conaway suggests that instructional designers meet faculty members where they are and invest time in forming relationships. For instance, when faculty members express interest in a topic, they often say things like, "When are you going to have a training session on that?" And Conaway says he always responds with, "Right this second! Come sit with me and we will discover all kinds of things."

"I want to work with faculty individually and see them progress as educators, from wherever they are today to wherever we can get them to tomorrow," says Conaway of his approach.

Plus, as instructional designers are increasingly focused on humanizing course materials, it's more important than ever to form relationships with and listen to faculty, adds Davis. "I always start with asking faculty what they want their students to get out of their course experience, and we talk through that before we start any design work," she says. "There is a saying that people ignore design that ignores people. You can set something up with the best of intentions, but if you are not listening to your users, it might not be used in the way it was intended to be used."

3: Be open and flexible

DeSilva suggests that instructional designers should remain open to new opportunities to present the work of their department and be flexible in their engagement efforts. She explains that one of her most successful programs emerged from a course

redesign initiative, but later transformed into a program that "wasn't in our wheelhouse."

"Running it out of our department has been an interesting adventure," says DeSilva. "We have gotten more faculty development and meaningful course redesign and excellent relationship building through this program than through anything else we have done. It was a completely different thing to take on" (Raths, *Campus Technology*, 4/3).

https://www.eab.com/daily-briefing/2019/04/15/3-ways-to-get-faculty-more-engaged-in-learning-innovations?utm_source=eabdb&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=eabdb&mkt_tok=eyJpIjoiTnpKak1UaGxPRGRsWWpkaCIsInQiOiJxbUtmY0RNaDRyNVl4Q3dGclE4djBlcEdGOVBHU0RkSWRoV1wvWmNcL3dSYWxPU2I1Z3dYaUdsZlhHNDhWTDdBWkhHRm0xYTJhYkVlB6bjRvRXN4alwveWlHbzZRQ2NObm5nbjJTeXNxeiVkm2IYVksyNXlyUEpaU2Qyc3dHWjhHRyJ9