East Tennessee State University

Digital Commons @ East Tennessee State University

2017

Faculty Perceptions and Practices in Online Education

James Lampley
East Tennessee State University, lampley@etsu.edu

Saundra Reynolds
East Tennessee State University

Follow this and additional works at: https://dc.etsu.edu/etsu-works

Part of the Higher Education Commons

Citation Information

Faculty Perceptions and Practices in Online Education

Copyright Statement

Faculty Perceptions and Practices in Online Education

James Lampley
East Tennessee State University

Saundra Reynolds
East Tennessee State University

ABSTRACT

This study addressed questions related to faculty perceptions of online teaching and education. There were three overall research themes: The ways in which faculty perceive and use the Desire2Learn educational learning management system as a delivery platform for instruction. How do professors observe differences in asynchronous and synchronous courses? How has online instruction evolved within the department since its introduction? The study included faculty and administrators working in the Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis department in the College of Education at East Tennessee State University. The method used for data collection in the study was face-to-face interviews with individual study participants.

Overall, participants reported a variety of usage levels in the delivery platform from basic information distribution, to in-depth use of functional features and tools. The extent instructors used the platform varied depending upon teaching styles, preferred methods of interaction, comfort levels with the technology, and individual preferences. All participants found the platform to be versatile enough to accommodate their personal teaching preferences, however, most reported a desire to see a more "user-friendly" format. The greatest concern found among all participants in the study was the need to find ways of engaging students effectively. Faculty have found many tools for engaging students in the online learning environment, such as: synchronous meetings, introductory videos, group assignments, and the use of online discussion forums. All participants reported positive and negative aspects of teaching online when compared to traditional classroom instruction. Negative perceptions included the lack of one-on-one interaction with students in person, and the possibility that students might not be assimilating the course information as completely as they might in a traditional classroom setting where regular interaction with scholars and other learners can enhance understanding. Positive perceptions of the move to an entirely online educational platform were the ability to reach more students from much wider backgrounds, demographics, and locations.