

MIT 530

# Change Management Plan – Blackboard Help Course 24/7

Submitted by: Sheri Anderson



## Introduction

The University of North Carolina Wilmington (UNCW) is a public comprehensive university, one of the sixteen constituent campuses of the University of North Carolina. UNCW consists of approximately 12,000 students and 800 faculty members. Information Technology Systems Division (ITSD) is a division within UNCW that supports technology operations and provides service maintenance for network applications at the university. Within ITSD are various departments that direct and advise program development, research, consulting, and communications involved with technology integration.

Technology Enhanced Learning, department within ITSD is responsible for training faculty and staff from approximately 4 colleges with current and emerging technology. Within the department of Technology Enhanced Learning, is the Office of E-Learning, which oversees all online and web-enhanced instruction. The hours of operation for E-Learning are 8 to 5 and there are two full time employees and two graduate assistants in the office.

The E-Learning office also provides instructional support and assistance to faculty who are using technology tools to enhance and/or expand course content and delivery. They also assist students with online course difficulties. The majority of their support goes towards the Learning Management System (LMS), Blackboard Vista. This LMS can be used for the delivery of instruction, course management, discussion boards, Wimba (a live online conference room), email, and chat.

In the Fall of 2007, E-Learning created a knowledge base entitled “Blackboard Help Course – 24/7” with the intention of providing additional support and assistance to faculty members who use the Blackboard LMS. This knowledge base offers instructors quick access to solutions 24/7 without having to call or email the Technology Assistance Center or the office of E-Learning. Features provided for instructors within the “Blackboard Help Course” include discussion boards, job aids, and email.

The training needs assessment was conducted to determine if the faculty using the “Blackboard Help Course 24/7” are satisfied with the support they receive during non-working hours. Information was gathered concerning the delivery and type of support the faculty would like available between 5pm - 8 am Monday through Friday and weekends.

## Summary of Change Proposal

During the first phase of the change, personnel in the Office of E-Learning will add a live chat and live online conference features to “Blackboard Help Course 24/7”. In phase two, the staff will train the graduate assistants to use the live features. This training will also include many of the common problems faculty encounter so they will be prepared to answer the faculty and staff questions. In phase three, the faculty will receive notifications regarding changes that have been made to the “Blackboard Help Course 24/7” (Appendix A).



## Identification of Stakeholders

A number of key people have been identified as stakeholders who can impact the success of the plan (Appendix B). The stakeholders consist of personnel within Information Technology Systems Division (ITSD) such as the Vice-Chancellor, the Director of Technology Enhanced Learning, the Office of E-learning staff, and the Graduate Assistants employed by the Office of E-Learning. Other key stakeholders include the faculty and staff that are currently or will be teaching online courses. The Office of E-learning staff and the graduate assistants are an integral part to the plan. Their jobs are to assist the faculty with problems or concerns regarding online courses. Faculty and staff who are currently teaching or will be teaching courses in the future are the primary clients of E-Learning.

The key stakeholders are broken down as follows:

**Vice Chancellor of ITSD** – this person can provide funding and other resources along with providing leadership capabilities

**Director of Technology Enhanced Learning** – this person can solicit funding and other resources along with providing leadership capabilities

**Office of E-Learning Staff** - these people can provide resources and bring about change systematically

**Graduate Assistants** – these people service the faculty and provide a conduit between the Office of E-Learning and the faculty

**Faculty** – the faculty and staff are divided into three different groups: innovators, mainstreamers, and laggards

## Forces for and against innovation

During the Training Needs Assessment several factors were identified as forces acting in favor or against implementing the change management plan (Appendix C). The faculty stated that only 60% were aware the “Blackboard Help Course” existed. Of the faculty who responded, most stated that they contacted the TAC when they encountered a question or problem regarding online courses. Although 50% of the respondents stated they were not interested in using the live chat and live online conferencing feature. The other half stated they would be very interested in these features. These features will offer faculty immediate feedback regarding their questions since they will have the ability to converse with a live person.

Since the faculty has stated they would like immediate support with a person, the Office of E-learning is willing to improve and implement a plan to achieve optimal support for the faculty and staff. They also already have funding in place to hire and maintain graduate students who would provide the main bulk of the support to the faculty. There is also a group of faculty who currently uses the Blackboard Help course and will serve as the opinion leaders and innovators for the plan. This faculty will be able to influence the mainstreamers and the faculty who are unsure of their needs.



Many of the faculty and staff have been trained to use the TAC whenever they encounter any type of technology problem. During non-working hours, faculty and staff routinely e-mail the TAC their problem or question and wait until the next business day for an answer. Fortunately, with the support of the Vice Chancellor of ITSD and the ability of the Office of E-Learning to provide immediate live support, the faculty will be more inclined to change their routine and utilize the Blackboard Help course for assistance.

## **Change management team**

The change management team will come together at the end of the Spring 2008 semester. This team will share a common goal of providing immediate and optimal support for faculty and staff regarding online learning. Part of the mission of the Office of E-Learning is to provide collaborate and support the faculty and staff.

This team will collaborate to determine whether the change management plan will disseminate throughout the faculty at UNCW. This team will begin working with the innovative faculty to create awareness and interest through demonstrations. The team will also continuously evaluate and revise the plan in order to provide effective change of practice.

The change management team will be formed in the Spring of 2008 and will meet periodically throughout the summer in order to put the plan in place as quickly as possible. The change management team will consist of the following:

- The Vice Chancellor of ITSD
- Office of E-Learning Staff
- Office of E-Learning Graduate Assistants
- Six faculty members who are leaders in utilizing online courses

The Vice Chancellor of ITSD's role will be in leadership, resources, and funding. Without the support of this leader, the plan will not be a success. The plan will require additional funding and staffing but it will be minimal. With the Vice-Chancellor's support, the faculty will more likely take the change seriously.

The majority of the plan will be implemented by the Office of E-Learning staff and graduate assistants since this is the office that oversees the online course development and support. The Office of E-Learning staff has the most at stake and therefore a majority of the planning and implementation lies with the two full time staff members.

The Office of E-Learning Graduate Assistants will be providing a majority of the support to the faculty and staff. They will also be assisting with online training.



The six faculty members who are leaders in utilizing online courses will be essential in ensuring the success of the plan. These members will serve as the innovators and opinion leaders on campus pulling the mainstreamers on board and changing laggards' minds.

## **Timeline**

The change management plan will be carried out in three phases (Appendix D).

### **Phase 1**

Month 1

April, 2008

*Strategy:* The Office of E-Learning will insert the live chat and live online conference feature into the blackboard Help Course and train the Graduate Assistants to use the tools and answer faculties' questions.

*Awareness:* Faculty using the Blackboard Help course notice the changes

*Interest:* Faculty will talk among themselves regarding the changes

*Evaluation:* Discussion among faculty

*Trial:* Innovative Faculty begins trying the live chat and live online features, makes suggestions for improvement

*Adoption:* Improvements implemented into Blackboard Help course

*Integration:* Follow up newsletters

During Phase 1, the Office of E-Learning will create the live chat and live online conference feature within the Blackboard Help course. The Graduate Assistants who work in the Office of E-Learning will be trained to use the live tools and trained on answering faculty and staff questions regarding online courses. The training will be conducted by the Office of E-Learning staff. It is essential to have good support staff who are able to utilize the tools effectively and efficiently.

### **Phase 2**

Month 2-5

May – August, 2008

*Strategy:* The office of E-learning will put out newsletters promoting the Blackboard Help course after each semester session

*Awareness:* VC of ITSD informs faculty of the plan

*Interest:* Interest has been generated by the semester newsletters

*Evaluation:* Faculty review the Blackboard Help Course; discussion among faculty

*Trial:* Innovative Faculty begins using the Blackboard help course more regularly; makes suggestions for improvement

*Adoption:* Improvements implemented into the Blackboard Help course

*Integration:* Blackboard help course is available with immediate feedback features



During Phase 2, The Vice-Chancellor will notify the faculty of the changes that are being made to support the online teaching community. She will stress the improvements of immediate live support for the faculty and staff. The Office of E-Learning will send out semester newsletters. This will begin with the end of the Spring 2008 semester and beginning of Summer I 2008. The newsletters will contain updates to the Blackboard Help course. Another newsletter will be sent out at the end of Summer session I and prior to the beginning of Summer session II 2008. The Fall 2008 newsletter will not only contain any changes that have been made to the Blackboard Help course but also promote departmental training for Blackboard on request along with the set Blackboard training dates.

## **Feasibility of Plan**

The change management plan that has been outlined is extremely feasible and allows for a proactive approach to serving the faculty and staff. With the additional live support the faculty will be able to more effectively and efficiently serve the students at UNCW. The plan integrates awareness activities that will promote interest on the basis of providing additional support. The faculty will be able to evaluate this process during Blackboard course development trainings and provide feedback to the E-Learning staff. Faculty and staff will then be able to try the Blackboard Help course when needed and begin to adopt the process of using the Blackboard Help course for their online questions. The plan will then be integrated into the system. Integrating the six phases for the adoption of innovations will help to ensure the success of this plan.

With the success of the plan, the faculty will have a positive online teaching experience due to immediate live support. The Office of E-Learning will be able to assist the growing number of faculty teaching online.

### **Phase 3**

Month 6-10

August - December, 2008

*Strategy:* The office of E-learning will conduct trainings at the Department level, will inform the faculty and demonstrate the Blackboard Help course

*Awareness:* VC of ITSD informs the faculty of the plan

*Interest:* Some Interest has been generated from the semester newsletters

*Evaluation:* Faculty review the Blackboard Help course; discussion among faculty

*Trial:* Innovative Faculty attend the departmental workshops/access the Blackboard help course – make suggestions for improvement

*Adoption:* Improvements implemented into workshops and Blackboard Help course

*Integration:* Improved workshops and Blackboard Help course

During Phase 3, the Office of E-Learning will conduct training on the development and implementation of online courses. During these trainings, they will inform the faculty who are new to the online environment of how to receive immediate live support. They will be able to demonstrate the live



features during these trainings. Because these faculty and staff are new to the online environment, the Office of E-Learning staff will not have to work to change behaviors but to instill a routine for these faculty.

## Appendix A

**Stage 0** – UNCW’s Office of E-Learning is concerned that the faculty and staff teaching online courses are not receiving efficient and effective support.

**Stage 1** – Members of the Office of E-Learning have made visits to faculty in various departments. Many of the faculty’s concerns have been voiced during one-on-one sessions

**Stage 2** – Define the actuals – more than half the faculty and staff are aware of the Blackboard Help Course but prefer to e-mail TAC and wait for assistance.

**Stage 3** – Determine available resources and identify constraints.

**Stage 4 – Choose** a feasible solution –integrate the Live Chat and Live Online Conference tools and promote the Blackboard Help Course

**Stage 5** – Implement the solution

**Stage 6** – Evaluate and revise

**Current condition:** The office of E-Learning currently has developed the Blackboard Help Course but the faculty are not utilizing the current support offered in the Blackboard Help Course

**Desired condition:** The Office of E-Learning would like to offer support to the faculty that they will utilize.

## Appendix B

Identification of key people and stepping stone strategies			
Name	Role in Innovation	Resource/Constraints	Stepping Stone Strategies
Vice Chancellor of ITSD	Transformer	Resource – <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• able to provide funding</li><li>• able to provide guidance</li></ul>	
Director of Technology	Transformer	Resource	



Enhanced Learning		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• able to provide funding</li> <li>• able to provide guidance</li> </ul>	
Office of E-Learning staff	Change Agent	Resource <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• able to provide resources</li> <li>• able to make adjustments to Help course</li> </ul>	Promote inside advocacy
Faculty (innovators)	Change Agents	Resource <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilize the Blackboard help course</li> </ul>	Promote inside advocacy
Faculty (mainstreamers)	Mainstreamer	Resource <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	
Faculty (laggards)	Laggards	Constraint – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• unwilling to change</li> </ul>	
Graduate Assistants	Change Agents	Resource <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• able to provide assistance to faculty</li> <li>• able to act as conduit between faculty and Office of E-Learning</li> </ul>	Promote inside advocacy

## Appendix C

Identification of Common Things in the Organization			
Forces favoring innovation	Forces against innovation	Importance to system and people	Easy to change
		Scale of 1-10 whereas 10 is important/easy	
E-Learning is willing to improve and implement the innovation		10	
Faculty would like immediate assistance		8	
	Faculty are used to going through the TAC for assistance first		2
	Faculty are not aware of the “help course”		5
	Faculty feel that it is easier to go through TAC rather than look up		2



	information		
	During non-working hours, faculty tend to self-trouble shoot rather than get assistance		3
Faculty are unsure of their needs		7	
Office of E-learning has funding for graduate students		9	
Faculty who currently rely and use the "Help course"		9	

## Appendix D – [Gantt Chart](#)

Strategies for each adoption phase						
Strategies	Awareness	Interest	Evaluation	Trial	Adoption	Integration
Month 1, April 2008						
Office of E-Learning staff will insert the live chat and live online conference feature into the Blackboard Help Course; Train the Graduate assistants to work with the faculty using the live chat and live online conference tools	Faculty using the Blackboard course, notice the changes;  Graduate assistants	Faculty will talk among themselves regarding the changes	Discussion among faculty	Innovative Faculty begins trying the live chat and live online features, makes suggestions for improvement	Improvements implemented into Blackboard Help course	Follow up newsletters



Months 2-5 May – August, 2008						
The office of E-learning will put out newsletters promoting the Blackboard Help course after each semester session	VC of ITSD informs faculty of the plan	Interest has been generated by the semester newsletters	Faculty review the Blackboard Help Course; discussion among faculty	Innovative Faculty begins using the Blackboard help course more regularly; makes suggestions for improvement	Improvements implemented into the Blackboard Help course	Blackboard help course is available with immediate feedback features
Months 6-10 August – December, 2008						
The office of E-learning will conduct trainings at the Department level, will inform the faculty and demonstrate the Blackboard Help course	VC of ITSD informs the faculty of the plan	Some Interest has been generated from the semester newsletters	Faculty review the Blackboard Help course; discussion among faculty	Innovative Faculty attend the departmental workshops/access the Blackboard help course – make suggestions for improvement	Improvements implemented into workshops and Blackboard Help course	Improved workshops and Blackboard Help course