Preparing for next month's joint Academic Core Standards committee and Board of Trustees meeting: The *proper* role of instructional video

Synopsis

An instructional designer, Susan Flanagan, who was recently hired (approximately three months ago) at Mount Lee Community College, helped Social Sciences Division faculty members in creating online modules and classes for future semesters. As can be expected, several instructors were reluctant and resistant to teaching their respective courses online. Based on instructional design analyses, Susan identified that "lack of interaction" was the main concern of the resistant Social Sciences faculty members. Based on her findings, Susan convinced 80% of the Social Sciences faculty to incorporate one-minute video introductions into their respective online courses. As a result of this success with these faculty members, Susan is now tasked with making a recommendation to an upcoming joint committee meeting of the Academic Core Standards committee and the Board of Trustees on instructional design best practices for a variety of video technologies.

Background Information

Mount Lee Community College (MLCC) is one of the oldest community colleges in the state. It consistently is placed in the top ten community college choices according to several state rankings. Several prominent MLCC alumni are active in the local community, county government, as well as in state politics. In preparing for its upcoming marketing campaign ("We stand by Mount Lee"), the College is considering including the following quotes from its graduates:

- "Mount Lee CC gave me self-confidence."
- "For me, MLCC is like family."
- "Coming to MLCC to study radiology was probably the best career move I ever made."
- "I truly believe that my time at Mount Lee contributed significantly to my acceptance into Stanford University's Law School".
- "I've always told everybody that the associate degree I got from Mount Lee Community College has gotten me farther than any other degree I have."

Mount Lee Community College is organized into five academic divisions, including: Business & Health Professions Division, Construction & Industrial Technology Division, Fine Arts & Humanities Division, Natural Sciences Division, and Social Sciences Division. In addition, there are two non-academic divisions including Continuing Education and Community Services Division and the Academic Success Division.

There are forty-five departments within the College. Prominent departments include Automotive Technologies, Biotechnology, Nuclear Medicine, and Theater Arts. It offers five degrees including Associate in Applied Science (AAS), Associate in Arts (AA), Associate in Fine Arts (AFA), Associate in General Education (AGE), and Associate Degree in Nursing (AN). MLCC students can concentrate in specialty

areas (e.g., Pre-Business Administration, Music, or Pre-Engineering), as well complete over twenty certificates (e.g., Digital Media Technology). The College also accommodates three learning centers (Business Skills Center, Math Learning Center, and the Writing Center), Weekend College, the Bennie Schlenker Art Gallery, as well as hosts several Physical Fitness summer camps.

In addition, Mount Lee has a very active Advanced College Enrollment (ACE) program where local high school students can receive college credit while in high school. MLCC's University Transfer program enthusiastically supports and advises current students to obtain the necessary skills, knowledge, and necessary courses needed to transfer to a baccalaureate institution. Several departments notably in the Natural Sciences and Social Sciences divisions have specific academic pathway guides that list specific courses that can be transferred. In fact, there are several pre-major articulation agreements with the state's Board of Regents.

Mount Lee has a collaborative working relationship with several four-year colleges across the state. Several MLCC graduates, particularly those with Associate Nursing degrees have transferred to the state's oldest university and land grant institution. There are two four-year universities (one public university and one private university) in the local region where several MLCC graduates apply. A number of graduates (approximately 40%) joined the workforce after receiving their respective Associate degrees. Several radiologists, nurses, automotive technicians, and cosmetologists have secured jobs within the broader Mount Lee community and region.

Case study characters

Learning Technology specialist: Susan Flanagan was hired by Mount Lee three months ago as its very first learning technology specialist. In an effort to help support faculty in effectively integrating technology in their respective courses (particularly online courses), the Director of Academic Success successfully argued the need to secure a new position within this division. As he noted, several universities and community colleges within the state now have instructional technology support. Susan recently received her master degree in Instructional Design and Technology from a university in a nearby state.

Director of Academic Success: Patrick Hill, a former Photography faculty member and chair, received his EdD in Educational Administration from the local private university three years ago. The Academic Success Division oversees the Frances Silkman Memorial Library, Business Skills Center, Math Learning Center, Writing Center, as well as the recently formed Learning Technologies area.

Social Sciences faculty members: There are nine Social Sciences faculty members. The Social Sciences division offers courses in Anthropology, Criminal Justice, Economics, Geography, History, Political Science, and Women's Studies. The Social Sciences Division chair position is rotated every three years. Carole Whiting (Criminal Justice) is the current Division chair. As observed by the Mount Lee administration, the Division's student credit hour production has been declining for the past 24 months.

Academic Core Standards chair: Paul Jones is the current chair of the Academic Core Standards. He is a faculty member in the Business and Health Professions division and teaches in the Radiology program, as well as relevant Nursing courses. He served a term as the Business and Health Professions division chair two years ago.

Community college president: Dr. Sharon King was selected to serve as the college's fourth president five years ago. She received her doctorate in Higher Education Administration from the state's land grant university. She began her career as a faculty member in the college's Astronomy department, before becoming a Division chair. She also served as the College's Dean of Student Services and the interim Vice President of Academic Affairs at McWilliams Community College, a neighboring community college. In her current *Welcome to Mount Lee* message, Dr. King writes, "With our award-winning health services, technical, university transfer, and continuing education programs, MLCC has what you need to help you improve your life. We are proud to serve you and the Mount Lee community…we stand by Mount Lee."

Board of Trustees chair: As one of the twelve appointed trustees, the Governor appointed Herbert Franklin to the Board six years ago. He previously chaired the Planning and Budgeting Committee. Herbert holds a Bachelor of Science and Master of Science degrees from the local university in the Mount Lee community. He is the current President of Sanitation Management, a family-owned business established 38 years ago.

Relevant documents

MLCC's Strategic plan: Mount Lee's current strategic plan (adopted two years ago) includes the following four goals:

- *Goal 1*: Access and Student Success
- *Goal 2*: Teaching and Program Excellence
- *Goal 3*: Accountability and Sustainability
- *Goal 4*: Community and Economic Leadership

During a recent Academic Governance meeting, President King emphasized the need to be a "learning-centered college that nurtures student learning and instructional excellence". One of the College's annual goals is to develop and maintain a creative environment where each division utilizes innovative technologies and fosters creative problem solving. It is no doubt that the King administration is attempting to position the College as the community's top choice for services and resources essential to its cultural, social, and economic development.

Technology Integration Master Plan committee charge: At the inaugural committee meeting, President King charged the TIMPC to deliver a master plan based on the following three central principles:

- The TIMP must emphasize *technology integration* best practices.
- The TIMP will identify specific learning objectives and the technology required to achieve them.

- The TIMP will expand access to the College's quality courses through development of physical facilities and distance learning tools.

MLCC's Mission Statement: The mission of Mount Lee Community College is to educate and inspire students with transformative educational experiences. Mount Lee is committed to providing accessible, quality, opportunities for lifelong learning to meet the diverse and changing needs of our community. The College continually recruits and retains highly qualified and diverse faculty and staff. It provides faculty, staff, and students with high quality equipment and necessary training. Mount Lee's comprehensive curriculum and support services enable students to earn associate degrees and certificates, prepare for transfer, gain career and technical education proficiency, develop basic skills, and prepare for lifelong learning. The College also serves the community through economic and workforce development.

Case Study

Approximately three months ago, Susan Flanagan, was hired as a learning technology specialist at Mount Lee Community College. This position was recently established at the college in order to promote more effective technology integration practices amongst all instructional divisions. In his justification, Patrick Hill, Director of Academic Success, wrote that a learning technology specialist would "lend credibility and promote excellence to all of Mount Lee's curricula." This also is Susan's first professional instructional designer position after receiving her master degree in Instructional Technology. She did have some community college experience as a technician specialist with another community college within the state.

During her first couple of months at Mount Lee, Susan spent considerable amount of time learning about the five academic divisions at Mount Lee, the diverse and numerous course programs and offerings, the academic governance structure, as well as the overall academic culture at Mount Lee. Susan also had several meetings with Patrick Hill in defining the roles and responsibilities of a "learning technology specialist". Though Susan has considerable technical experience in her former role as a technician specialist, she thought it was important to clearly define what a learning technology specialist would do at Mount Lee. Both Patrick and Susan agreed that a learning technology specialist would collaborate with Mount Lee faculty and administrators in order to develop effective and innovative learning technologies.

Susan's first major project

One of Susan's first "learning technology specialist" major projects was to work with Social Sciences division faculty members in order to create online modules and classes for future semesters. During the past two years, the Social Sciences division student credit hour production has decreased and has been lower than expected. Carole Whiting, the current Division chair, has been tasked to increase the student credit hours. One of the feasible initiatives is to increase the amount of Social Sciences course offerings to create online courses and to expand the amount of students taking Mount Lee Social Sciences courses.

As can be expected, several Social Sciences instructors were reluctant and resistant to becoming online instructors. The two faculty members who teach the Economics courses could not envision how they could teach the course content via a collection of web pages. During the faculty meeting when Susan was introduced, the Geography faculty member questioned the instructional value of online teaching. As she recorded in her journal, Susan wrote, "I think converting any Social Sciences course to an effective online course particularly with instructors who never taught online is going to present *unique* challenges. I sense some mistrust and fear of the Learning Technologies area and my specific position. I will need to overcome this."

As the first logical next step, Susan decides to conduct a series of instructional analyses. With an assortment of Social Sciences syllabi and corresponding course outlines, she compiles an extensive content and instructional goal analysis. She surveys all of the Social Sciences faculty members. She meets individually with each of the nine faculty members and conducts small (approximately two or three faculty members) group meetings with instructors who teach the same content.

During these meetings, she identifies two instructors who are already implementing online instruction in their respective classes and there is one instructor who appears receptive to Susan's efforts. In reviewing and analyzing her survey and interview results, Susan identifies that "lack of interaction" is the main concern of the resistant Social Sciences faculty members. Susan also found out that one of the instructors who already is teaching online, has successfully used *one-minute* video introductions with his students. During the instructor's last semester's video greeting, he said:

> Hello, I am Brian Mitchell. I am going to be your Political Science 11 instructor this semester. I am beginning my sixth year here at Mount Lee community college. I am really excited to be teaching an online course for the second time after teaching one course this past summer. To begin this course, you will want to review and read the course syllabus probably a couple of times. There is a whole bunch of information including lessons on Blackboard, textbook, and assignments that you are going to complete during the semester. After teaching online courses, my best advice to you as a student is to keep working on the course assignments continuously.

In his current semester video introduction, he recommended to his students, "Do not wait until the last minute to upload your assignments. This is usually when mishaps happen the most and unfortunately late assignments will not be acceptable."

Based on this discovery and innovative instructional practice, Susan convinces approximately 80% of the Social Sciences division faculty to incorporate their very own one-minute video introductions into their respective online courses. During a two-week period, Susan hosted a "One Minute Video Greeting Week". Using a Flip Camera, she recorded one-minute "introductions" of the Social Sciences instructors who are scheduled to teach online next semester. She scheduled the Academic Success Center for specific designated video sessions during the two weeks. Susan asked the instructors to have a script ready that was about a minute in length. She downloaded the videos to her computer and then, sent the videos to the college's streaming server.

After the "One Minute Video Greeting Week", Social Sciences division faculty created an assortment of video introductions. Each faculty member created their own introduction script and added their personal touch. For example, an Anthropology faculty member had the following introduction:

> Morning folks, I am Dr. Carraway and I will be working with you in your online course this semester. First, a little bit of background…I attended St. Louis University and received a baccalaureate degree in Sociology. I ran my own business for a time and was involved with corporate relations. I went back to school and attended University of Arkansas and received a master degree in Anthropology. Now a little bit about this semester…we will have several readings on related Anthropology topics. Then, we will be writing corresponding analysis papers based on these readings. We will finish up our semester with the research project. In order to get going with this course, click on Course Documents, and this will give you an overview of the course and class assignments. It also will tell you what is expected of you as a student in this course.

In comparison, a Women Studies faculty member delivered the following video greeting:

> Hello, welcome to Introduction to Women Studies. My name is Linda McLawhorn and this semester we will be learning about the multitude ways of how Women Studies theories and principles have influenced our society. This course truly provides you with an introduction to the overall theories and viewpoints related to Women Studies. After you complete this course, you may want to register for more advanced Women Studies courses that are offered in future semesters. Please take a few minutes and review the course syllabus and assignments found on the class Blackboard site. Although we are not meeting in person, I hope that we all can work together and make you feel connected with your fellow classmates. A good place to start is to post an introduction about you in the discussion board. I look forward to reading a bit about you, as well as getting to know you throughout the semester.

Not all of the video greetings were recorded at Mount Lee. In fact, one faculty member decided to record her greeting at a ski resort.

Follow-up to Susan's success

Within a week, Several Mount Lee faculty members, division chairs, and other administrators immediately heard about Susan's "one-minute" video innovation and was considered as a legitimate way to offer interaction between a faculty member and students in an online setting. As a result of this "success", other Mount Lee departments are considering adopting this technique. The Technical Services director told Susan that they are going to create an interactive introduction to their web page where support personnel can provide their "one-minute" introductions. Patrick Hill also told Susan that President King's office is considering including a few video clips that introduce Mount Lee's administrators to students and the public.

Susan's successful project continues to spread. For example, yesterday, Susan was now tasked with making a recommendation to the college's Academic Core Standards committee on instructional design best practices for a variety of video formats, including screencasts, voice threads, web "infomercials" that advertise the college's five-year plan, video mashups, and other formats. Paul Jones, the Academic Core Standards committee chair, met with Patrick and Susan and noted that Mount Lee needs to integrate more video into their respective curricula. He wants the Learning Technologies unit (actually Susan) to present

these best practices and answer the question on the proper role of video in instructional settings, particularly online courses. In fact, Dr. Jones took the initiative and organized a joint committee meeting with the Board of Trustees to discuss these best practices. To prepare for next month's joint committee meeting, Susan now must prepare a presentation with a corresponding job aid that addresses the joint committees' inquiry with regards to these video best practices.

Video best practices

To prepare for next month's meeting, Susan reviewed and researched several innovative video best practices as well as, not so good practices. Below are the results of her inquiry.

Multimedia Development Association listserv: The day after scheduling the joint committee meeting in her daily appointment book, Susan sent out a message to the Multimedia Development Association (MDA) listserv. She asked members about their own experience with using video particularly within a higher education setting. She got some mixed reviews. An instructional designer mentioned that several faculty members at her college wanted to use videos when though video may not be appropriate for the actual content and learning objectives of a particular course. One MDA member wrote how Dance Education faculty members at his college used videos of their past performances to enhance their students upcoming dance productions. Another MDA member recounted how a Culinary Arts faculty and students used videos and a simulated version of the Iron Chef in their courses. She wrote, "We had several 'Iron Chef' cooking contests where students competed or videotaped the competitions."

Capstone projects: Susan also recalled some of the recent capstone projects completed by her fellow students in graduate program. In fact, several students posted their video projects on YouTube. One project involved the creation of a set of videos on the American Constitution and sharing the videos on VoiceThread. Another capstone project involved a series of short videos helping financial advisors understand changes to the U.S. Securities and Exchange filings and forms. The videos contrasted the old and new forms, focused on the changes, and showed users how to complete the new areas of the forms. One innovative project involved the development of a video mashup project on rainforest deforestation. In an approximately three-minute project, a student integrated a combination of video clips, graphics, audio and other media files that summarized information about this pending environmental disaster.

Blogs: Though Susan did note some positive blogs with regards to video best practices, she observed a preponderance of video "non-examples" and considered these blogs as a way to vent some frustrations with regards to existing video practices. One of the common themes that Susan noted was the frequent reference to the "talking head" lecture video. This is where an instructor delivers his former face-to-face lecture in an online video format that can last up to sixty minutes. One of the instructional designers noted students seldom utilize the lecture format. Basically, students had to sit through the long videos in order to get the information they were looking for and could not even print the information that they were looking for. Another instructional designer wrote in her blog about the following situation:

I was asked to help coordinate the video recording of an entire semester's worth of lectures for the _____ [intentionally left blank] department in my College. The reason was that instructors would access these lectures and finding small segments of the lectures that could be used to deliver to students online. I advised against this approach, however, faculty members simply said, "Let's just err on the side of caution and capture it all, because you never know, we may want to use some of it later."

Susan had to chuckle at one of the blogs where an instructional designer lamented the fact that she worked on a video about a major content management system upgrade for two months only to find out that the subject matter experts did not completely understand the changes resulting from the upgrade and did not have full information on the functions available in the new version of the content management system.

Web searches: Susan reviewed several websites in looking for online video. One prominent type of instructional videos was what she termed as "short videos". The intent of these videos demonstrated how a particular procedure or task needed to be completed and is targeted to specific instructional goals. For example, a video showed instructors how to use a college's recording equipment and document camera. Another video explained how to add an image in the latest version of a College's learning management system. As reported on how to create these "short videos" in an instructional designer's Blog, he "typically does a quick analysis with the instructor and several of the students if necessary. Some of these videos are produced quick-and-dirty in that they can be created in less than 30 minutes with few resources then sent to our College's web server." Some of these videos usually coincided with the face-to-face training that was going on that week. Susan noted that a particular set of short videos included real-life scenarios to demonstrate a particular concept or principle. In her notebook, Susan observed that video tutorials and possibly, video testimonies can be an effective best practice.

Higher education profiles: Susan reviewed the past five years of annual higher education profile reviews in *Current Higher Education* magazine. A community college featured in the 2008 issue discussed how language art instructors used a combination of audio and video clips to effectively teach language skills to ESL instructors and students. This combination helped enforce the students' understanding of speech, definition, and spelling.

Another featured college discussed their innovative videoconferencing practices. This university in a nearby state is in a partnership with four community colleges where they have remote videoconferencing units located on each community college campus. One of the "lessons learned" from this featured profile was the emphasis on having a robust Internet connection. Prior to implementation, Director of Information Technologies noted that each community college had various speeds from low end (128k) to 12mb per second download. Since the leadership team demanded eLearning modules that contained a lot of videos and other rich media, it was imperative to have large enough network connection.

In one of the profiles, Susan read how a community college boasted about its active student involvement with specific video projects. Basically, an Art History department transformed a course that had a weak connection to the instructional objectives for the course that in turn made the earlier assignment seem like "busy"

work. After redesigning the course, instructor gave video cameras to each of their respective students and each student recorded himself or herself in the completion of their student project. At the end of the semester, the students reflected on how they had improved as art historians. Susan considered that Mount Lee might add a video production course to their course offerings. In a review of basic video production tasks and techniques, she observed the following video production workflow that includes the following activities:

- Plan production (scout location, get releases, schedule shoot)
- Create storyboard/overview and shot list
- Shoot video
- Capture (transfer) video to computer
- Import other assets (still images, graphics)
- Edit video by selecting clips, adding titles and transitions
- Add audio (voice over, music, location sound)
- Export finished project video for web, DVD or use in presentations

In one of the MDA listserv messages, someone wrote that there is an intense learning curve in understanding video production knowledge and terminology.

Case Study Challenge

The primary *challenges* that Susan faces are:

1) Applying instructional design best practices to various video formats.

2) Preparing a corresponding presentation and job aid.

3) Comprehending the respective political motivation of the Mount Lee's administration including the current five-year strategic goals, the Academic Core Standards committee chair, and the Board of Trustees chair, as well as other stakeholders.

Discussion Questions

Respond to the following Discussion questions with regards to this case study:

1) Critique Susan's initial solution of "One-minute" video and Mount Lee's faculty reluctance in teaching online courses. Consider and discuss other needs analysis and learner analysis questions that Susan could have posed with regards to this task. Are there other stakeholders besides Social Sciences faculty members to consider?

2) Consider the goals developed by Mount Lee's TIMPC. Discuss these goals in considering challenges associated with Susan's task in developing more online courses and getting Social Sciences faculty involvement and "buy-in."

3) Discuss the role of video in creating effective multimedia for instructional purposes. When and how often should video be used in multimedia production?

4) Based on the information described in this case study, develop a set of recommendations for Susan and her upcoming presentation. In your list of recommendations, include data and corresponding rationale that link your recommendations to likely improvements within this particular instructional setting.

5) Susan is tasked with developing a set of best practices with regards to video. What are some possible barriers to using these video best practices? Create a list of barriers to the successful use of these best practices. In this list, be sure to identify the actual video medium, the best practice and the corresponding barrier(s).