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Jo Anna Grant TSSA Winter 2014

Jo Anna Grant
CSUSB, jgrant@csusb.edu

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TSSA Report

Awardee: Jo Anna Grant, Communication Studies, jgrant@csusb.edu

Name of Conference Attended

E-Learn 2014 – World Conference on E-Learning, October 27-30, 2014; New Orleans, LA

Teaching Strategy Studied

Flipped classroom in Malte Persike's presentation "The Digital Flip: Effects of Virtual and Physical Flipped Classrooms in Massive Open Statistics Teaching"

Collaborative learning in Cathie Norris's and Elliot Soloway's presentation "Scaffolding Synchronous Collaboration: Leveraging Data in Support of Teaching and Learning"

Impact on/How Applied to Current Teaching

Flipping the Classroom. The data from the flipped classroom study presented by Perske at this conference, as well as other meta-analyses of flipped classrooms (such as one published in *Wired Campus*), show that turning a conventional class to an online class decreases student performance, and making the classroom into a flipped class shows the same student performance as in a traditional classroom. This is quite discouraging, as making online classes and flipped classes consume massive amounts of university resources (from instructors, to production/post production assistance, to physical and digital space) equating to about 20 hours/week for the instructor plus 18 hours/week for student assistants and technical assistants—for just one course! This was very discouraging to me, as I had planned to create a flipped classroom for my redesigned COMM 312 Persuasion class and to modify my online COMM 400 Research Methods class to the flipped class model. Based on the data presented, I decided not to use the flipped classroom format for these classes.

However, there is still hope for the flipped classroom. An updated version of Perske's study proposed and tested the "Ceiling Hypothesis" that the instructors motivated to create online and flipped classrooms are the very ones that are already good instructors in the traditional classroom. Thus, there is not much room for their students to improve. But, when taking a poor lecturer (where the students performed poorly and the instructor was not happy with his own teaching), provided different results. Just having the instructor record online lectures using a script based on transcripts of the lectures given in class, and having him do a flipped classroom experience significantly improved student performance. This tells us that the instructors that need to be incorporating flipped models may be exactly the ones least likely to do so.

Collaborative Learning. The presentation by Norris and Soloway mostly discussed the advantaged of a Web 3.0 mobile-based collaborative learning platform they are developing called WeCollabrify. This platform contains several aps that can be used to support synchronous collaborative learning. The benefits of synchronous learning platforms are: (a) that students can clarify peer's ideas, (b) students get new ideas from peers, (c) students feed of others' ideas, and (d) students never have to learn alone. Their platform would not be device or operating system dependent. However, it requires that students have constant access to their mobile device and to the web. Since the aps presented are still in the "proof of concept" stage—not even to beta testing yet, I could not incorporate them into my classrooms. However, the seminar did emphasize to me the importance of creating shared understanding through collaboration. I think it is something that I will be looking to incorporate into my courses in 3-4 years.

Unexpected Outcomes. A side benefit to attending this conference was attending a session on E-Portfolios in Higher Education. Our department currently uses a paper-based student portfolio as a way to conduct program assessment. Many faculty members want to redesign the course and/or move to an e-portfolio system. From this session I learned that different portfolios have different goals: (a) accreditation, (b) reflection, (c) professionalism, (d) community of practice, (e) student autonomy, or (f) employability. Although there are many tools to help move us to an e-portfolio system, we need to pick the one that best fits our goal for the portfolio in the first place. This has helped me guide discussions of modifying the course in our department, and determining our goal before we try to pick software to help us with it. On a wider note, it has helped me to understand the different goals that portfolios serve in other programs.

Date Submitted: November 13, 2015