Designing a Quality Graduate Supervision MOOC For Faculty Development

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Introduction

Graduate supervision is an important area for ongoing faculty development. Given the relationship between quality supervision and graduate student success, institutions should invest in ongoing support of new and experienced faculty who serve as graduate supervisors. Graduate supervision can be time consuming and demanding especially for new faculty members. It is important to design faculty development opportunities that are flexible, accessible and effective to address the needs of busy faculty members. This proposed study examines the potential of MOOCs as an effective learning environment to promote faculty development in the area of graduate supervision. Connectivism, constructivism and learning communities are components of the theoretical framework that will inform and guide the design of the MOOC. A design-based research approach will be used to study, design, implement and evaluate the graduate supervision MOOC.

Theoretical Framework

The design of a Quality Graduate Supervision MOOC in this study will be guided by three learning theories: connectivism, learning community, and constructivism. Connectivism is used to emphasize discussion, communication and networking. Siemens (2006) highlighted the idea that “instead of knowledge residing only in the mind of an individual, knowledge resides in the distributed patterns across a network” (p. 88).

Learning community theory will be used to encourage the formation of a learning community among faculty participants in the MOOC, considered essential to achieve learning in faculty development programs (Taylor & McQuiggan, 2008).

Constructivism will be used in the design elements of constructivism that emphasize the social interaction, prior knowledge, collaboration, and the role of culture in learning (Applefield, Huber & Moallim, 2001).

Methodology and Data Sources

This study adopts a design-based research approach (Reeves, 2006). Wang and Hannafin (2005) define Design-Based Research (DBR) as “a systematic but flexible methodology aimed to improve educational practices through iterative analysis, design, development, and implementation, based on collaboration among researchers and practitioners in real-world settings, and leading to contextually-sensitive design principles and theories” (pp. 6-7). The design will be accessible for four phases: analysis, development, evaluation and reflection (Reeves, 2006).

Phase 1: A MOOC team is formed to help develop the design of the MOOC and the research process. Two questionnaires will be sent to faculty members and Graduate Programs Directors to further understand the phenomena and to help in choosing topics for the MOOC.

In phase 2: the MOOC will be developed and ready to be run.

In phase 3: faculty members will engage in the learning community and experiences provided by the Quality Supervision MOOC. Faculty will be invited to complete a pre-MOOC questionnaire about their goals and expectations for the MOOC. A post-MOOC questionnaire will invite feedback from faculty on their experience and satisfaction with the MOOC.

In phase 4: “the reflection phase”, interviews will be conducted to deepen the understanding of the phenomena, how the MOOC benefited faculty members, and how it might be improved upon. Data will be analyzed for key themes, design principles and insights on faculty development.

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References


Outline of the Proposed MOOC Design

Data Analysis

Methodology and Data Sources

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Module 1: An Introduction (or faculty lounge), goal setting; attendance in person optional but strongly encouraged

Module 2: Maximizing the effectiveness of the supervisor/student relationship

Module 3: Increasing the quality of communication

Module 4: Mentoring through the proposal, research and writing process

Module 5: Conflict resolution

Module 6: Key learning, highlights and reflections

DesignDraft of MOOC modules

Data Sources

Sample

Method/Tool

Method of Analysis

Faculty

Questionnaire

Convenience sampling

Faculty members at University of Calgary

Electronic questionnaire

Qualitative-quantitative analysis of content using NVivo Software and MS Excel Software for the quantitative analysis

GPs

Questionnaire

Purposeful sampling

All members of the Graduate Programs Directors

Electronic questionnaire

Qualitative-quantitative analysis of content using NVivo Software and MS Excel Software for the quantitative analysis

Pre-MOOC questionnaire

Convenience sampling

All members of the MOOC

Electronic questionnaire

Qualitative-quantitative analysis of content using NVivo Software and MS Excel Software for the quantitative analysis

Observation

Field notes

Observational field notes

Qualitative-quantitative analysis of content using NVivo Software

Post-MOOC questionnaire

Purposeful sampling

Faculty members registered in the MOOC

Electronic questionnaire

Qualitative-quantitative analysis of content using NVivo Software

Interviews

Purposeful sampling

Subset of the faculty members registered in the MOOC

Question guide

Qualitative-quantitative analysis of content using NVivo Software

Documentation

Meetings journal, procedure of DBIR changes

Software will be used for document management and analysis

Qualitative-quantitative analysis of content using NVivo Software