

The iLearn Program: Integrating Student Learning and Collaborative Technology

Freed-Hardeman University

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Executive Summary

In order to work most effectively with the current generation of student learners, Freed-Hardeman University employs various web-based and/or technology-enhanced techniques in course pedagogy. Select faculty, responsible for teaching General Education classes, have been recruited into the iLearn Program and are receiving training in the use of participatory pedagogical technologies that the literature suggests have made demonstrable improvement in student learning. Freed-Hardeman University recently revised its General Education core and has implemented a comprehensive system for assessing the extent to which students are attaining General Education competencies. Baseline measures are being obtained in order to measure the impact of the pedagogical technologies within the General Education classes.

Faculty members in the program are divided into three teams called “cohorts” and work through the program together. Cohort 1 began in Fall 2011, Cohort 2 will begin in Fall 2012, and Cohort 3 will begin in Fall 2013. As they train to impact student learning in the classroom and document their results, they interact with their cohort colleagues, the Director of the iLearn Program, and the instructional technologists in the Center for Instructional Technology (CIT). At the end of the year, faculty cohorts evaluate student-learning outcomes and reevaluate their pedagogy. Cohort participants are given time to rethink their strategies in preparation for a new round of classroom instruction.

To maximize the impact that iLearn will have on student learning, academic leadership has identified specific student learning outcomes connected to the General Education core. The faculties involved in the iLearn Program are examining their own pedagogy as it relates to these outcomes. They have been presented with a variety of technology-based pedagogical methods from which to choose. All faculties have access to the Teaching and Learning Center overseen by CIT to receive training in the use of these new methods.

The faculty participant’s primary task is to engage student learners via these newfound methods. Participants are documenting their progress during training and implementation. Students will have the opportunity of receiving assistance with the technological assignments in the iLearn Commons along with having collaborative space to interact with their fellow students. At the end of each semester, assessment of student learning outcomes will be collected and analyzed for the impact that iLearn Program may have had. Student surveys and focus groups are going to be conducted each semester to assist in determining the impact of the pedagogical technologies.

During subsequent rounds of instruction in the iLearn Program, students benefit from the additional training that the iLearn faculty participants have received. Assessment collected after each year of teaching will be compared to previous years and to a baseline established before faculty cohorts entered the iLearn Program. Each cohort will share information about the iLearn effort and direct/indirect outcomes to benefit the iLearn faculty/students and the broader community of University faculty/students.

The recommended budget includes funding for new staff positions, new equipment, and infrastructure. The Director of the iLearn Program oversees the iLearn Program under the supervision of the Vice President for Academics and Enrollment Management.