

Chapter 10

Developing, Implementing, and Experiencing an Online Sociology Degree Completion Program at a Large California Public University

Alan Emery

California State University – Fullerton, USA

Patricia Literte

California State University – Fullerton, USA

Echo Chang

California State University – Fullerton, USA¹

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In this chapter, the authors investigate the creation and operation of a Sociology Online Degree Completion Program at a large California public university. The program emerged over several years, and the authors discuss the rationale for its formation, emergence, and implementation. The authors concentrate their analysis primarily on the work of the Sociology Department's Online Education Committee, whose activities were instrumental in creating the program. They then examine the student populations served by the program and their experiences. The authors compare

Developing, Implementing, and Experiencing an Online Sociology Degree

the demographics of the students in the Online Degree Completion program with the demographics of transfer students in general, and they highlight pertinent similarities and differences. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the program's future, including challenges facing the program and how the program relates to the continued movement towards online classes in higher education. The authors thus offer a multidimensional and narrative account of the emergence of this program.

ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

The university is a large—and growing—public university in the California region, and one of the largest in the system of which it is a part. It serves an increasingly diverse student population. Its online course offerings are expanding considerably. The department of sociology is one of the largest in the College of Sciences. It is a department that has undergone a transformation in the past decade with faculty retirements and new hires. In this context, the Sociology Degree Program was started.

To obtain a multidimensional view and narrative of the program's origins, members of the Sociology Online Education Committee, as well as administrators involved in the program, participated in two focus groups; one was not sufficient because of scheduling conflicts. The focus groups participants included the following individuals. The names below have been changed to protect the individuals' identities.

- **Felipe:** Hired by Dean Edwin of Extended Education to help develop the program.
- **Jerry:** Sociology faculty, member of the Sociology Online Education Committee.
- **Keith:** Sociology faculty, and a former chair of department.
- **Lily:** Sociology faculty, Coordinator, Sociology Online Degree Completion Program.
- **Leonard:** Sociology faculty, a former chair of department, member of the Sociology Online Education Committee and past instructor in the program.
- **Mary:** Director, Self-Support Degree Programs in Extended Education.
- **Ruth:** Sociology faculty, a former vice chair, member of the Sociology Online Education Committee and past instructor in the program.
- **Teri:** Sociology faculty, member of the Sociology Online Education Committee and past instructor in the program.

24 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:
www.igi-global.com/teaching-case/developing-implementing-experiencing-online-sociology/96112

Related Content

Common Scenario for an Efficient Use of Online Learning: Some Guidelines for Pedagogical Digital Device Development

Walter Nuninger (2017). *Handbook of Research on Innovative Pedagogies and Technologies for Online Learning in Higher Education* (pp. 331-366).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/common-scenario-for-an-efficient-use-of-online-learning/174578/

Higher Education in a Virtual World

Patricia Genoe McLaren and Lori Francis (2011). *Streaming Media Delivery in Higher Education: Methods and Outcomes* (pp. 352-367).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/higher-education-virtual-world/55035/

Distributed Learning Objects: An Open Knowledge Management Model

Veronica Diaz and Patricia McGee (2006). *Knowledge Management and Higher Education: A Critical Analysis* (pp. 147-181).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/distributed-learning-objects/24972/

Blending in the Humanities: Course Model and Assessment Results

Astrid Klocke and Danielle Hedegard (2015). *Models for Improving and Optimizing Online and Blended Learning in Higher Education* (pp. 173-188).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/blending-in-the-humanities/114294/

Invention in Two Parts: Multimodal Communication and Space Design in the Writing Center

Sohui Lee, Christine Alfano and Russell G. Carpenter (2013). *Cases on Higher Education Spaces: Innovation, Collaboration, and Technology* (pp. 41-63).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/invention-two-parts/72670/