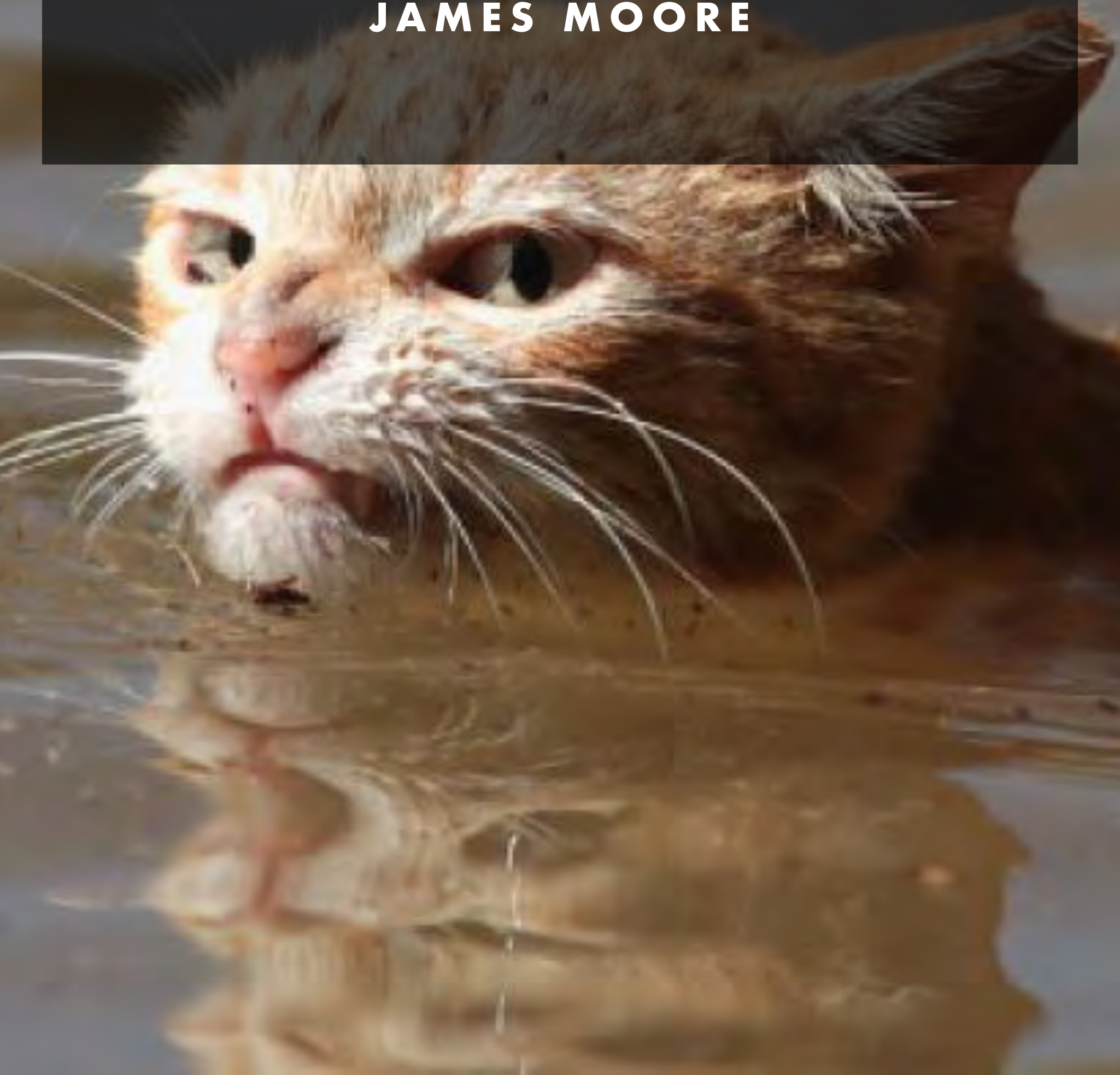


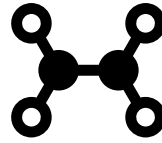
OVERCOMING BARRIERS

**HOW TO INCREASE FACULTY AND STAFF BUY-IN
FOR ONLINE PROGRAMS**

JAMES MOORE



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OVERCOMING BARRIERS

INTRODUCTION

Perhaps one of the most apt quotations to begin an exploration of increasing faculty and staff buy-in for online programs is from Niccolò Machiavelli, who writes in “The Prince” that *“it ought to be remembered that there is nothing more difficult to take in hand, more perilous to conduct, or more uncertain in its success, than to take the lead in the introduction of a new order of things. Because the innovator has for enemies all those who have done well under the old conditions, and lukewarm defenders in those who may do well under the new. This coolness arises partly from fear of the opponents, who have the laws on their side, and partly from the incredulity of men, who do not readily believe in new things until they have had a long experience of them.”* The advice is evergreen. However, achieving buy-in for online programs is possible.

WHAT IS BUY-IN?

So what is buy-in? Simply put, buy-in is internal commitment, which has three important components:

1. Defining work objectives
2. Specifying how to achieve them
3. Setting stretch targets

Compliance is not internal commitment. Simply ordering faculty to teach online will not work well. It is more likely to engender resentment and distrust. There are justified reasons why educators may be reluctant to teach online, such as:

- Skepticism towards online learning in general
- Workload concerns
- Individual reasons

Education is an evidence-based practice, and scientific skepticism and rigorous enquiry are core to education. However, there is a considerable body of research that demonstrates that online learning is as good as, or better than, “traditional education”- but some faculty feel that they have been oversold on online learning and the concept of “teaching from the beach.” The reality is that online learning can provide efficiencies to both the educator and the institution, but the efficiencies to the educator are typically realized over time, whereas the efficiencies to the institution are realized immediately.

Online learning requires upfront commitment and significant preparation. This added workload can be considerable, and most faculty are aware of how limited their time already is.

And then there are the individual reasons. Typically they manifest themselves as expressed fear that online learning will not work out for the faculty. Or that students’ evaluations may be lower than desired. Or that faculty may not understand how to use the technology adequately and make a fool of themselves in front of their students. These are, again, significant reasons for reluctance that need to be heard and understood.

So how do we move on from here? The core to providing good online learning is understanding student needs—principally, convenience. Students are looking for their online experience to be convenient. That is the prism through which it will be judged. Their lives are messy and complicated, and this is why they opted for an online course or program.

FOUNDATION

With this understanding of faculty and student perspectives in place, the institution needs to be fully prepared before having any conversation about buy-in. There are four foundational areas that need to be developed:

1. Effective online strategy
2. Platform for learning (LMS, VLE, etc.)
3. Faculty support
4. Student support

EFFECTIVE ONLINE STRATEGY

From my perspective, an effective online strategy should focus on reducing costs, reducing attrition, and increasing enrollment.

Online can reduce costs by consolidating campuses and course sections. There is less need to offer the same course on multiple campuses if an equivalent online course can meet the same student needs. Similarly, faculty and staff can work some of the time remotely, reducing office costs (heating, cleaning, security, etc.), which could be further leveraged to reduce physical plant costs.

Student attrition can be reduced in instances where students relocate, or can no longer easily come to class, by moving those students onto online classes.

Enrollment has the potential to increase as students consider the university more favorably. Although they may not intend to study online, the knowledge that they can either complete

their program online or take online courses when they need may help “seal the deal” of enrolling.

Done well, online offers a competitive advantage where the university leverages the affordances of online learning to teach in distinctively pedagogical ways. Program quality is improved, as is faculty development.

PLATFORM FOR LEARNING

Successful online learning requires a platform for learning (the Learning Management System, or Virtual Learning Environment) that “just works” for at least 80% of the faculty and staff. This underscores the importance of selecting an effective Learning Management System in which the decision is made with full faculty and staff involvement. Luckily, Learning Management Systems have improved dramatically in recent years, but there are outlier systems that complicate simple processes and invoke severe displeasure in those forced to use them.

FACULTY SUPPORT

Online learning is a collaborative process, and faculty need to be supported by a team of instructional designers and multimedia specialists. Having a place to record content and a quality assurance process takes the pressure off faculty. Without this support, faculty are likely to feel overwhelmed and underappreciated.

STUDENT SUPPORT

Students need to have a team they can contact if they need help with technology. Otherwise their frustrations and technology issues will be relayed directly to frazzled faculty.

FRAMEWORK

So what does the research suggest as ways to make meaningful changes within the organization? There is plenty to study from, but **Lewin's Forcefield Analysis** (Lewin, 1946) is an instructive place to start. Here, forces for change are met by forces against change that result in a dynamic equilibrium in which little, if anything, changes. In this mental model, reducing or removing the restraining changes is a better way to effect change than simply concentrating on amplifying the driving forces.

Then we have **“Change Recipients' Reactions to Organizational Change: A 60-Year Review of Quantitative Studies”** (Oreg, Vakola, & Armenakis, 2011)—not a true meta-analysis, but a comprehensive review of sixty years of research investigating explicit reactions to organizational change that culminates in a theoretical model that is currently being exploited and validated. As with much good research, the outcomes and model may initially appear obvious. Key is creating a supportive and trusting culture, and the observation that *“if perceived risks/costs outweigh benefits, change recipients will understandably tend to resist change.”*

COMMUNICATE

With this framework to work from, there are clear avenues of action. Communication is the way to both build trust and create a unified response.

STATE GOALS CLEARLY

The message to faculty and staff should be along the lines that there is a clear and current problem facing higher education in general and, specifically, this institution of learning. This problem impacts you directly—your job and benefits are at risk. Strategic use of online will fix the problem for the university, and maybe for you, too. There will be costs and adjustment, some of this uncomfortable. There will be milestones (and review).

The role of the CFO is to show truthfully that projected costs will exceed revenue unless there are significant changes made at all levels of the institution, with online learning as a means to improve revenue and reduce costs. Change agents are more motivated to act by loss aversion. Online offers a lifeline to both the institution and the individual.

LISTEN

Listen, as there will be both justified and ungrounded fears. Survey your students, faculty, and staff. Schedule online open houses to both share information with your stakeholders, and to understand their concerns. Solicit feedback at every level.

SHARE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Publish student success stories (and their struggles). Provide online teaching awards that celebrate transformational instruction and coaching. Provide online design awards that reward the largely hidden work of instructional designers. Schedule lunch-and-learns so that all in your organization have a better understanding of goals, and also the roles and

responsibilities of their colleagues. Support faculty and staff to attend conferences, but better still, promote presenting at conferences and reporting back findings. Highlight achievements in internal communications on a regular basis.

FIND ADVOCATES

Former adversaries are the best advocates you will have. Look for those for whom you have solved a significant problem and then get them to evangelize on your behalf. Constantly look for problems and ways they can be fixed. Remember that students and employers can be advocates, too.

REWARD STRUCTURE

Time to develop online courses is considerable. If possible, provide the time and space for faculty to develop courses they will be proud of. Don't cancel courses in development, as this sends a negative message to faculty and instructional designers. Online courses work best when frequently offered, as this allows faculty to make continuous improvements to content and teaching methods. Develop teaching contracts (and consider providing additional student bonuses so as to increase class size in an equitable way to both faculty and the institution). Provide recognition of ownership to both faculty and instructional designers. Provide the right tools for teaching, which is both equipment and training.

SUPPORT PROGRAM

Teaching online is faculty development, so have an effective support program in place.

MENTOR

Faculty will be more responsive to advice from others who walked the same route.

Formalize mentoring relationships rather than letting them develop ad hoc. Again, teaching online is faculty development. It is preparing your faculty to teach in new (better) ways to adapt to a changing environment.

EMBED INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

Embed instructional designers within the department they support. This way they are seen as members of the department and colleagues, rather than strangers. Avoid instructional designer burnout, though, as these designers may be asked to help with more trivial technological issues that interrupt meaningful work. This can be done by limiting their hours or providing two locations for them to work—one in the department, and one some distance away. You want to avoid the “us and them” syndrome which too often infects siloed institutions. Develop asynchronous training for when instructional designers are not available, and share templated LMS content that faculty can adapt as they create and teach their courses.

EXTEND HELPDESK

Online students are looking for convenience and may be studying at “unsocial” hours. These online students will contact the most convenient person they know to be available—you don’t want this to be only your online faculty. Similarly, online faculty will be working at “unsocial” hours and will need technical support. Extend helpdesk hours to meet the needs of both these groups. And, again, to avoid burnout, recognize that helpdesk and support staff can work remotely.

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

The higher education landscape is changing, and the future is uncertain. Teaching online is faculty development, which may prepare faculty to adapt to this new environment so they don't get left behind. Provide specialized training and certification (such as Quality Matters).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, faculty and staff buy-in for online programs is possible. There are two core requirements: a supportive and trusting culture, and an acceptance that the benefits of change outweigh perceived risks/costs to the individual. The framework to effect meaningful change is communication, an effective reward structure, and a well-developed support program.

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George, J. M., & Jones, G. R. (2016). Towards a Process Model of Individual Change in Organizations. *Human Relations Human Relations*, 54(4), 419-444.

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ABOUT

James Moore is the Director of Online Learning for DePaul University's Driehaus College of Business. He teaches Internet Marketing classes in fully online, blended and face-to-face formats. He attempts to balance his love of technology and gadgets with the knowledge that quick and simple solutions are best. Unfortunately, creating quick and simple solutions often involves a long and complex process.

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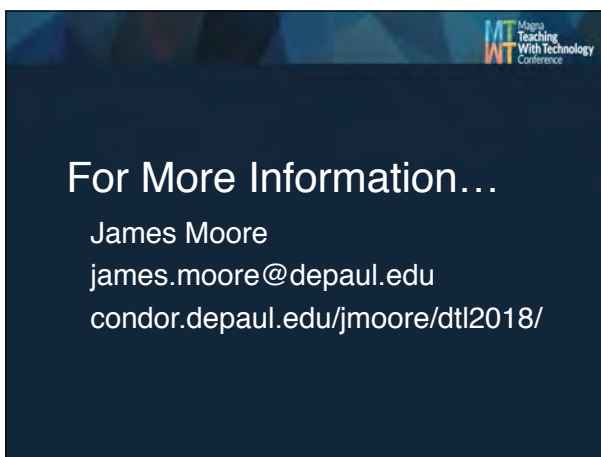
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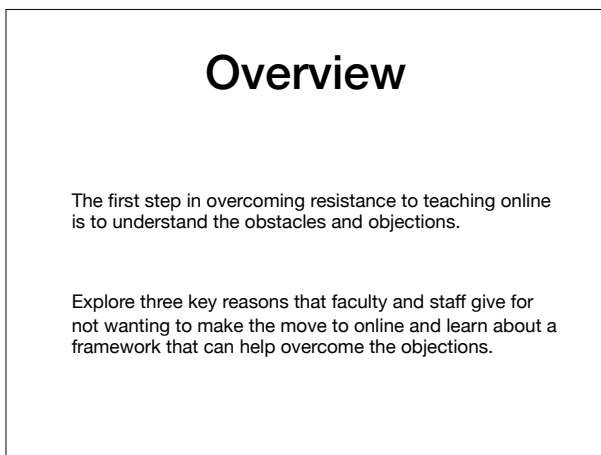
Phone: +1 312.362.5701



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2



3

Our Time Together



Presentation

Questions & Discussion

Please ask
questions
at any
point

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"It ought to be remembered that there is nothing more difficult to take in hand, more perilous to conduct, or more uncertain in its success, than to take the lead in the introduction of a new order of things.

Because the innovator has for enemies all those who have done well under the old conditions, and lukewarm defenders in those who may do well under the new.

This coolness arises partly from fear of the opponents, who have the laws on their side, and partly from the incredulity of men, who do not readily believe in new things until they have had a long experience of them."

—Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*



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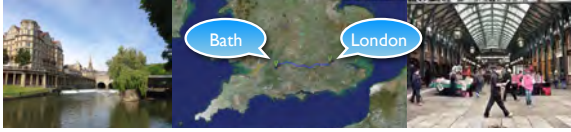
In case you were wondering...



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Hometowns: Bath & London



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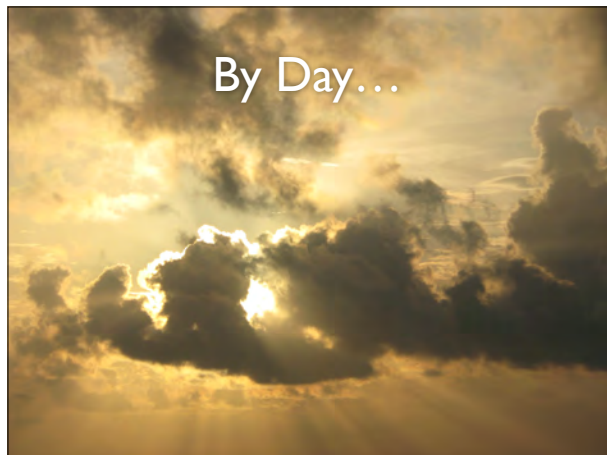
But I live in Chicago



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I Work At DePaul





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James Moore
Director of Online Learning - College of Business

1999: Office of Distance Learning
Webmaster

2002: Lifelong Learning & Suburban Campuses
Web development manager

2005: ITD / IDD
Instructional technology / instructional design
consultant

2007: College of Business
Director of Online Learning



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By Night...



MKT595: Internet & Interactive Marketing
11-Week MBA Course
Taught entirely online

 condor.depaul.edu/jmoore/mkt595/



Practical Internet Marketing
6-Week Certificate Course
Taught both online and flipped/hybrid

 condor.depaul.edu/jmoore/pim/

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Study



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Hello
my name is

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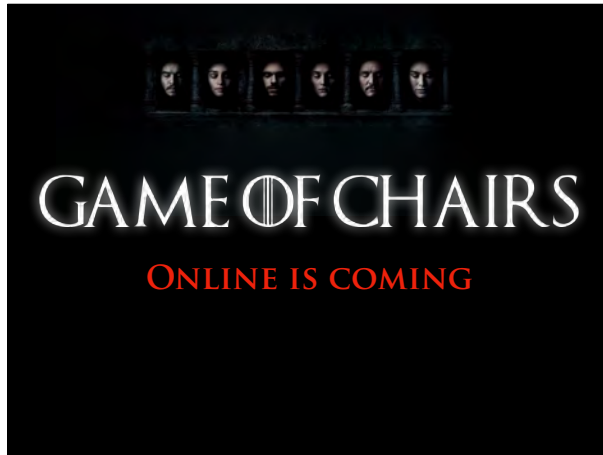


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Your current reality probably looks like
something along this spectrum...

From

16



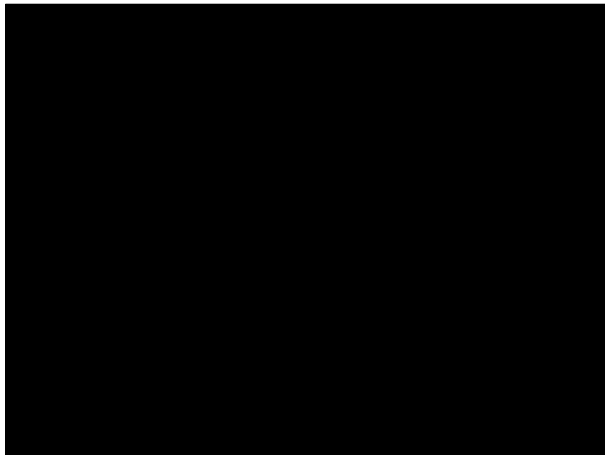
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To

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Compliance Is Not Commitment



"You have 20 seconds to comply"

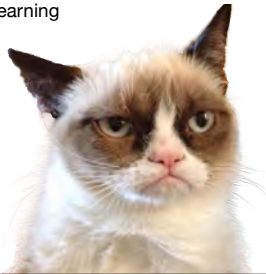
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Reasons For Reluctance

Skepticism towards online learning

Workload

Individual reasons



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Education is an evidence-based practice.
Scientific skepticism and rigorous enquiry are core to education.



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Oversold Promise



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Current Reality



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Sea and Sand...

More Efficient Work

28



Understanding Student Needs

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Principally **convenience**

Foundation

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- 1.Effective online strategy
- 2.Platform for learning (LMS, VLE, etc.)
- 3.Faculty support
- 4.Student support



(things you need before even thinking about buy-in)

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Effective Online Strategy




Reduce costs

- Consolidate campuses/ sections
- Working remotely
- Reduce physical plant

Reduce attrition

- Online to complete program



Increase enrollment

- Online to complete program (consideration)
- Competitive advantage
- Improve program quality

Improve faculty development

- Improve faculty development

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Platform For Learning

"It just works"



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Faculty Support

Instructional designers

Multimedia specialists

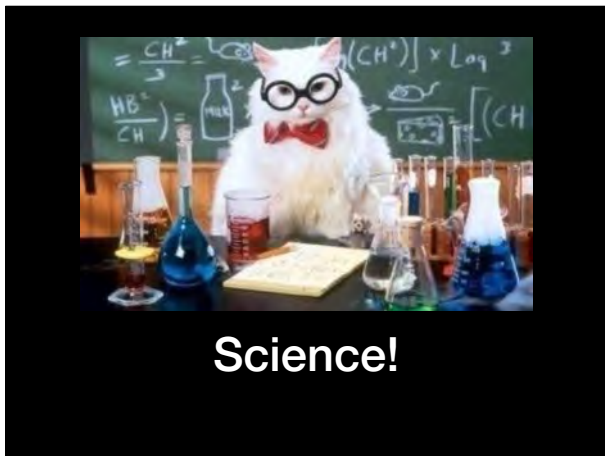
Recording studio

Quality assurance

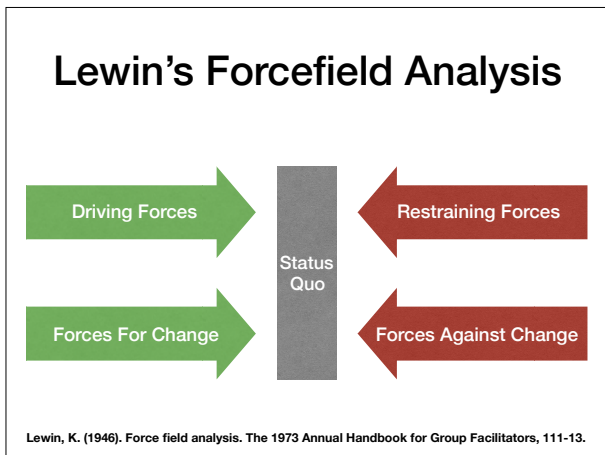




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1948-2007

Create a supportive and trusting culture

"If perceived risks/costs outweigh benefits, change recipients will understandably tend to resist change"

Oreg, S., Vakola, M., & Armenakis, A. (2011). Change Recipients' Reactions to Organizational Change: A 60-Year Review of Quantitative Studies. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 47(4), 461.



Solution Framework

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- 1.State goals plainly
 - Role of CFO (loss aversion)
- 2.Listen (survey)
- 3.Share accomplishments
- 4.Find advocates

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State Goals Clearly

There is a clear and current problem


- That impacts **you**

Strategic use of online will fix

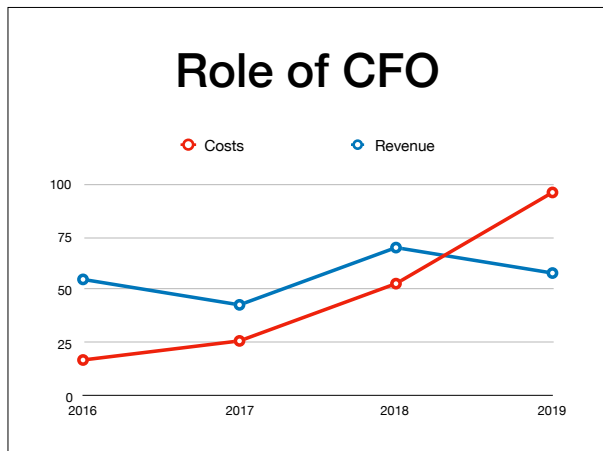
- And maybe for **you**

There will be costs & adjustment

There will be milestones (& review)



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Online Offers A Lifeline



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Listen

Survey students,
faculty, & staff

Schedule online
open houses

Solicit feedback



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Share Accomplishments

Publish student success stories (and
their struggles)

Online teaching awards

Online design awards

Lunch & learn

Conference presentations

Highlight in internal communication



Find Advocates

Former adversaries are the best advocates

Look for problems, and ways they can be fixed

Students and employers can be advocates too



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Reward Structure

Time to develop online courses

Don't cancel courses in development

Frequent offerings

Contract (with additional student bonus)

Recognition of ownership (faculty & ID)

Tools for teaching: Equipment & training



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Support Program

1.Mentor

2.Embed instructional design

3.Extend helpdesk

4.Faculty development



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Mentor

Faculty will be more responsive to advice from others who walked the same route

Again, online is faculty development - It is preparing your faculty to teach in new (better) ways to adapt to a changing environment



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Embed Instructional Design

ID's office within department

Avoid burnout though:

Limit hours / two locations

Avoid the "us & them"

Team structure

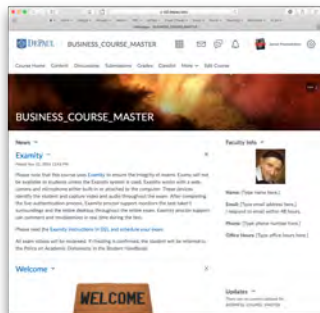
Asynchronous training

Templated LMS content



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LMS Template



Introductions

Syllabus

Schedule

Modular content

Tool instructions

Support documentation

Ice-breaker

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Extend Helpdesk

Online students are looking for convenience, and may be studying at “unsocial” hours

Online students will contact the most convenient person they know to be available - you don't want this to be only your faculty

Online faculty will be working at “unsocial” hours, and will need technical support

Helpdesk and support staff can work remotely



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Faculty Development

The landscape is changing, and the future is uncertain

Online is faculty development

Prepare faculty to adapt to this new environment (so they don't get left behind)

Specialized training

Certification (Quality Matters)



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Conclusion

Faculty and staff buy-in for online programs is possible

Two core requirements:

1.Supportive and trusting culture

2.Benefits outweigh perceived risks/costs (*to the individual*)

Framework: Communicate, reward structure, support program

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References

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