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A Tale of ~~Two~~ Three Cities: Comparing the Pros and Cons of Delivering Health and Environmental Coursework via 'Online' and 'Face-to-Face'

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Need

- Increase demand for health & environmental specialists
- Need for continuing education and recertification
- Wide spread access to the internet

Proliferation of Online Education

- Reaching Untapped Audiences
- Increase (or maintenance) of enrollment
  - The U.S. 18 year old population growth is stagnant
- Increase in money into institution
  - Steady decline in state support
- Keeping up with the 'Joneses'
  - Gives perception of a 'modern' university

Southern Illinois University

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New Mexico State University

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Geography of New Mexico

- 2.1 Million Population
- 121,365 square miles
  - (Germany is 137, 847 square miles)
- Las Cruces is 50 miles from Mexico border
- Las Cruces to Albuquerque is 225 miles
- Las Cruces to Santa Fe is 290 miles
- Las Cruces to Taos is 355 miles
- Las Cruces to Farmington is 410 miles

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New Mexico State University Profile

- Bachelors in Public Health
  - 128 credit hour
- Master in Public Health
  - 48 credit hour
    - Community Health Education
    - Health Management, Administration & Policy
  - 15 hour Graduate Certificate in Public Health
- BPH
  - 120 students; 60 minors
  - Half online; half on-campus
- MPH
  - 100 students; 70 online
  - 35 Graduate Certificate (100% online)

NMSU Faculty Profile

- Tenure-Track Faculty
  - 3-3 teaching load
  - Approximately half are online;
- Example of Schedule
  - Fall:
    - MPH 574 Community Organization [F2F]
    - MPH 574 Community Organization [online]
    - MPH 561 U.S./Mexico Border Health [online]
  - Spring:
    - MPH 576 Theoretical Constructs [F2F]
    - MPH 576 Theoretical Constructs [online]
    - MPH 561 U.S./Mexico Border Health [F2F]

Adjuncts Selected from throughout the country

- Southern Illinois
- North Carolina
- Florida/Wisconsin
- Colorado
- New York
- Minnesota
- Texas
- Alabama
- Louisiana
- New Mexico
- North Dakota
- Ohio

Typical Barriers to Online Instruction

- Beliefs
  - online is inferior
  - online is cheaper
- Both professor and student must have state of the art equipment/internet access
- Lack of infrastructure/software
- Lack of personnel support for faculty (and students)
- Students not prepared for online delivery
- Weak Learning Management System

Potential Plusses to Online Instruction

- Outreach
- Very efficient
- Neutralizes some negative teaching characteristics
- Faculty are typically more responsive to students

How NMSU has overcome such barriers

- All hires include online instruction expectations
- Mandatory orientation for both F2F and online students
- Online must attest they have necessary equipment
- Teaching Academy
- Quality Matters ‘certification’
- Distance Education and Technology Fees

Potential Problems With Online Offerings

- Takes away from face-to-face classes
- Different expectations from Administration on spending time in the office
- Not meeting federal requirements for individuals with disabilities
- Costly
- Using technology fees for items other than distance education
- Not providing continuing in-service

Brockport

- Three major graduate programs online
  - Adapted Physical Education
  - Health Education (School)
  - RN to BSN
- New Administration
- Technology Support
- Faculty Training is Available

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Summary

- Need Commitment from Faculty
- Provide Support
- Make this part of the teaching load

Questions?

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