



Proactive Defense

By Sue Donaldson

DINFOS gains proficiency in online learning

THE CHALLENGE

EACH YEAR THE DEFENSE INFORMATION SCHOOL (DINFOS) trains thousands of outstanding Public Affairs and Visual Information personnel for the U.S. Department of Defense. A joint-service school, DINFOS is attended by members of all five United States armed forces as well as civilian government employees and military service members from foreign nations. One of DINFOS' most recent challenges was to provide faculty and instructors with an overview of best practices for online course design and delivery.

THE APPROACH



The Center for Workforce Solutions (CWS) at Anne Arundel Community College (AACC) met with DINFOS representatives to discuss what skills the training participants required. For the program to meet its goals, developers needed to understand the specific knowledge and skills the students sought or were required to possess. This information was used to customize a curriculum for DINFOS' faculty.

THE SOLUTION

CWS worked with AACC's virtual campus team to design and finalize blended (online and face-to-face) training for DINFOS instructors titled "Teaching & Learning in the e-Learning Environment: A Practitioner's Approach." This blended training allowed DINFOS faculty to experience the online learning and develop best practices for online instruction. The training also included a pre-course survey to assess participants' entry-level knowledge, skills and interests as well as a post-course survey. Participants completed a variety of formative and summative assessments during the training, developing activities and materials in

support of DINFOS-specific course development and delivery. In addition, participants created a repository of activities, resources and a professional development plan to support ongoing e-learning initiatives.

"The instruction we received in the Building Online Communities block of instruction has been great! We ended up using some of the best practices to start a dialogue and put some of the big picture ideas into practice. The course was really the jumping point we needed to revitalize our own online teaching program," United States Air Force Maj. Denise Burham said.

THE OUTCOME

Twenty-five DINFOS faculty members have completed this training, which included eight modules for a total of 64 hours of learning. Topics included:

- ▶ Introduction to the e-Learning Environment
- ▶ Teaching Methods for the e-Learning Environment
- ▶ Designing for Instruction
- ▶ Engaged Learning in the Online Environment
- ▶ Assessing Learning
- ▶ Building an Online Classroom Community
- ▶ Classroom Management Techniques
- ▶ Course Design (based on national standards of best practices)

THE FUTURE

AACC CONTINUES TO WORK WITH DINFOS to identify opportunities to partner and use the college's resources to supplement and enhance their internal capabilities.

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