

Accelerating the Development Process at Rivier College's School of Business

Rivier College, Nashua NH

Background: Rivier College is a Catholic coeducational liberal arts college offering undergraduate and graduate degrees through day and evening courses. The college, which emphasizes academic excellence and pre-professional and professional preparation, was founded in 1933 by the Sisters of the Presentation of Mary. Rivier offers more than 60 programs leading to associate's, bachelor's, and master's degrees. Situated on over 68 acres in Nashua, NH, Rivier College is fully accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc.



In the fall of 2004, Rivier initiated accelerated learning programs to accommodate the demands of its students – many of whom have life experiences that allow them to benefit from this exciting yet demanding format.

Challenge: Because this was Rivier's foray into this venue, Dr. Joseph Allard, Vice President of Academic Outreach sought support to ensure that the accelerated learning reflected the level of academic and professional rigor that Rivier is known for.

Rivier faced several significant challenges as it looked to create accelerated learning programs in its undergraduate and graduate business programs:

- Rivier had no prior experience with accelerated learning in the business department although it did have online training capability through BlackBoard.
- Many of the professors did not have accelerated learning background nor did they fully understand the principles of accelerated learning.
- No materials or structure existed to serve as a foundation for accelerated learning programs.
- There was no staff support in place to help bootstrap this effort.
- There was minimal budget for this effort AND a requirement that future funding of an outside consultant would quickly disappear.

Solution: Through a colleague at another university, Dr. Allard found Entelechy. Entelechy formulated a plan in which Entelechy would:

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- Create a Student Guide template in Word® that would guide instructors to apply accelerated learning techniques AND that created a consistent and professional look and feel to the courses.
- Facilitate an initial kickoff meeting with faculty to agree upon appropriate accelerated/web-enabled learning techniques that will be embedded in their modules and explain how to use the template in the design and development of their module (specifically the student materials).
- Develop a time-line that would have all six courses completed in module format within three short months.
- Meet (face-to-face or via phone/email) individually with each of six faculty members a minimum of two times to ensure that:
 - Modules are incorporating the agreed-to accelerated/web-enabled learning principles.
 - Faculty members are adhering to the project timeline.
 - Questions regarding the template or instructional design are answered.
- Communicate with faculty concerning the development of course content for inclusion in the course modules. Communication included:
 - Tips/techniques learned from research and/or practice.
 - Lessons from other faculty members.
 - Changes or enhancements made to the templates.
 - Encouragement to maintain forward progress.
 - Issues or challenges that need to be addressed to meet the instructional quality and deadline requirements.
- Edit and format the participant materials. Entelechy conducted at least two reviews for each professor. We first reviewed the front matter and one module to ensure that the professor was apply the template and accelerated learning concepts appropriated. Extensive feedback was given to the professor. The second edit was a final edit to ensure that everything was in perfect order.

Results: According to Dr. Allard, “Your expertise in curriculum development, skill in managing such a large project as ours, and ability to work with individuals of all types, while keeping everything on schedule was no small task. The outcome of our course development project was nothing less than superb. Thanks in large measure to you, we were able to complete six months of work in three months – and it was completed with great professionalism.”



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Rivier contracted with Entelechy to help facilitate the accelerated learning process with the next cohort of professors and simultaneously train two full-time Rivier staff to assume Entelechy's responsibilities. As a result, the program – now internally supported – is thriving and will serve as a model for other departments.

