

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESS OF DEVELOPING ONLINE COURSES

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INTRODUCTION

Teaching online means conducting a course partially or entirely through the Internet. It is a form of distance education, a process that includes courses taught through the mail, by video-tape, or via telephone hookups or satellite TV-any form of learning that doesn't involve the traditional classroom setting in which students and instructor must be at the same place at the same time (Susan Ko and Steve Rossen 2001, 2).

As academic institutions are moving rapidly toward the use of the Internet to offer courses and programs, as well as to develop virtual universities (Palloff and Pratt 1999, xvii), the need for teaching and developing online courses in a Christian institution, such as in a seminary, is not an exception compared with other higher educational institutions.

This article is one attempt to develop, measure, and assess online courses in a seminary, specifically converting traditional classes into non-traditional classes. It is aimed at the administrative process of developing online courses using the principle of MBO (management by objectives). By using MBO in the administrative process, the writer can identify common goals in developing online courses, set up standards to measure each individual's responsibilities, and assess the contribution of each member (George Odiorne 1965, 55).

This article is organized as the follows. (1) One of the advantages of online courses: student-centered approach in education. (2) Brief overview of the institution where the article might be applied. (3) Definition of MBO and the explanation of MBO cycle. (4) Detailed administrative process of developing online courses following MBO cycle.

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ONE OF THE ADVANTAGES OF ONLINE COURSES

Out of many advantages of online courses, one of them from teaching and learning aspect, is that online course can be used to boost up student-centered approach in education. Contending that online education must align with student-centered approaches, if it is to be educationally effective, Knowlton supports his idea by contrasting between the teacher-centered and student-centered classroom subdividing classrooms into the categories of things, people, and processes (Knowlton 2000, 6).

In the teacher-centered classroom, professors introduce the specific things that are worthy of being studied, and students are told how to interpret them, whereas in a student-centered classroom, students use things to take more active control of their own learning. Therefore, in a student-centered classroom, the knowledge that they discover is, in essence, created by the student. As a result, knowledge becomes more personally relevant to the student (Knowlton 2000, 6). Both professors and students introduce “things,” and both offer interpretations and implications (Knowlton 2000, 7).

In a seminary, especially in a MDiv (Master of Divinity) program, most of the courses are related with the basic doctrines of Christianity. Therefore, teacher-centered approach seems to be better than student-centered in the effectiveness of the education. Because of the easy access to information through the Internet, however, what is more important is not the information but how to interpret and use it. Therefore, even in a MDiv program, teaching and learning by way of online courses can be accomplished more effectively for the future ministry of the students in relation to educational things (contents).

While in a teacher-centered classroom, the professor is the sole voice of intellectual authority and the only one who has been endowed with knowledge worthy of dissemination, in the student-centered classroom, students also dispense information by assuming the role of active participants in the day-to-day rigors of developing an understanding of course materials. Therefore, roles of professor and student are dynamic: the professor and students are a community of learners. The professor serves as coach and mentor; the students become active participants in learning (Knowlton 2000, 7). In addition, in the online class, as every individual is supposed to post his or her

ideas, even silent students in a traditional class are forced to be active in learning, which activates the effectiveness of education. Therefore, in terms of educational entity, online courses can open new opportunity to both professors and students.

In a teacher-centered classroom, knowledge is assumed “transferred” from professor to student through one-way communication. Therefore, in the teaching and learning process, the professor usually professes and lectures while the students listen and take notes. On the other hand, in a student-centered classroom, as the professor is removed as the center of the classroom, collaboration and dialogue among students and the professor are required (Knowlton 2000, 8). In a student-centered classroom, professor serves as facilitator while students collaborate with each other and the professor to develop personal understanding of content (Knowlton 2000, 7).

Therefore, developing online courses in a seminary, especially in MA, ThM, and Doctoral degree programs where the major task is writing a thesis or dissertation, can introduce an educationally effective way considering educational contents, persons, and processes by facilitating a student-centered online class.

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE INSTITUTION WHERE THIS ARTICLE IS APPLIED

The seminary where this administrative process of developing online courses might be implemented is located in Seoul, Korea. Korea has established a firm cyber network using the Internet. Even in a very small town, in a PC room, we can use the high speed Internet.

The graduate school has its specific mission for the evangelization of the unreached peoples. Around 20% of the students of the seminary are international from all around the world. Some of them who come from the countries, where they cannot have access to the Internet or even computer, within one or two months, they learn from colleagues how to use the Internet. The school is unique in using English in every activity of education. The school has its own server to host its homepage where online courses can be implemented. Every faculty can use the Internet. In the library and dormitory, they can easily have access to the Internet.

At the present, there is no online course. The president and dean of the seminary, however, seem to be interested in developing online

courses.

DEFINITION OF MBO AND THE EXPLANATION OF THE MBO CYCLE

George Odiorne defines MBO (management by objectives) as, “a system of management whereby the superior and subordinate jointly identify objectives, define individual major areas of responsibility in terms of results expected, and use these objectives and expected results as guides for operating the unit and assessing the contribution of each of its members (George Odiorne 1965, 55).”

From this definition, we can examine four key activities involved in MBO. Firstly, identify the common goals of an organization between the superior and subordinate. Secondly, define responsibilities of each individual in terms of the results expected. Thirdly, use the objectives as guides for operating. Fourthly, use the measures as the criterion to evaluate the contribution of each member.

This article will use the process of MBO and multiple steps, which will be repeatedly operated as a cycle, in developing an online course.

MBO Cycle

The four key activities in the definition of MBO can be delineated more specifically into seven steps (Michael Anthony, lecture notes of 2003).

1. Organization's common goals and measures of organizational performance (Identifying the common goals)
2. Revisions in organizational structure
3. Superior sets down goals and measures for subordinates & Subordinate proposes goals and measures for subordinate
4. Joint agreement on subordinate's goals (Defining responsibilities of each individual)
5. New input
6. Cumulative periodic review of subordinate's results against targets (Using the objectives as guides for operating)
7. Review of organizational performance (Using the measures as the criterion to evaluate the contribution of each member).

DETAILED ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESS OF DEVELOPING ONLINE COURSES FOLLOWING THE MBO CYCLE

Each of the above seven steps of the MBO cycle will be applied for the administrative process of developing online courses in a seminary in Seoul, Korea. Some benefits of MBO to each part will be added.

The Organization's Common Goals and Measures of Organizational Performance

At this stage, top managers of an organization review the purpose for which the organization exists. These objectives are (1) to provide direction to the entire organization and (2) to provide guidelines for subordinate-level managers to formulate their objectives (Drucker 1954, 63).

With MBO in an organization, it 1) embodies managerial effectiveness as a central value, 2) focuses managerial efforts, 3) facilitates coordinated effort, 4) provides profit potential, 5) provides objective reward criteria, 6) identifies advancement potential, 7) identifies developmental needs, and 8) facilitates change (Michael Anthony, lecture notes of 2003).

Developing online courses in a seminary, which has unique characteristics in terms of nationalities and language, can have synergy effect in building up network in the long-term perspective. Therefore, the benefits for developing online courses seem to be evident to administrators, faculty and students of the school. President would give direction to the entire organization and provide guidelines for the dean of the school to write the objectives for the online courses. Temporarily, the goals to develop online courses are assumed to enhance the quality of education by providing large quantity of information and by interaction between students and faculty and to provide unique educational opportunities to many students.

Revisions in Organizational Structure

With MBO, 1) each member of the enterprise contributes something different, 2) their efforts must pull together to common goals, 3) performance requires each job be directed toward common objectives of the entire organization, and 4) a subordinate's results are

measured by the contribution they make to the success of the enterprise (Michael Anthony, lecture notes of 2003).

The school, however, does not seem to require any revisions in organizational structure at the present in developing online courses because it has its own programmer who can help to implement online courses.

Superior Sets Down Goals and Measures for Subordinates and the Subordinate Proposes Goals and Measurements for Subordinate

At this stage, each individual manager determines the common goals of an organization between the superior and subordinate. This procedure takes place in three general steps: identifying key result areas, writing objectives, and negotiating with the boss (Morrisey 1970, 21).

With MBO, superiors can have benefits in, 1) motivating subordinates, 2) strengthening interpersonal relationships, 3) providing a framework for coaching, and 4) eliminating weak appraisal methods (Michael Anthony, lecture notes of 2003).

In developing online courses, dean of the school, the faculty related with the project, and the programmer in the information center may identify, discuss and settle down how many online courses will be open and what should be the long-term and short-term objectives. For the time being, the online courses will be operated as a test and auxiliary tool for traditional class. After operating two or three semesters, a course entirely through the Internet will be developed and implemented as a regular course.

Joint Agreement on Subordinate's Goals

At this stage, superior and subordinates define responsibilities of each other. Joint agreement on subordinate's goals will be used as criterion for assessing the contribution of each member after one term of activities is finished.

In organizations with MBO, subordinates have benefits in, (1) getting knowledge of what is expected of them, (2) establishing performance measurement, (3) clarifying authority and responsibility, and (4) increasing job satisfaction (Michael Anthony, lecture notes of 2003).

In developing online courses in the school, each faculty is responsible for the operation of the online course. Any problem concerning the software and hardware, however, will be responsible for the information center. On the main entrance page, there will be course information, course documents, assignment, and discussion board. Only faculty will have the right to file upload.

New Input

At this stage, using the objectives as guides for operating, two types of actions will be given as new inputs into objectives. First, feedback of interim results against milestones. Second, knockout of inappropriate goals after the results (Michael Anthony, lecture notes of 2003). By way of this trimming, the objectives will be more refined and attainable.

In developing online courses in the graduate school, during and after the semester, the responses from students will be gathered and evaluated in order to analyze to find out the strengths and weaknesses. In addition, discussion between the professor and the programmer will improve the operation of online courses.

Cumulative Periodic Review of Subordinate's Results against Targets

Whether intermediate and final (Carroll and Tosi 1973, 89) or periodic and final, there are two types of objective reviews. The purpose of cumulative periodic review of the subordinate's results against targets is to assess progress and identify problems that may happen while subordinates accomplish objectives.

After two or three semesters, discussion between the dean, the professor for the developing online course, and the programmer will meet for the review of the developing of the online course.

Review of Organizational Performance

This final review is to determine organization performance. In this stage the MBOs are reviewed for the entire period. The purpose of this session is on the renewal of the MBO cycle by reviewing the whole process of the cycle in order to plan the objectives for the next period

better. In this session, subordinates will be measured by the contribution they make to the success of the enterprise.

Based on the cumulative review of several online courses, president will assess the results by the direction and guidelines that he gave at the first stage of MBO. The professor responsible for the developing online course and the programmer will be assessed by the results they have brought to the school.

CONCLUSION

This article is aimed at developing online courses, which can introduce an educationally effective way in a seminary, considering educational content, people, and processes. In developing the administrative process, MBO principles are recommended as setting the common goals, defining individual responsibilities, using the objectives as guidelines for operating and the criterion to assess the contribution of each member.

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