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Fostering Independent Learners of Information Systems in the 21st Century Through Integrated Educational Technologies

Rebecca J. Giorcelli
Fairmont State University

Joseph C. Blankenship
Fairmont State University

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Fostering Independent Learners of Information Systems in the 21st Century Through Integrated Educational Technologies

Educating Students with the Perception that Technology is Too Complex to Learn

Rebecca J. Giorcelli and Joseph C. Blankenship

AMCIS 2009 Panel Proposal

Part 1: Statement of the panel topic and the target audience

The topic of this panel session is the management and delivery of course content through the integration of new instructional technologies to facilitate independent student learning in technical courses. The two lead panelists will provide examples and explanations of newly restructured information systems courses using a range of instructional technologies, including an online course management system, student response system, online video tutorial approach, classroom information systems synchronization tools, smart classroom technologies, and online student collaboration tools. These courses have been developed to foster a move away from the traditional classroom lecture "teaching centric" paradigm to an independent "learner centric" paradigm. This classroom methodology was developed as one result of the work completed for an NSF-funded project, *Expanding Pathways for Educational Development and Information Technology Experiences (ExPEDITE)*. A focus of this classroom methodology is presenting technology-based course material to students with little to no technical background. These students often perceive technology-related classes as extremely difficult and many times overwhelming. The proposed methodology uses the various instructional technologies to slowly build the learner's background through a gradual, repetitive learning process where the learner becomes more independent with each classroom activity.

The target audience for this panel discussion would include, but not be limited to, all IS educators with an interest in participating in the exploration and development of classroom methods for teaching information systems courses in the 21st century. The specific learning modules presented will demonstrate the lead panelists' approaches in relation to topics such as software programming, database design and development, and management of information systems for non-IS majors. The panel discussion will be opened to the implementation of these instructional technologies and methods to any IS-related course.

Part 2: Statement of the panel objectives

The objectives of this panel include the dissemination of newly developed student-centric classroom instructional approaches within an open discussion forum. All participants will be considered as panel members who will be asked to provide feedback and suggestions and share ideas and experiences with other panel members.

Part 3: Statement of the panel format

The panel format will include: two learning module presentations and demonstrations by the lead panelists at 20 minutes each, a 35-minute open discussion and feedback session facilitated by the lead panelists (involving all attendees), and a 15-minute wrap-up by the lead panelists to review a summary of the discussion points and provide closing thoughts.

Part 4: Bio of each panelist

Rebecca J. Giorcelli, Ph.D. - Dr. Giorcelli will serve as a lead panelist and will facilitate the panel session. She was named as a full-time Assistant Professor in the Information Systems Department, School of Business at Fairmont State University in August of 2005. She was appointed as the Information Systems Program Coordinator in August 2008. She instructs courses related to quantitative IS applications, programming, windows and web-based database application development and project management. She serves on the Faculty Development committee and Undergraduate Research Council committee. She also serves as the Faculty Advisor for the local chapter of Delta Mu Delta Business Administration Honor Society and the Information Systems Student Organization (ISSO). Dr. Giorcelli has had several presentations and publications on the topic of IS-related educational research.

She joined FSU with over 10 years of professional experience related to curriculum development and technology-based education research. As Principal Investigator for the Center for Technical Leadership (CTL) Project, Dr. Giorcelli collaborated with researchers at Booz Allen Hamilton to create curriculum modules for software management best practices for the Defense Acquisition University within the Department of Defense. As Co-Principal Investigator for the Comprehensive Information Technology Education in Rural Appalachia (CITERA) Project funded through the National Science Foundation, she worked to raise awareness of IT career opportunities at the junior high level. And as Program Evaluator for Project ISAAC (Improving Student Achievement and Advancing Communities) funded through the Regional Education Service Agency (RESA) VII in West Virginia, she worked to assess student improvement programs for middle school students.

In her current position, Dr. Giorcelli is the Principal Investigator for two National Science Foundation-funded projects related to curriculum development in the computing fields. In order to meet the growing IT workforce demand in North Central West Virginia, the *Expanding Pathways for Educational Development and Information Technology Experiences* (ExPEDITE) project was designed to create educational pathways from high school through college to provide students with a smooth transition to information technology (IT) related careers. The *Advancing Computing Curricula and Expanding Learning Experiences through Re-engineered and Accelerated Technology Education (ACCELERATE)* project moves the undergraduate computing education at Fairmont State University (FSU) and Pierpont Community and Technical College (PC&TC) toward transformative learning by restructuring the Information Systems, Information Technology, and Computer Science (IS/IT/CS) programs within the two institutions.

Dr. Giorcelli holds a Bachelor of Science degree, Master of Science degree, and Doctorate of Philosophy in Industrial Engineering from West Virginia University.

Joseph C. Blankenship D.Sc. - Dr. Blankenship will also serve as a lead panelist and will co-facilitate the panel discussion. He was named as a full-time Assistant Professor in the School of Business's Department of Information Systems at Fairmont State University in August of 2008. As an Assistant Professor, Dr. Blankenship has responsibilities in the areas of management and leadership within the classroom, student advisement, a member of the undergraduate and graduate faculty, new curriculum development in the graduate and undergraduate programs, and program option development. He also has publications in IACIS's annual journal, as well as Pittsburgh Hospital News, and ITtoolBox and other publications.

Prior to assuming his position with Fairmont State University, Dr. Blankenship served as an Adjunct Professor , Department of Information Systems and Communications, Robert Morris University (RMU), Assistant Professor, Department of Business, The University of Findlay, and Assistant Professor Department of Computer Science and Information Systems (CS&IS), Youngstown State University (YSU).

Dr. Blankenship came to the discipline of collegiate professors from a career as an international information technology-consultant. During his time as an Information Technology Consultant he served in several capacities with his last position being that of a business division Director until August 2003. While employed commercially Dr. Blankenship served on or directed project teams within the US and Internationally. His areas of responsibilities were Project Planning, Budget, Systems Analysis, Database Design and Implementation, Software Design and Development, Quality Assurance, and System Implementation. In addition, he was responsible for employee development, project approval, contract management, and client management and development.

Dr. Blankenship holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration/Computer Information Systems from Robert Morris University and a Doctorate of Science degree in Communications and Information Systems from Robert Morris Universities Graduate School of Information Systems and Communications.

Part 5: Statement of equipment needed

Required equipment for the panel session includes access to High Speed Internet, network connectivity for two laptop notebook computers, and an overhead projector. Since the purpose of the panel is to solicit feedback from panel participants, digital video and audio recording equipment is also requested to be set up to capture the panel session and allow for downloading to the panelists' laptops for future transcription and editing.