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MOVING BEYOND TRADITION

Designing an Online Course for School Leaders

Article by Larry J. Walker and Michelle Sullivan

Abstract

Increasingly post-secondary institutions are dedicating resources to develop online courses. This includes hybrid (classroom and online instruction) and fully online classes. The growth of online options coincides with the creation of various platforms that make communication between graduate students and faculty members seamless. However, there is a gap in the research which examines the development of online courses for current and aspiring school leaders (e.g., teachers, principals, district staff). For this reason, this article utilizes extant literature and autoethnographic vignettes to 1) investigate the steps universities and school districts should take to make online classes more accessible for school leaders; 2) discuss the advantages and challenges of taking online classes for school leaders and 3) describe a faculty members experience developing a graduate online course. The article includes limitations and implications.

Keywords

1. School leaders
2. School districts
3. Online classes
4. Graduate students
5. Accessibility

Introduction

The growth of online courses has changed the education landscape. Traditional face to face (F2F) models is slowly being replaced with hybrid, fully online, and other opportunities (Kentnor, 2015). Although some school districts and post-secondary institutions have been at the forefront of technological changes others have failed to keep pace (Powell et al., 2015). Offering professionals an array of learning opportunities is essential in a global economy. Post-secondary institutions can no longer depend on

antiquated models that do not meet the needs of students. Further, institutions have to ensure students living in geographically isolated communities (e.g., rural) are given the opportunity to develop workforce skills.

Creating new learning opportunities is particularly important for PreK-12 educators. Frequently, they must meet new pedagogical standards because of changes to state and federal laws and other guidelines (Walker, 2018a). For example, school leaders are expected to follow the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL). The PSELs provide a benchmark for current or aspiring school leaders. Meeting professional guidelines is critical. Although requirements vary from state to state, obtaining a license (e.g., school leadership and educational leadership) includes completing a plethora of courses. The courses are designed to prepare leaders to meet the needs of diverse populations, balance a budget, collaborate with the local community, and support the needs of teachers (Goings et al., 2018; Rubinstein-Avila, 2017).

Considering educators should dedicate a significant amount of time to the aforementioned responsibilities including balancing a budget and supporting teachers; finding the opportunity to attend professional development or graduate classes may not be feasible. Nationally school districts allow educators to earn higher salaries if they meet specific credit/degree guidelines (Berry & Shields, 2017). However, allotting specific days to attend F2F classes may inhibit their ability to meet familial or school obligations. For this reason, taking online classes offers educators the chance to gain the experience to become a school administrator or district office leader while alleviating time restraints (Vu, Cao, Vu, & Cepero, 2014). In addition, while there has been considerable focus on the growth of online classes there is a gap in the research that examines 1) whether current or future school leaders have access to online classes; 2) the advantages or disadvantages of taking online classes and 3) the steps faculty members take to develop courses for school leaders.

Literature Review

THE GROWTH OF ONLINE CLASSES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

While it has become ubiquitous in higher education, distance learning has evolved since the first correspondence courses were offered via newspaper advertisement in the 1700s (Kentnor, 2015). Distance learning models were increasingly refined throughout the 1800s and into the 1900s via post, radio, video, and television formats. Groundbreaking work began in the 1980s and 1990s with the advent of online education via the use of computers (Che & Zhang, 2018).

Enrollment in colleges and universities has been uneven from year to year. Private for-profit universities have seen a steady decline in enrollment over a four-year period, but longitudinal reports are mixed as to whether enrollment has increased or decreased for public institutions and for private not-for-profit institutions (Seaman, Allen, & Seaman, 2018; Xu & Xu, 2019). However, there has been an overall increase in online enrollment. This includes students enrolled in mixed mode/hybrid and fully online

courses as well as students who take either a mixed mode/hybrid or entirely online course combined with F2F courses (Legon & Garrett, 2018; Seaman et al., 2018; Xu & Xu, 2019). The consistent growth in online enrollment suggests that this trend is poised to continue as technology changes.

As online courses at post-secondary institutions continue to increase, school leaders will need to regularly evaluate how they are delivering content to students. For instance, Legon and Garrett (2018) surveyed Chief Online Education Officers at various higher education institutions regarding the decision to either design their own online courses, purchase course materials from learning management software companies, or have their courses designed specifically for them by an outside contractor. They found most institutions built their own courses, which could have implications for course delivery, cost, and management (Butcher, Davies, & Highton, 2019).

ONLINE CLASSES IMPACT ON STUDENT ACCESSIBILITY

Accessibility issues in higher education include flexibility (Lee, 2017; Safford & Stinton, 2016), cost (Lee, 2017), geographical isolation (Lee, 2017; Ortagus, 2017), and disability (Coleman & Berge, 2018; Erickson & Larwin, 2016). One of the benefits of online courses is that they make higher education accessible to underserved groups (Lee, 2017). Fortunately, distance education serves individuals that would likely encounter challenges enrolling due to limited time, inability to relocate, family responsibilities, and other obstacles. Additionally, distance education offers opportunities to students who may have lacked access for financial or social reasons, including students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, women, and minority students (Lee, 2017).

Peslak, Kovalchick, Wang, and Kovacs (2018) conducted a study examining attitudes toward the delivery methods of a course at three separate universities focused on undergraduate and graduate students. They found that the students they surveyed preferred the F2F delivery overall, with younger students and males showing the strongest preference for F2F and mixed methods/hybrid courses. Older students and women showed a stronger preference for online courses. The preference appears to stem from perceived effectiveness of both fully online and hybrid courses (Peslak et al., 2018).

For working adults, program flexibility is attractive (Serdyukov, 2017). Most non-traditional students have to consider balancing work, family, and school. The convenience and flexibility of asynchronous online learning is an asset. (Lee, 2017; Ortagus, 2017; Safford & Stinton, 2016; Serdyukov, 2017). However, the idea that distance education only serves non-traditional students is outdated. Increasingly students with disabilities, high school students, and even on-campus students are taking advantage of new opportunities (Erickson & Larwin, 2016; Lee, 2017; Murphy & Stewart, 2017; Ortagus, 2016).

Considering the evolving online landscape, it is important to address how accessible online courses are for everyone. Comfort with technology, the perceived value and legitimacy of online courses, student motivation, perceived access to faculty, and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Rehabilitation Act Amendments (RAA) of 1998, section 508, are all vital to student success (Bookallil & Rolfe, 2016; Coleman & Berge, 2018; Erickson & Larwin, 2016; Lee, 2017; Ortagus, 2017; Safford & Stinton, 2016; Serdyukov, 2017).

Students with disabilities that take courses online may have additional challenges with some course materials. Instructors must be aware that students with physical impairments, visual impairments, auditory impairments, and cognitive impairments have unique needs (Coleman & Berge, 2018). Faculty member's course materials and delivery methods need to take these challenges into consideration when designing online courses (Coleman & Berge, 2018; Massengale & Vasquez, 2016).

It is important to recognize that complying with ADA does not mean there are no other online challenges. Access to an online course does not ensure student success. A study comparing distance education with F2F course outcomes at an Australian university determined that distance learning did not have a positive impact on student success and retention (Bookallil & Rolfe, 2016). The findings are not unusual. Other studies have associated online coursework with negative student outcomes and class withdrawal (Lee, 2017; Murphy & Stewart, 2017; Safford & Stinton, 2016; Shea & Bidjerano, 2014). This may occur because of limited technological experience, lack of motivation, limited engagement, or minimal support leading to frustration (Bookallil & Rolfe, 2016; Lee, 2017; Murphy & Stewart, 2017; Ortagus, 2017; Peslak et al., 2018; Safford & Stinton, 2016; Shea & Bidjerano, 2014).

As online opportunities continue to grow student outcomes may fluctuate. For this reason, it is important to evaluate program effectiveness. In addition, post-secondary institutions should ensure that groups from various backgrounds have an opportunity to develop 21st century workforce skills. Moreover, university leaders must work with employers, including school districts to ensure educators have access to quality online learning environments. This is particularly important considering the impact they have on student success in PreK-12 settings.

Method

This article utilizes extant literature (Research Questions #1 and #2) and autoethnography (Research Question #3) to deconstruct: 1) the challenges/advantages for school leaders enrolled/considering an online course 2) what steps school districts and post-secondary institutions should take to make sure online classes are accessible and 3) the experiences of a faculty member that developed an online class for school leaders. The following research questions guided this study.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

RQ1: What are the advantages and disadvantages of taking an online class for school leaders?

RQ2: Why are post-secondary institutions utilizing various modalities (e.g., F2F and fully online) to deliver content to students?

RQ3: How does one develop a graduate online class that meets the needs of current and aspiring school leaders?

AN EXAMINATION OF EXTANT LITERATURE

The research questions investigate the advantages and challenges school leaders could encounter with online classes; while considering why some post-secondary institutions are moving away from F2F to fully online and hybrid courses.

RQ1: WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES AND CHALLENGES OF TAKING AN ONLINE CLASS FOR SCHOOL LEADERS?

The growth of fully online, hybrid classes, and other platforms have a tremendous impact on higher education (Platt, Amber, & Yu, 2014). While some researchers suggested the changes have been detrimental to certain groups others asserted that it has created new opportunities (Cottom, 2017). Determining which practices supported the needs of students enrolled in online classes is critical. According to Ginder, Kelly-Reid, and Mann (2017) nationally over 20 million students are enrolled in distance education courses.

A study titled *Cutting the Distance in Distance Education: Perspectives on What Promotes Positive, Online Learning Experiences* investigated the experiences of undergraduate and graduate online students and instructors (Boling, Hough, Krinsky, Saleem, & Stevens, 2011). The students suggested that one of the challenges of taking an online class was a disconnect between students and teachers, and students and classmates. Closing the gap between student needs, rigor, and feeling connected is important. For instance, some students suggested online classes that created intellectually stimulating environments including discussion boards were more desirable. Several students saw the benefits of taking an online class. According to the researchers, “students indicated that they preferred an online program to a face-to-face program because of the flexibility and convenience it offered” (Boling et al., 2011, p. 121). The quote is noteworthy because aspiring or current school leaders have challenging schedules which could impede their ability to enroll in F2F classes.

There is another benefit for school leaders taking an online class that is rarely discussed. Some may be unprepared to align student outcomes with technology needs. Today using laptops, iPads, and other forms of technology in PreK-12 schools has become normalized (Maich & Hall, 2016). However, current or future school leaders may not have received appropriate training. Taking an online class may encourage them to consider school technology needs. A study (Schrum, Galizio, & Ledesma, 2011)

surveyed school administrators experiences with technology. When asked to outline their experiences with technology in their preparation programs the responses were revealing. The researchers stated, “a majority of school-based administrators as well as respondents in the district technology director role stated that they had no specific instructional technology course” (p. 248). The quote reflects the need to reexamine university school leader programs. The authors continued, “however, a small number of participants did report that technology was emphasized within their classes with regard to student assessment practices and data-driven decision making” (p. 248). Enrolling in an online class could push leaders to evaluate their training and seek additional support.

Considering millions of undergraduate and graduate students are enrolled in distance education classes, school districts have to ensure employees have access to leadership courses. It is important to remember that educators dedicate significant hours to tutor students, attend school related events, fundraise among other challenges (Rothman & Henderson, 2011). Thus, it is critical that school district leaders collaborate with post-secondary institutions that offer rigorous courses, quality instructors, and interactive online environments. Although some individuals will choose F2F classes; districts should not limit opportunities for those with busy schedules.

RQ2: WHY ARE POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS UTILIZING VARIOUS MODALITIES (E.G., FACE TO FACE AND FULLY ONLINE) TO DELIVER CONTENT TO STUDENTS?

Due to the growth of technology, the debate between fully online versus F2F classes has escalated (Paechter & Maier, 2010). The competition to recruit college students has long term implications considering higher education enrollment has flattened in several states (Long, 2014). Students have more options in comparison to previous years. Although private and public postsecondary institutions offer a variety of online options for profit colleges have gained traction among some adults (Gilpin, Saunders, & Stoddard, 2015). The increase in online enrollment has led researchers to determine which experiences students prefer.

Driscoll et al. (2012) conducted a study of students enrolled in a sociology class. The course included six sections offered during the fall, spring, and summer semesters. Students had the opportunity to take a F2F or online class. The author’s findings offer a glimpse into how certain college experiences may benefit one group more than another. According to Driscoll et al. (2011), “students in the F2F sections of the course generally had higher GPAs and were enrolled in more credit hours than students in the online sections” (p. 320). In contrast, “students in the online sections tended to be older, to have taken more online courses, and to work more hours during the week” (p. 320). The study highlighted the benefits online classes offer traditional and non-traditional students that have responsibilities outside of academia.

The findings also have implications for PreK-12 educators. Teachers have busy schedules and could benefit from taking online classes that offer more flexibility.

However, it is important to acknowledge that not all online experiences are similar. Because some for profit schools went bankrupt, federal and state regulators and researchers have scrutinized their outcomes including graduation rates and student debt (Cottom, 2017). Considering the criticism examining the experiences of students enrolled in online classes is vital.

Fetzner (2013) looked at community college students enrolled in an online class that either received an “F” or withdrew from the class. The study found that more than 40% of the students that were unsuccessful identified falling behind, personal problems, classwork, and family responsibilities as factors. While the experiences of students from two-year colleges compared to graduate students can differ, increasingly college students have to overcome internal and external challenges that impact outcomes (Walker, 2018b).

The benefit of offering online classes for postsecondary institutions are immense. It allows them to save space, resources, maximize student enrollment, and meet the needs of students with disabilities. Lei and Gupta (2010) asserted, “online courses may help disabled and geographically isolated students, as well as students with busy schedules obtain quality higher education” (p. 617). Online classes can help school leaders with busy schedules complete requirements in a timely manner. The authors continued “online instruction decreases overcrowded classrooms. Online courses allow institutions and faculty to offer more classes at peak demand times of the day and week, thus maximizing the scanty available resources by increasing flexibility in class scheduling” (p. 617). Universities can save money and attract a diverse group of students through online classes. As college costs for institutions and students continue to rise offering more courses that are convenient will be more appealing.

AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC APPROACH

Utilizing autoethnography contextualizes the experiences of individuals including creating vivid accounts (Creswell, 2013). Researchers including Goings (2015) and Walker (2019) suggested it allows the author to share accurate portrayals of interactions with various individuals, systems, and institutions. Ellis, Adams, and Bochner (2011) asserted “autoethnography is an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyze (graphy) personal experiences (auto) in order to understand cultural experiences” (p. 273). The first author decided to discuss his experiences designing an online class for school leaders to share the advantages and challenges that other faculty members may encounter.

Further, the article provides a template for post-secondary institutions preparing to train faculty members to create online content. In addition, there is a gap in the research that offers real world experiences from faculty preparing to teach school leaders. Sharing a personal account will also inform school districts considering offering online professional development and/or graduate courses for administrators, teachers, and other employees.

RESULTS

We reported the results of our inquiry for RQ3.

RQ3: HOW DOES ONE DEVELOP A GRADUATE ONLINE CLASS THAT MEETS THE NEEDS OF CURRENT AND ASPIRING SCHOOL LEADERS?

DATA COLLECTION

The autoethnographic data is a collection of the first author's experiences enrolled in a program developed by Comfort University (pseudonym) a large public college located in the southern United States. Overall the program prepares faculty members to create fully online or hybrid courses for undergraduate and graduate students. Faculty members are responsible for producing content through online and in person meetings. This includes several consultations with an instructional designer and completing various assignments including creating a syllabus, course objectives, quizzes, interactive activities, online group discussions, reviewing relevant articles among other responsibilities. The program is comprehensive and allows faculty members to provide feedback through surveys. Moreover, faculty members were responsible for completing weekly assignments that led to a culminating activity. The university financially compensated faculty selected to participate in the program.

Throughout the program the first author maintained a journal and collected email communications with university facilitators. Reviewing emails allowed the author to recall specific questions or concerns. Keeping a journal was important to reflect on his experiences during and after the course was completed. According to LeRoux (2017),

Self-reflection requires the capacity to exercise introspection and leads to inquiry into the human condition and human consciousness. This requires stepping back from an experience and considering how one thought or acted, but at the same time, immersing oneself in the event and reliving the experience in all its dimensions. (p. 197)

Researchers including Ardoin et al. (2014) used journaling as a tool to examine the lived experiences of participants. The first author decided to collect qualitative data because it would allow him to relay important details and reflect on a variety of thoughts. As Gouzouasis and Ryu (2015) noted, "authors of autoethnography demonstrate the various levels of opened, interpretive storytelling" (p. 402). The vignettes explore the first author's experiences enrolled in a university program designed to train faculty to develop a fully online or hybrid course. Lastly, the first author developed a class that was designed to be taught online.

DATA ANALYSIS

The first author analyzed and catalogued interactions with an instructional designer and university facilitator. Increasingly researchers with a focus on technology, accessibility, and integration are utilizing ethnography to describe the experiences of an individual or

groups (Hallett & Barber, 2014). The conversations were member checked for authenticity. Verisimilitude was important to ensure the author's lived experiences were accurate. According to Jacobson and Larsen (2014) "verisimilitude is the appearance of being true or real" (p. 185). Moreover, while the experiences outlined may be similar to other accounts they should not be generalized. Overall the vignettes represent the first author's experiences enrolled in a university program to develop an online class.

VIGNETTE 1: IDENTIFYING CONTENT FOR AN ONLINE CLASS FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

The department's decision to assign online classes during my first semester gave me the flexibility to commit to other projects including enrolling in Comfort University's Distance Education in Higher Education class (pseudonym). Teaching an online course was a new experience. Throughout my tenure at other institutions I always taught F2F classes. I enjoyed the new experience and believed it aided my understanding of the role accessibility plays in distance education. When I realized the department recommended me to take the Distance Education in Higher Education class I was intrigued. Several colleagues from other post-secondary institutions have taken similar classes. In fact, I was scheduled to take the course at my prior institution before deciding to accept a job offer from Comfort University.

Over a period of 10 weeks I engaged in F2F and online activities that strengthened my understanding of meeting student needs. This includes consultations with an instructional design expert who provided critical feedback and recommendations on course development. In addition, faculty members had to participate in group discussions with others enrolled in the class. The experience was enlightening and gave me a few ideas for the course I had to develop. However, one of the primary challenges was developing an online course for a class I had not previously taught. Fortunately, a colleague had developed a syllabus, PowerPoints, and other materials for the class.

After meeting with my colleague, I realized some changes would be necessary. This included altering some of the assignments and readings. After speaking with faculty members and conducting some research I made a few changes including adding a research paper as a requirement. Furthermore, I included some journal articles and a group discussion that would enhance student's online experience. Throughout my time enrolled in Distance Education in Higher Education I contemplated whether the materials for the class would inspire students to reflect on the importance of being a school leader. Increasingly educators are under immense pressure to reverse trends in underserved schools. While the class I developed is one piece of the puzzle; students that completed the course will have the skills to meet the needs of students, teachers, and the local community.

VIGNETTE 2: COLLABORATING WITH AN INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGNER

Throughout the course meeting with the instructional designer in person or communicating via email was informative. There were a variety of steps I had to take to

ensure the class design was aesthetically pleasing. Faculty were required to develop a course banner, syllabus, activities, videos and other components, which are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) among other state and federal laws. The designer had several years of experience and offered helpful feedback that led me to change some content and other class features.

Perhaps the biggest benefit of working with an instructional designer included talking with someone who had previously taught online classes and understood some of the pitfalls. Mr. Thompson (pseudonym) was knowledgeable and took time to answer questions. During a conversation he suggested, “make sure you are creating content that meets student’s needs” (H. Thompson, personal communication, September 20, 2019). Having access to a designer and program facilitators was helpful. I believe the support system provides a template for school districts or other post-secondary institutions offering/considering similar opportunities.

In addition, Mr. Thompson shared stories of successes and challenges he encountered while teaching online classes “I have taught classes where students really enjoyed the material” (personal communication, September 20, 2019). This proved to be useful when determining how my class would support students with various learning styles. Mr. Thompson stated the following a few weeks later, “make sure you offer students a variety of opportunities to understand the material” (personal communication, October 3, 2019). Furthermore, he worked with me to identify resources for school leaders and made recommendations that addressed specific challenges. According to Mr. Thompson “I think Comfort University may have some resources including videos that will help strengthen the course” (personal communication, October 3, 2019). Because of Mr. Thompson’s recommendation I was able to identify resources through the university which improved my class content.

Working with Mr. Thompson made me realize it is important to give faculty members the tools to teach online classes to school leaders. However, after conducting a comprehensive literature review it was apparent that this topic was not previously explored. For this reason, I believed it was critical to highlight my experiences developing a course. While Comfort University’s program was challenging it also did a great job providing faculty with several resources that made the design process enjoyable. Nevertheless, similar programs at other institutions may not be as comprehensive. Hopefully my experiences will give those faculty members a reliable option.

VIGNETTE 3: COMPLETING PROGRAM ACTIVITIES AND MEETING DEADLINES

Throughout the program faculty members were responsible for completing a variety of individual and group assignments. For example, you had to periodically upload content that was graded. Class activities could be accessed via a dashboard. More importantly, you received weekly emails to update your progress and remind you of assignment due dates. The F2F meetings included speakers and discussions aimed at developing a student-centered course.

Facilitators also checked in to see if you had any questions or concerns. After missing a session because of an illness, I received the following email from F. Sampson (pseudonym),

I hope you are feeling better today!

When you have moment, you may want to reach out to classmates Lisa, Mary, and Colleen (pseudonyms) - you are in a group discussion together that starts in week 2 (next Friday). You do have access to the discussion now. It is a group discussion and then one person from the group posts a final summary. You may also want to take a look at the PPT presentations that have been posted in the Week 1 module. Other than that, the most important thing is to meet with your instructional designer (which I know you are doing). If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to me or your ID. (personal communication, September 14, 2019)

The email reflected the programs faculty centered philosophy. However, the biggest challenge was completing assignments in a timely manner. Teaching classes, attending various meetings, and developing content can be challenging. All assignments including online group discussions had to be submitted by a specific date and time. Because of a busy schedule sometimes the required assignments due date seemed closer than anticipated. This was more a reflection of faculty commitments than the design of the class. However, I would recommend extending the class by a week or two to give faculty more time to focus on the requirements.

Overall the deadlines kept me on task. For example, it was helpful when the class facilitators sent out emails to remind faculty to complete requirements by a specific date. For me, the deadlines were also a reminder of the challenges graduate students encounter. This includes balancing various aspects of their personal life while enrolled in a class.

Discussion

The growth of online classes presents current and future school leaders from a variety of backgrounds with the opportunity to pursue a graduate degree. Unfortunately, there is a gap in the research which investigates the challenges/opportunities they may encounter and what steps postsecondary institutions are taking to make classes more accessible. Moreover, researchers have failed to consider the experiences of faculty members. Deconstructing each issue was important for several reasons including 1) increasingly college students are enrolling in hybrid or fully online classes; 2) educators have job commitments that may limit opportunities to take F2F classes and 3) there is scant research that considers the benefits and problems faculty members developing online classes for school leaders could encounter. The extant literature suggests that postsecondary institutions are offering more classes because it is cost effective, recognize the importance of meeting the needs of diverse groups, and understand shifts in market demand.

The results from the first author's experiences suggest that university programs that are supportive, data driven, encourage feedback, offer a combination of online and F2F sessions can succeed. However, the findings also highlighted how faculty members can struggle to balance requirements for university sponsored programs while meeting other obligations. The findings also illuminated the important role of instructional designers (ID). For example, the first author shared autoethnographic vignettes which described how feedback from the ID informed class design and content. Furthermore, the first author determined that working with an ID with a background teaching an online class was helpful. Overall the findings can help post-secondary institutions design faculty centered programs while considering whether school leaders have access to an array of online classes.

Limitations

Increasingly post-secondary institutions are training faculty to develop new content and online classes. The training varies based on institution type and size. The data for this study was collected at a large public institution in the southern United States. As a result, the information cannot be generalized to other colleges and universities. Factors that may have impacted the findings could include faculty composition, department and university culture, and funding. Further research should include a quantitative study that surveys the experiences of educational (or school) leadership faculty members that developed an online class. In addition, we recommend surveying faculty from different parts of the country. Lastly, collecting student data may help researchers understand the relationship between course development and student satisfaction.

Implications

This article represents a snapshot of one faculty members experiences enrolled in an online development class. However, the study could have an impact on decisions by school districts and post-secondary institutions which include:

1. School districts collaborating with colleges to develop graduate online courses that are convenient and accessible to current and prospective school leaders.
2. Post-secondary institutions examining how much time is realistic for faculty members to dedicate to online course development.
3. Ensuring faculty members are receiving enough initial and follow up support.
4. Determining if online courses are meeting state and federal guidelines to support the needs of educators with varying disabilities.
5. Investigating whether educators benefit from F2F classes in comparison to hybrid and fully online classes.

6. Examining if the cost (F2F vs. online) is prohibitive for current or aspiring school leaders.

Conclusion

Post-secondary institutions are at a crossroads. The advent of distance education has created more opportunities for students, but advocates and policymakers have scrutinized school costs, student accessibility, and debt. Fortunately, more than ever graduate students have a multitude of options. Having more options is important for PreK-12 educators that are seeking to advance their careers. For this reason, ensuring they can meet district and state licensure requirements is critical. Access to online classes for current for future school leaders gives them the opportunity to succeed. Furthermore, it is important that post-secondary institutions and school districts collaborate to ensure they offer a variety of choices including synchronous and asynchronous online classes. Developing online classes is important. Thus, training faculty members to create content that is student centered would prepare educators to lead schools and district offices. Considering the popularity of online learning postsecondary institutions can diversify course offerings for school leaders. However, it is incumbent on stakeholders to ensure students have courses and quality content which align with district and state requirements.

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