

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

News Release

Texas Advances Online Professional Faculty Development

Open-source TXprofdev.org available to any faculty member free of charge

AUSTIN, Texas (Sept. 15, 2010) -- Full-time and adjunct faculty members now have access on demand at no charge to online professional development modules in the areas of critical thinking, foreign language teaching methods and reading comprehension with the launch of TXprofdev.org. A fourth area focusing on faculty development for online teaching will be fully available in early 2011.

“We believe TXprofdev.org offers faculty of all experience levels a fresh approach to professional development to enhance the college student experience,” said Dr. MacGregor Stephenson, assistant commissioner for the Academic Affairs and Research Division at the Coordinating Board, who had oversight for the project.

“Faculty members can take advantage of these new tools, which provide models for highly effective teaching and evaluation, and can lead to enhanced outcomes for students.”

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board funded the TXprofdev.org project through the Coordinating Board’s P-16 Division, which provides support for forward-thinking and innovative performance programs for college students and faculty innovation. The grant for development began in February 2008 and will conclude in February 2011.

Three Texas institutions contributed to the development of the modules:

- Lone Star College, online learning
- The University of Texas at Austin, foreign language teaching methods
- The University of Texas at Austin, critical thinking
- The University of Texas at El Paso, reading comprehension

The modules consist of instruction examples, teaching tips, recommended readings, current pedagogical scholarship, active learning teaching strategies, and classroom

activities. They are designed to improve higher education instruction, particularly for new faculty, faculty teaching introductory level courses or faculty teaching online courses.

“TXprofdev.org offers any faculty member interested in improving his or her teaching effectiveness online tools that are available as needed,” Stephenson said. “This is a winning combination for the college faculty and students.”

To schedule an interview with Dr. MacGregor Stephenson about TXprofdev.org, contact Andy Kesling in External Relations, (512) 427-6119, andy.kesling@theeb.state.tx.us.

Related Web Links:

- TXprofdev.org, www.TXprofdev.org
- Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, www.theeb.state.tx.us

Related Information:

Critical Thinking

Students in all classes at all levels can benefit from improved critical thinking. Teachers prepared with tested pedagogical techniques based upon the latest research will be able to help students learn how to think critically, identify skills and problem areas, transfer skills across contexts, and reflect upon their thinking habits. This set of modules was created by The University of Texas at Austin.

Foreign Language Teaching Methods

Foreign Language Teaching Methods focuses on 12 different aspects of language teaching, each taught by a different expert instructor. The site contains video footage from an actual methods course held in Spring, 2009 at The University of Texas at Austin. This flexible resource could be used by foreign language teachers including English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) as a component of a classroom methods course, a stand-alone course for independent learners, or as a means of obtaining professional development credits. This set of modules was created by The University of Texas at Austin.

Reading Comprehension

Students often need guidance to improve their reading comprehension, but many faculty have not had specific training in how to help students become more effective

readers. These modules provide insights into reading difficulties and effective strategies to improve reading comprehension skills in college courses across the disciplines. This set of modules was created by The University of Texas at El Paso.

Faculty Development Modules for Online Teaching

This set of modules will assist in preparing faculty to teach online and hybrid/blended courses. They include information on key issues in online education such as accessibility, creating an inviting online classroom, facilitating participation in an online environment, and various legal issues that pertain to online and hybrid education. This set of modules was created by Lone Star College.

About the Coordinating Board

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board works with the Legislature, Governor, governing boards, higher education institutions and other entities to help Texas meet the goals of the state's higher education plan, *Closing the Gaps by 2015*. The Coordinating Board providing Texans with broad access to higher education of the highest quality in the most efficient manner.