Visions of the Future: An Interview with Dr. Karen Miner-Romanoff
By Carolyn LeVally

Dr. Karen Miner-Romanoff is the recently named Associate Provost for Academic Quality & the Executive Director of the International Institute for Innovative Instruction (also known as the Institute). We asked this driven, enthusiastic leader for the inside scoop on her thoughts on and plans for the Institute over the coming months.

Q: The Institute’s vision states that we strive to be a global thought-leader; what does that look like to you?
KMR: Informing higher education with innovative design, teaching methods, and advanced assessment. Becoming an Institution that sets the bar for curriculum design and learning experiences and illustrates, through rigorous research, the validity of our practices. Educational design research is very challenging; we have done it and will continue to do it on a more systemic basis. Our goal is to provide resources for others to integrate into their programs and agencies for great student and individual success.

Q: What changes are you expecting or hoping to see?
KMR: I think we have already made significant moves toward systemic excellence in several areas by standing on the shoulders of our founders, Drs. Fennema and Manning, and by illustrating fidelity to our visionary, Dr. Washington. We are developing meaningful relationships on a university-wide level with faculty and staff for more engaged processes and making and continuous evolution is our mantra. We will also develop protocols to measure the impacts of all major redesigns in a manner that others can emulate.

Q: How is the Institute planning to expand its services and increase its public visibility over the next year?
KMR: We are going to work closely with our marketing team to reach externally. However, it is our responsibility as well to be ambassadors for our professions and efforts. We have many exciting initiatives and processes that build our reputation as experts and that can and should be exported to partners. Our mission is to expand the most successful learning and teaching models to the widest audience.

Q: What types of partnerships are we planning to engage in to promote our practices?
KMR: We continuously expose partners to our work at the Institute … we get a great deal of positive responses! We hope to develop deliverables that potential partners can take with them as they contemplate their learning and teaching needs. We are building even more advanced teaching development courses so that we will move from novice to experts in teaching and are currently running our first post-doctoral seminar in doctoral pedagogy, for instance.

Q: Will the Institute become more involved in international learning? If so, what role do you see the Institute playing in international education?
KMR: Learning is learning and education is education. The world is our canvas and we are currently moving into Western Africa for the first time with LAWEH University in Ghana, as an example. We send teachers to teach others in higher education about our models, have successful programs in Korea, Oman, and Poland and hope to continue to thoughtfully expand to new regions. We cannot overstate the economic and social impacts that education has in these countries.
Institute Staff at Community Care Day
By Kayleigh Hughes

As part of Community Care Day, members of the Institute teamed up with other Franklin University employees to do volunteer work for My Very Own Blanket, a nonprofit that gives blankets to children in foster care with the goal of helping those children feel valued and comforted.

Kayleigh Hughes, Liz McClurg, and Erin Wehmeyer journeyed to My Very Own Blanket’s headquarters in Westerville, Ohio, to paint a mural, weed their gardens, and plant new flowers. It was a sweltering day, with temperature in the mid-nineties, but the team was stocked with water and everyone at My Very Own Blanket was kind and encouraging.

Founder and CEO of the organization, Jessica Hollins, was on site all day and started the event off with an impassioned account of what inspired her to start the organization. She recounted how her love of sewing eventually led to an excess of blankets for her own children, at which point she realized that other children would love and appreciate a blanket of their own as well. Since My Very Own Blanket started over sixteen years ago, the group has donated more than 65,000 blankets to children in foster care.

While working with the organization, Institute members were also able to learn about another great aspect of My Very Own Blanket: their commitment to creating a community of volunteers who contribute to the success of the organization. My Very Own Blanket has a dedicated group of volunteers that includes seniors, students, young adults with disabilities, and incarcerated men and women. They also host team-building events for other organizations, such as Girl Scout troops and companies, to contribute to the cause.

In between painting a colorful mural, Franklin Team members had the opportunity to chat with volunteers and take a tour of the organization.

As the Franklin team toured the bright, fabric-laden facility, Wehmeyer commented, “I’ve found my mom’s new volunteer opportunity!”

Indeed, the friendly faces and warm success stories were big signs of an organization that anyone with a desire to lend a helping hand would feel proud to contribute to.

“I feel good about helping an organization that impacts the lives of so many children in the foster care system,” said McClurg of the experience. “The work My Very Own Blanket does is staggering.”

For more details about My Very Own Blanket or to volunteer, please visit http://www.mvob.org/
Putting Educational Data to Work
By Erin Wehmeyer

Like many higher education institutions, Franklin University has access to a lot of statistics and figures through our Learning Management System (LMS). Those statistics reveal all kinds of details. We have stats on student grades, course completion numbers, and schedule changes. We know when, where, and for how long a student opens an assignment or tutorial in a class. We know how many times a learning unit was opened and whether or not it was marked as complete. We know if a student attempted to submit something and then deleted it. We have end-of-course survey responses, grades, drop rates, etc. If it happens within our LMS, we have data about it.

How to Use Data Effectively

Clearly, our LMS contains a wealth of information. But how can our faculty and staff use that data to improve courses? The first step is to dig in and take a look at how the data relates to student success.

When we first began analyzing LMS data, we discovered that about 70% of students were only accessing learning information (or “learning objects”) that had due dates, specifically those items that were displayed on the “calendar view” for a course. So, anything that did not have a due date, such as weekly preparation details, lecture notes, multimedia, online class meetings, and class announcements, was not displayed. The unintended consequences of not having due dates for learning-related content on the course calendar meant that students were left to “discover” that content rather than have direct access to it.

Once the design team analyzed students’ course content access patterns, they changed the course design by adding due dates to most learning objects and including more internal links between objects in a course. In addition, the design team shared its findings with the LMS team, who also made changes to how courses are displayed on the home page. Now, what was previously “invisible” to students is easier to see and easier to access.

Retreat Helps Institute Plan Continual Improvements
By Barbara Carder, M.S.

On August 27th, Institute faculty and staff participated in a daylong retreat at Apple Valley Lake. Hosted by Executive Director Dr. Karen Miner-Romanoff, the team took advantage of the beautiful, creativity-inspiring setting to discuss and plan Franklin University’s course design schedules for the fall trimester and beyond.

“We have to plan how we can collaboratively combine our experience and expertise,” said Dr. Miner-Romanoff. “We are data driven, but our collective passions will move us toward data excellence. And, our excellence of design and assessment will become more obvious as we move forward.”

For example, with input from faculty and other stakeholders, the Institute is updating our design processes. An eye towards continual improvement provides a solid foundation for our partners in design, assessment, and teaching effectiveness.

Dr. Miner-Romanoff refers to the philosophy of continual improvement as a lesson to learn and live by. She has this written on her wall: “How are we doing? How do we do it better than yesterday?” (See box on p. 4 for more information.)

The Institute is experiencing an energized and productive fall trimester and is looking forward to working with our partners on the continual improvement of our processes.

Lessons Learned

So, what lessons have we learned from our foray into data analysis? We have decided to use even more data! We added a consultation phase to our design process so that our design faculty and content faculty can collaborate more effectively. Design teams now have access to more student survey data, program assessment reports, library usage reports, Student Learning Center (SLC) data, and other resources in order to make more informed design decisions.
Institute Inaugurates Franklin Faculty Forum
By Amy Vinchesi

On September 25, 2015, the Institute convened the first Franklin Faculty Forum in Philips Hall in what will become a series of such gatherings, with the goal of fostering effective, reciprocal alliances between the Institute and faculty.

The forum was the ideal setting in which to share the Institute’s updated mission and vision statements, and to share in more detail the many improvements and innovations currently underway in the areas of Educational Effectiveness and Quality, Teaching Excellence, and Assessment Measures.

Presentations were given by Dr. Karen Miner-Romanoff, Associate Provost and Executive Director of the Institute; Dr. Joel Gardner, Department Chair, Instructional Designers; Dr. Yi Yang, Department Chair for Innovative Instruction; Dr. Fawn Winterwood, Director of Teaching Excellence; and Dr. Yeu-rong Sweetland, Director of Assessment.

Drs. Yang and Gardner took this opportunity to reintroduce faculty to what it is instructional designers actually do—namely, they’re information architects, designing and building courses and learning experiences in much the same way an architect designs and builds a house: block by block, using best practices and pedagogies and balanced assessments to create an effective, synergistic course structure. They also formally introduced the many improvements to the Institute’s design processes, in which new, major, and minor course design work will be achieved more efficiently and collaboratively going forward.

Dr. Winterwood discussed her ongoing efforts to expand the University’s opportunities for faculty development through a series of new faculty development courses. From INST 501: Introduction to Teaching in Higher Education to INST 802: Executive Leadership in Higher Education, and including the Rethinking Doctoral Education Seminar Series, these development opportunities promise to promote continuous professional improvement for Franklin faculty. Dr. Sweetland then updated faculty on her continuing research into direct and indirect assessment measures, including the new embedded rubric tool now available in BlueQuill, and procedures for research review by the Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Overall, the forum was a great success, and future forums promise to build in more time for follow-up discussion. As Dr. Miner-Romanoff summed up: “We believe it is paramount that we collectively work to develop, teach, and assess the research-driven learning experiences for our students. We were very excited to gather together with faculty and university stakeholders and look forward to more Forums with more discussion and innovative, synergistic opportunities.”

How Do We Do Better Than Yesterday?

Staff and faculty at the Institute have found inspiration from Amy Rees Anderson’s article, “The Ultimate Goal Is To Be Better Today Than Yesterday, With A Plan To Become Even Better Tomorrow.” Anderson, an entrepreneur and angel investor, encourages us to continually ask ourselves how we are doing and how we can improve:

Recognize that every day we are the result of every past decision we have made up to that point. And tomorrow we are going to be the direct result of the decisions we are making today. So if we are doing things today that will make us better tomorrow, and we continue that pattern day after day, we are always going to be in the process of becoming our best. One way to do this is to ask yourself, “Where are the decisions I am making today going to lead me?” and, “Am I better today than I was yesterday?”

You can read the rest of this thought-provoking article online at Forbes: http://onforb.es/1MsNu4q
Task-Centered Course & Multimedia Design  
By Carolyn LeVally

The Institute is always searching for new, engaging ways to help students learn. One way is to make sure a course achieves its outcomes. Another is by creating purposeful, interactive multimedia. In our recent redesign of Instructional Design & Performance Technology (IDPT) 650, we did both.

In this graduate IDPT course, students learn how to evaluate the effectiveness of instructional materials. Students have consistently struggled in this course. In order to help alleviate some of the difficulties of the course, Dr. Joel Gardner dove into the course redesign using a task-centered approach based on the First Principles of Instruction (Merill, 2002):

1. Task-centered  
2. Activation  
3. Demonstration  
4. Application  
5. Integration  

All five of these principles were applied in the redesign of IDPT 650 in order to create a better learning experience for our graduate students. Let's look briefly at how each of these principles are incorporated in the redesign.

Task-Centered

Learning is task-centered when it occurs within the context of a real-world task.

In order to make the course task-centered, students are required to respond to four real-world case studies with increasing complexity.

Activation

Activating learning occurs in several ways, one of which being when the learners are provided with an organizing structure for their learning.

We provided students with a graphic organizer that summarized each of the phases of the Evaluation Process in an interesting, visual manner, as seen below:

![IDPT 650 Evaluation Process](Image)

Demonstration

Real-world demonstrations of new knowledge and skills helps increase learning.

As the course design emerged, we realized the need to increase the demonstration of real-world scenarios for students to apply. To meet this need, we created a series of seven multimedia pieces. The first piece of e-learning is an overview of the entire evaluation process, while the subsequent six pieces of media each focus on one phase of the process. In order to demonstrate each phase of evaluation, we created a scenario which follows a fictional instructional designer named Sally through her journey using each phase of the Evaluation Process at a company.

To demonstrate each phase of the Evaluation Process, we provided the general definition and description of the phase, followed immediately by a description of how Sally accomplished that phase. We also included sample documents that Sally created in her scenario that students can reference and learn from. The media was created using Articulate Storyline, and was designed to follow the graphic organizer created for the activation principle.

Application

Learning increases when learners apply their new knowledge and skills in a real-world context.

To help students apply what they learned from the course and the e-learning multimedia pieces, we provided two types of application opportunities.

The first opportunity occurs within the multimedia. Learners have the opportunity to check their understanding of the material they just learned by answering interactive questions at the end of each phase of the Evaluation Process. These questions include detailed feedback for the learner's growth.
**Task-Centered Course & Multimedia Design (Continued from p. 5)**

These questions provide application for the students at a purely informational level.

The second opportunity occurs within the course as student assignments. Students would respond to case studies which included activities such as planning a design process, developing evaluation instructions, analyzing data, and creating evaluation reports.

**Integration**

Integration occurs when learners discuss, reflect on, debate, or plan to use their new knowledge. To encourage students to integrate their new knowledge into their work, we also included a reflection assignment at the end of the course.

Each of these First Principles of Instruction were crucial in both the course and multimedia design. After one run of the course, we’ve received extremely positive feedback. Students find the multimedia quite helpful, and the course less confusing and more exciting.

We’re going to gather more feedback in the future, but for now, this course is pushing the boundaries of task-centered design and multimedia.

**Institute Faculty Win 2015 AECT Division of Distance Learning Crystal Award**

Dr. Lewis Chongwony, design faculty member, and Dr. Karen Miner-Romanoff, Associate Provost of the International Institute for Innovative Instruction, were recently awarded a 2015 AECT Division of Distance Learning (DDL) Crystal Award.

They received this honor for their work on Franklin University’s CJAD 710, the Criminal Justice Administration Adult and Juvenile Systems of Justice course, which is offered within Franklin’s Criminal Justice Leadership graduate certificate program.

The DDL Crystal Award is an opportunity for The Association for Education Communications and Technology (AECT) to recognize innovative, outstanding multimedia-based distance learning courses and projects. The awards are intended to promote high-quality, professional educational products and distance learning activities.

Dr. Chongwony said, “The award is a validation of the quality work we do at our great university to enhance student learning experience and success. More specifically, it is a testament of how we deploy best design practices to deliver solid interactive and engaging learning experiences supported by our collaborative course design approach.”


The AECT-DDL awards will be officially awarded during the DDL Governance Member Meeting at the 2015 AECT Convention in Indianapolis on November 6, 2015.

The Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT) is a professional association of thousands of educators and others interested in improving instruction through technology. It provides an international forum for the exchange and dissemination of relevant ideas.

**Get More From the Institute**

Become an Institute member and get access to many great benefits and opportunities, including Mini-MOOCs, discounts on badges, monthly presentations and workshops, 50% discount to the 2016 Teaching & Learning Conference, and more! For more information on becoming a member, email us at i4@franklin.edu.