

e-Learning Preparedness Initiative across the College (EPIC) (Wake Technical Community College, NC)

Online students are now a significant portion of Wake Tech's student population, and Wake Tech offers more online classes than any other community college in North Carolina. Student performance in those classes, however, lags behind that in traditional classes by about 5% on average. The disparity is particularly evident in high-demand, "gateway" courses, and student survey responses confirm that many lack the skills they need to do well in an online environment. Wake Tech has aggressively pursued distance education in keeping with its open-door policy and commitment to accessibility. Now, the college must give greater focus to the **quality** of student learning in the online environment – and **EPIC is that focus. Through** strategies aimed at developing online learning skills and supporting e-learning success, EPIC seeks to reduce online learning barriers and support student learning, persistence and success in online courses.

EPIC's Two-Pronged Approach

1. Students

Students will be given the skills, tools, and awareness they need to be successful in an online course through an interactive e-Learning Intro Student Orientation Module. The e-Learning Intro focuses on the three skills necessary for a successful online student: Basic Computer Literacy, Expectation Management, and Blackboard Boot Camp. Students will have the opportunity to self-assess and remediate within the e-Learning Intro.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Students will be able to **identify** online learning barriers and strategies to overcome them
2. Students will demonstrate online learning skills and use them in online courses
3. Students will be able to **navigate** online courses to complete tasks;
4. Students will be able to **communicate** with online instructors;
5. Students will be able to **collaborate** with peers in online courses

2. Faculty

Faculty will develop the skills they need through a two-year Online Instructor Certification Program, which provides instruction in pedagogy, instructional design, accessibility, and advanced training for teaching online. The program also offers a mentorship in which seasoned online faculty can lead the way for newcomers.

After completing the program, faculty will design online courses based on national standards of best practices and research of instructional design techniques. Courses will be designed to promote student learning to achieve identified outcomes.

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