HLC Accreditation Evidence

- NISOD "Innovation Abstracts" Publications Stephanie Schottel

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Barton instructor published in national periodical

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Story by Joe Vinduska
Courtesy photo submitted

Barton German Instructor Stephanie Schottel's article "Five Ways to Make Your Online Foreign Language Content More Brain-Friendly" was recently published in "Innovation Abstracts" magazine by the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD). NISOD is a membership organization committed to promoting and celebrating excellence in teaching, learning, and leadership at community and technical colleges.

Schottel's article is about breaking down barriers to student success from a cerebral standpoint.

"I am very interested in asynchronous online foreign language education and am even working on the topic for my doctorate," she said. "As I mentioned in the article, as course designers we have access to so many course integrations, apps, and cool websites we can link to, but what is truly effective when it comes to student experience and student performance? That is the question that I hope to find answers to, and I think the answers lie in the field of neuroscience and in research that we can conduct in online language classrooms. The goal, in my mind, is to provide a user experience that leads to true language acquisition."

Schottel aimed to help other educators to always innovate, but not at the cost of overwhelming students or creating too much additional noise that can distract the students from the core elements being taught.

"My goal was to show that we can make small changes to our online courses that can have a positive impact on the student," she said. "We sometimes think we need to overhaul our entire course, but we are all so busy. What if we chose one or two things that we could change on an online course page or assignment and see how the students respond? Instead of feeling like we need to learn a whole new integration or app, what if we kept things simple and highly relevant? I'm not saying that there isn't a place for the fun bells and whistles, but we should always keep in mind the effect on the student. Are we adding a component because it's new and shiny or because it will serve the student well?"

Director of Online and Learning Management System Management Erin Eggers said Schottel's work helps create a running dialogue amongst educators in a never-ending quest to find the best ways to educate students across the world.

"It's an incredible accomplishment," she said. "We are very proud of Stephanie for all her hard work."

Schottel said being included in this dialogue is vital to all educators.

"It feels particularly rewarding because I see such value in NISOD's mission with its emphasis on teaching excellence at the community college level," she said. "The fact that I contributed to the discussion around what works in online foreign language at the community college level feels empowering. One teacher from a school in Canada reached out to me in response to the article, and I think that was the most rewarding part of all: that a teacher read the article and was considering updates to her online class."

The article can be found here: Five Ways to Make Your Online Foreign Language Content More Brain-Friendly.

For more information, contact Schottel at schottels@bartonccc.edu or (713) 444-5936.

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