

## Supporting Diffusion: Engaging the Innovation-Decision Process for Sychromodal Class Sessions

### Abstract

This best practices paper describes activities and initiatives that engage the innovation-decision process associated with a teaching and technology innovation (known as *sychromodal class sessions*) at the College of Education at a large Mid-western university in the United States. In particular, this paper will discuss how certain activities engaged faculty members at the knowledge, persuasion, and implementation stages of the innovation-decision process, as well as how they have contributed to the continued diffusion of this innovation by faculty members within the College of Education.

### Background

Everett Rogers offered the following description of an innovation: “An innovation is an idea, practice, or project that is perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption” (Rogers, 2003, Kindle locations 520-521). For many teachers the idea of holding a class session composed of both face-to-face and online students is still quite new. Yet this model of instruction, referred to as a *sychromodal class session*, has been developed and implemented for a variety of courses in a number of masters and doctoral programs within the College of Education at a large Mid-western university. A sychromodal class session is one in which face-to-face and online students meet simultaneously with instructors for a single, shared learning experience (Cain, Sawaya, & Bell, 2013). We believe that the successful diffusion of this particular teaching innovation has been due to efforts at supporting faculty at critical points in the innovation-decision process as described by Rogers and other diffusion of innovation researchers.

The CEPSE/COE Design Studio (the Design Studio), an in-house technology and design resource for faculty in the College of Education, has played an important role in developing and refining course designs that feature sychromodal class sessions. The Design Studio has also played a role in providing information and training to faculty who wish to try sychromodal class sessions as a primary feature of their own course designs. This paper will describe certain Design Studio activities in detail and how, by chance or by design, they correspond to stages in the innovation-decision process.