How can I break into the online teaching arena?

Posted by Frances77 - 2012/06/27 12:11

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I'm very frustrated and stuck and would appreciate some advice and feedback. I graduated with my Ph.D. in general psychology from Walden University recently and have applied to numerous online schools for all positions I meet the qualifications for and haven't gotten so much as a nibble. This goes for the brick and morter university face to face jobs as well. I know the job market is highly competitive and that it takes time to find a job. I have been teaching at a community college in my town for the past 4 years and have some really good experience doing forensic work as well. However, I do not have any publications and I am wondering if this is holding me back. I have tried contacting heads of the departments directly to send them my vita, letter of interest, and letter of recommendation from the Chair of the department where I teach and of course also apply to the job postings. And nothing.... What am I doing wrong or how can I improve? I am working on publishing but it will take some time. I am also worried that the brick and morter schools won't want to hire me becuase my degree was earned online. However, my undergraduate and master's were earned in the traditional classroom setting.

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Re:How can I break into the online teaching arena?

Posted by VickyPhillips - 2012/06/28 14:56

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Hi Frances77,

Thanks for the posting. I hope others from Walden and/or who teach psychology online will chime in with their advice. Based on my experience, psychology is commonly taught online -- it's the most popular online social science major -- so there is demand; however there is also no shortage of qualified psych grads out there who apply to teach online. I wonder if your biggest obstacle isn't going to be your topic area -- psychology.

I myself majored in psychology with a masters and taught this field online (with a certificate in teaching online earned from Walden) and what I found is that there are a lot of masters level or higher talent aggressively competing for positions in online teaching in the social sciences.

You are smart to look for ways to "differentiate" yourself. I'd say having publications can't hurt and that your real world experience in forensics psychology may also be a good card to play in promoting yourself. Have you thought of authoring courses as well as teaching them? In some places there is more demand for course authors and developers than teachers. Just a thought.

Vicky

Frances77 wrote:
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Re:How can I break into the online teaching arena?

Posted by #1MSPM - 2012/07/03 15:13

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Hi: As someone who is charged with hiring instructors for an online graduate program at a public university, I can tell you that our search and screen committees receive many dozens of responses to each posting for even part-time adjunct positions. Vicky is right: especially in the social sciences, the market is flooded with talent at both the master's and doctoral level. One of the ways our committees often screen is by looking first at applicants with degrees from public universities and private not-for-profit schools. Applicants who studied at the for-profit and online-only institutions are shuffled to the bottom of the pile, unless such an applicant has a stellar record of peer-reviewed publications and/or teaching or professional experience that is particularly attractive. The issue is not with online delivery, which has ample research to support its effectiveness, but rather with the nature of for-profit schools, many of which have a checkered history relative to graduation rates and abuse of the federal financial aid system. Many academics, rightly or wrongly, maintain that education cannot coexist with a mission of profit-making for shareholders. The academy is a big ship, and it will take a long time to alter the course of that point of view.

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