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CNCC's Faculty Distance Learning News

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What is Distance Learning/Education??

Welcome! I thought this might be an easier format to communicate happenings in this area. Please let me know what you think...

Distance learning (DL), distance education (DE), Distributed Learning, and e-learning may have many definitions based on the institution or company. I like the definition from the Instruction Telecommunications Council-Distance Education (ITC): "the process of extending learning, or delivering instructional resource-sharing opportunities, to locations away from a classroom, building or site, to another classroom, building or site by using video, audio, computer, multimedia communications, or some combination of these with other traditional delivery methods" (2006).

An article entitled, *Thirty-two Trends Affecting Distance Education: An Informed Foundation for Strategic Planning* details trends and issues in distance education. I had the opportunity to hear one of the authors, Dr. Scott Howell speak at the Wyoming Distance Education Conference in May this year. He said this article is still relevant and applicable today.

My view is that CNCC is entering an exciting time in distance learning with a vast potential to establish our own niche with our programs and courses.

Video Conferencing News

Dorothy Brown and I both attended a Polycom Technical Overview meeting last week in Denver. The gist of it was that 'hopefully' we will have the new upgraded systems in place by mid-August and the systems have some great capabilities.

The Instructional Technology Science and Mathematics Education (ITSME) website states about video conferencing: "This rich communications technology offers new possibilities for schools, colleges, and libraries, who are now using videoconferencing systems for a variety of purposes, including formal instruction (courses, lessons, and tutoring), connection with guest speakers and experts, multi-school project collaboration, professional activities, and community events" (1999, July 14).

Using the video conferencing rooms will be relatively simple thanks to IT (Robert Lackey and Dorothy Brown) and time slots are available. Please call me to schedule.

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"Video conferencing facilitates learning by allowing remote or distant learners to meet regardless of their location...the possibilities (of video conferencing technology) are virtually limitless" Frank Owen

WebCT Vista Update & Adding Technology to Your Courses

In a nutshell, we can continue to use the previous courses on Campus Edition and/or we can try to roll them over to Vista for either Fall or Spring semesters. We have until June 30, 2007 to use Campus Edition.

Some courses that use e-packs may need to be upgraded to Vista e-packs, but we will know in a short time what will work, if you would like to upgrade. Vista is intertwined with Banner which will have a lot of advantages.

Most of the discussions revolve around using WebCT as a fully online course, meaning that the student and instructor do not meet face-to-face (f2f) for class instruction. However, there are other ways to incorporate technology into your courses using WebCT.

One way and this is actually my favorite is to teach a course as a hybrid. Definitions vary, but for our purposes, a hybrid course is one that the students and instructor meet f2f 51% of the time and have structured online assignments the other 49% of the time.

In other words, instead of MW, for instance, the class meets only one of those days or if the class is a once a week class, then class meets half of the allotted time. If class is 7-10 pm, a hybrid would meet 7-8:30 pm. I like to post assignments and discussion board questions on WebCT with specific weekly due dates. For the actual class time, I review material and facilitate group activities pertaining to material. Students seem to really like this format.

There are courses where all f2f time allotted is needed. Incorporating technology into a course as a component of the course defines it as a 'Blended' course. This is a great way to utilize class time effectively w/o taking up a large portion of f2f time on information that the student can obtain on their own. The WebCT component could cover material not covered in class, additional material, quizzes, and/or assignments to be completed. (I find posting all assignments due and information pertaining to them a great way to save on white copies and alleviates the "I didn't get one" scenario.

Another way to incorporate technology and add material to any of your courses is to take advantage of the textbook's companion website. There is usually a vast amount of material available and they are normally free. I provide the link via WebCT for my courses, so that students just need to 'click' on the link rather than type in the address.

I will be happy to help on any format or platform you decide. In May 2006, I presented a session entitled, "Teaching the HBO's (Hybrid, Blended, and Online courses) at the Wyoming Distance Education Conference in Rock Springs. The distance ed link/page will be revamped (thanks, Derek!) soon and the presentation will be posted there under Resources. I could also present it to a group if there is a desire to do so.

Just a note--online, video conferencing (PicTel), and hybrid courses are differentiated by section numbers in addition to the differentiation by geographic location. Blended courses are listed the same as traditional f2f courses as f2f time is not reduced. Also, fully online courses are charged the same tuition as CCCOnline courses; all other courses are charged CNCC's tuition.

"Properly designed hybrid courses are a wonderful way to get students to spend more time-on-task and therefore hopefully develop a better mastery of the material"
David G. Brown

References

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ITC <http://144.162.197.250/definition.htm>

Howell et al 19 pages

<http://www.westga.edu/~distance/ojdl/fall63/howell63.html>

or shortened to 3 pages

<http://www.spcollege.edu/eagle/research/perc/perc13.htm>

Owen

<http://www.templateready.com/Powerpoint/articles/videoconferencing.html>

ITSME

<http://www.cmsdnet.net/ITO/videoconferencing/whatisvideoconferencing.htm>

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Brown

<http://www.wfu.edu/~brown/Syllabus%20Articles/SyllHybrid%20Courses.htm>

Vista Homepage

http://www.webct.com/software/viewpage?name=software_vista_4.0

Until Next Time...please feel free to call me...