Distance Learning: Engaging the Millennium Student

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Distance Education

Basic Idea:

- Students and Teachers are in different places for all or most of the time that they learn and teach.

- They depend on some kind of technology to deliver information and provide a way of interacting with each other.

- The **use of technology has removed barriers of time and space**, facilitating the delivery of information that is "**just right, just enough, and just in time.**"

Why Distance Education? [*NCES*]

- Nearly 1/3 of all colleges and universities reported in 1997 had some form of distance education
  [*National Center for Education Statistics*]

- 54,470 **distance education** courses offered in 1997-98 academic year by 2-year and 4-year institutions

- In 1999-2000, **60% participated through the internet**; 39% through prerecorded audio and video;

- **Global Education** and **Training Market** is currently estimated at **$2 trillion** [Computer Industry Almanac 2006]

  □ USA share $740 billion

Why Distance Learning? [NCES]

- Females more likely to participate;
- Students generally over the age of 24;
- Students are busy with work and family;
- ***Increased demand*** for College Education
- Emerging technologies have made DL ***practical and cost effective***
- Anytime access to both faculty and students;

[

Growth Rate *[Computer Industry Almanac 2006]*

- Current estimation: approximately 10% of the overall training and education market in all sectors.

- Expected growth for online students – by 12% by end of 2008;

- In 10 years - most students will spend at least part of their school days in a virtual class, grouped online with others who share their interest, mastery and skills;

Students - Distance Education

- Students are different than those in the traditional classroom.
  - Need different study skills
  - Need different communication skills
  - Need different kinds of support
  - Need help with different kinds of problems
- Best students:
  - Classification: (Fresh, Soph, Junior, Senior, Grads)
  - Age: (Younger vs. Older)
  - Personality differences

Instructor Roles

- Teaching Functions:
  - Elaborating course content
  - Supervising and moderating discussions
  - Supervising individual and group projects
- Student Progress
  - Grading Assignments and providing feedback on progress
  - Keeping student records
  - Helping students manage their study!!!!!
  - **Motivating students!!!**

Instructor Roles:

- **Learner Support**
  - ☐ Answering or referring administrative questions
  - ☐ Answering or referring technical questions
  - ☐ Answering or referring counseling questions
  - ☐ Representing students with the administration
- **Evaluating Course Effectiveness**

Millennium Student

- Raised on technology
- First generation to grow up with computers in home and school
- Spend 1/3 of their lives on the Internet (email, chat rooms, Facebook, MySpace)
- Preferred forms of communication (email and instant messaging)
- Demand quick and instant gratification

Millennium Student

- They tend to Facebook through most of their classes

- Bring laptops to most of their classes (not working on class work);

- Read more Facebook profiles, WebPages than books;

- Fulltime students with part time jobs;

- Use of Online books;

[*www.researchandmarkets.com*]
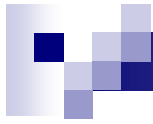
Engaging these Students

- Easier???
- More Difficult??

Interaction [Kent Brooks, Western Oklahoma State College]

- ## Three Types of Interaction
  - ☐ Learner to Content
    - Role of the instructor is to support and assist each student as he or she interacts with the content and converts it to personal knowledge

  - ☐ Learner to Instructor
    - Ability to **humanize the relationship** with distant learners is important
    - **Stimulating the students interest**
    - **Responding** to all student queries promptly (within 24 hours)
    - **Detailing the understanding of content** to ensure correct application of content
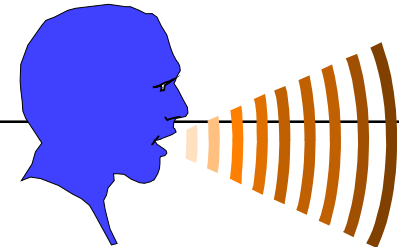   - **Evaluation/Feedback**

  - ☐ Student to Student
    - **Student Group interaction**: virtual

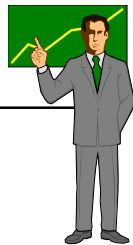# Tele-techniques:
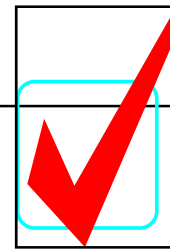
Humanizing
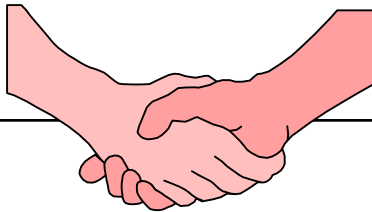
Participation

Feedback

Delivery

Evaluation

Design Components

- Humanizing
  - is the process of creating an atmosphere that **focuses on the importance of the individual** and overcomes distance by generating group/class rapport;

- Participation
  - in teleconferencing is defined as the process of getting beyond the technology by **providing opportunities for spontaneous interaction among participants**

Design Components

- Feedback
  - *It helps in correcting misunderstandings and filling in omissions*

- Delivery
  - is presenting what is to be said in such a way that it will be **received, understood and remembered**

- Evaluation
  - is the process of getting information about the message which helps you and the participants complete the communications loop;
    - Student
    - Faculty

Engineering Student Participation

- Discussion Groups
- Quizzes
- Students given opportunity to ask or answer questions
- Students given opportunity to express opinions
- Student assignments
  - Allow students to ask and receive responses to questions
    - Feedback allows instructor to establish a sense of participation
    - Links instructor to the student, student to student
    - Key program evaluation

Assignments: Student Expectations

- Fair and objective grading
- Have their work treated with respect
- An explanation and justification of the grade awarded
- *A clear indication of how they can improve both in terms of specific responses to questions and in general*
- *Encouragement and reassurance about their ability and progress*
- Constructive criticism and advice
- An opportunity to respond if desired
- A timely response (before next assignment is due)

Things that Work!

- The Syllabus Sign-off Sheet - ensures accountability

- During the first week of class - ask students to update Blackboard with a phone number and a CORRECT e-mail address (this ensures that I can reach them)

- Having an introduction discussion board w/ pictures during first week of class - puts a face to the name.
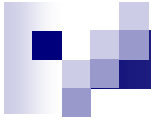
Things that Work

- Having a weekly discussion board question/response - this gives an interactive feeling to the class even though it is online.

- Having a discussion board topic dedicated to questions - this allowed everyone to benefit from the answer.

- Requiring students to work on their project in phases rather than one huge deal at the end - this made them think about it early on in the semester.

Things that Work

- Giving students my cell phone number - even though they often called at crazy times - it was a "lifeline" for them when a quick response was needed

- My "no late work accepted" policy - ensures that I get assignments in a timely fashion (rather than a bunch at the end of the semester)

- Online attendance

Things that Don't Work

- Group projects - inevitably one person would do all/most of the work while everyone got the credit. (Classroom as well)
- Offering extra credit options too early in the semester.
- Allowing deadlines to slide without penalty.
- Emailed assignments;

Questions

- Effectiveness??
- Percentage of students who successfully complete??
- Integrity of assignments and exams??
- Target Audience?
- HU Students?
- Can this work??

Conclusions