

Learning Technologies in Higher Education: Challenges and Considerations

This collaborative research presentation was concerned with the role of on-line technologies in supporting web-hybrid or blended courses and the differences between the faculty and student perceptions of the effectiveness of such technologies. It was delivered in three parts between 23 and 27 February 2011. The final posting was made on 3 March 2011. The first two parts focused on: 1) how on-line technologies originally developed to facilitate distance education will likely transform courses that are conducted in campus settings and how this will affect teaching in higher education and 2) the extent to which student and instructor expectations of on-line technologies differ and how to manage students' expectations in order to best achieve our objectives. The final instalment included an invitation to review the course website for EECE 361 – Signals and Systems. The discussion revealed the depth and diversity of opinion regarding the details even when participants are in general agreement regarding the base issue. This underscores the need to solicit opinions even when agreement seems to be unanimous.

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The Assignments

I - Introduction

Hi, all.

Welcome to our on-line SoTL presentation on **Learning Technologies in Higher Education: Challenges and Considerations**.

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When you receive this message, please reply to me (but not to the list) as confirmation.

If, at any time, you need assistance in completing any of the course tasks or accessing any of the presentation resources, please do not hesitate to contact me.

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Overview

During the next few days, we are going to ask you to spend approximately 90 minutes over several sessions as we consider the challenges and opportunities associated with applying new learning technologies in higher education.

Upon completion of the on-line presentation, you will be able to both explain and critically discuss:

- how on-line technologies originally developed to facilitate distance education will likely transform courses that are conducted in campus settings and how this will affect your teaching
- the extent to which student and instructor expectations of on-line technologies differ and how to manage students' expectations in order to best achieve your objectives
- how to select the most appropriate on-line technologies for your course, when to use them and how often

We'll wrap things up by providing you with an opportunity to review an existing course that uses a combination of face-to-face and on-line teaching methods to achieve its goals: **EECE 361 - Signals and Systems Laboratory**.

li – Logistics

Before we begin, let's review the format for the presentation and a few logistics.

The three instalments to the on-line presentation will be sent to you on or before 10 am on Wed, 23 Feb; Thu, 24 Feb, and Fri, 25 Feb. They should be completed by noon on the following working day.

The first instalment will be fairly simple and will serve mainly to set the stage and help us get into our routine. It will also give us a chance to resolve any technology glitches.

The second and third instalments will be more involved.

- - -

Each instalment will have three components.

1. **Content** (text + website, document, multimedia clip)

It should take you about 10 minutes to visit the website, listen to the audio or video clip, or read the document)

2. **Review Questions** (five multiple choice questions)

It should take you less than 10 minutes to complete the four multiple choice review questions. You may need to review the content as you answer the questions.

When you complete the review questions, please send your answers to me at davem@ece.ubc.ca. I'll provide you with immediate feedback.

3. **Reflective Question** (one multiple choice question plus up to 100-word justification)

The reflective question asks you to take a position on a particular issue related to use of on-line technologies in higher education that has been raised or suggested by the content.

It should take you about ten minutes to adopt one of the suggested positions and provide a 100-word justification.

When you complete the reflective question, please send your answer to the list at sotl@lists.ece.ubc.ca.

Please feel free to respond to other's answers to the reflective question!

Once again, both the review questions and the reflective question should be completed by noon on the working day after they were issued.

III – Installments

1 - Distance and Learner-Centered Courses

Hi, all.

Instalment 1 is a short podcast on Teaching On-Line by Melody Buckner from the University of Arizona.

The podcast is interesting to us for two reasons.

First, the speaker is obviously knowledgeable and experienced in this field and the content is obviously relevant to this month's SoTL theme.

Second, this is an opportunity to experience listening to a podcast in a formal setting and to consider the added value that the podcast brings (or, perhaps, doesn't bring) to the learning environment.



Comments:

Melody makes an interesting case that

- courses follow a continuum that extends from "purely face-to-face" to "fully on-line"
- on-line learning is naturally learner-centric
- many of the technologies that are used to facilitate on-line learning can be used in hybrid courses that include both face-to-face and on-line learning
- the range of on-line tools that is available to course designers and instructors is immense
- when combined with careful course design, on-line tools can be used to accommodate the manner in which students learn best

Review Questions:

1. Which of the following is **not** one of four modes of course delivery recognized by the

University of Arizona?

- a. face-to-face,
- b. web-facilitated,
- c. web-centric,
- d. web-hybrid,
- e. fully online

2. Which of the following is **not** one of the unique attributes of online learning recognized by the University of Arizona?

- a. time, device and distance independence
- b. asynchronous and synchronous interactivity
- c. multimedia delivery
- d. hybrid delivery
- e. learner-centered

3. Which of the following is **not** one of the student attributes that Melody Buckner warns us to consider when planning online courses?

- a. constant need for motivation
- b. short attention span
- c. need for instant rewards
- d. preference for multimedia stimulation
- e. need for immediate interactive responses

4. Which of the following is **not** one of the techniques that Melody Buckner suggests that we apply when planning online courses?

- a. plan ahead

- b. seek learner feedback
- c. use short modules
- d. segment content
- e. use Twitter or chat rooms

Reflective Question

Ten years ago, only a fraction of UBC instructors maintained course webpages. Today, virtually every course does.

Although it is likely that the on-campus courses will be transformed by on-line learning technologies during the next ten years, most university instructors will require significant training if they are to take full advantage of them.

- a. strongly agree
- b. agree
- c. neutral
- d. disagree
- e. strongly disagree

Note that you may disagree or agree with either clause!

Thanks for your response to Instalment 1. While we generally agree that new learning technologies will indeed have a significant impact on UBC's on-campus courses, it's also clear we must be mindful of the diversity of perspectives concerning the specific role and the utility of these technologies.

While some of new technologies may not exactly match our personal tastes or requirements as requirements, I'm personally amazed at how many *technical* resources are available to help instructors get up to speed quickly. Our friends in IT have done their jobs well!

The problem of deciding when and how to use the new technologies to achieve pedagogical goals is not covered nearly as well. That sets the stage for Instalment 2.

Before we move on, I'll note that Melody Buckner has produced a series of podcasts concerning Teaching Online and they're available at iTunes U. They're perfect for listening on the ride to or from work (which, I find, is the ideal place to consume audio-only podcasts).

I'll also draw the group's attention to the entries in the FCP Master Library that relate specifically to new technologies. See the listing at the end of this message!

I'll assume that everyone has completed the theme readings that Harry assigned for this month:

a. Educational Technologies Guide

<http://ctlit.ubc.ca/educational-technologies/>

(9.17, 9.18, 9.19) in the Vista Library

b. Faculty e-Learning Resource Guide (pdf)

<http://ctlit.ubc.ca/resources/publications/>

c. E-learning methods for consideration

<http://www.elearning.ubc.ca/toolkit/>

Instalment 2 - Student & Faculty Perceptions of On-Line Technologies

Instalment 2 focuses on the differences between instructor and student perceptions of the new on-line technologies and, by extension, the problem of deciding when to supplement conventional HTML/PDF on-line content with more sophisticated technologies. These may range from Java applets, video demonstrations, audio-only podcasts, multimedia podcasts, and various real-time interaction tools.

There's a tendency to assume that the more sophisticated technologies will always receive a warm reception from students. In practice, students are a bit more discerning and often for very pragmatic reasons. These may include the length of time required to watch a video or the need to have earphones handy when listening to audio in a public place.

While we have a duty to listen to their concerns, we also have a duty to help reshape student expectations where appropriate. It seems likely that we will be most effective if we have a better appreciation of the differences between student and faculty perspectives at the outset.

I've attached two papers that are germane to the discussion.

The first is

"A Student Evaluation of Teaching Techniques," by Mark B. Freilich.

It appeared in the Journal of Chemical Education back in 1983. It highlights the

differences between student and faculty perceptions of traditional teaching issues and suggests a framework that could be used to evaluate new online technologies.

The second is:

"Student Perceptions of Web-based Instruction: A Comparative Analysis" by Dana Tesone and Peter Ricci.

It appeared in the MERLOT Journal of Online Learning and Teaching in 2008.

I'll dispense with the Review Questions for this instalment and get right to the Reflective Question.

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Reflective Question

While course designers always have the best of intentions, the differences between their perception of the value or appropriateness of a new learning technology may not match their students' perceptions and thus render their efforts less effective. Accordingly, special efforts must be made to ensure that we appreciate how new technologies are perceived and consumed from a student perspective with particular emphasis on pragmatic factors.

- a. strongly agree**
- b. agree**
- c. neutral**
- d. disagree**
- e. strongly disagree**

Note that you may disagree or agree with either clause!

- - -

Thanks!

Appendix A - Extracts from the FCP Master Library

- 9.12 Lest We Forget: Critical Factors for Success in On-line Learning (Aucoin, 2000)
- 9.13 Student Teams, Teaching, and Technology (Stein & Hurd, 2005-2006)
- 9.14 Virtual Learning Environments: Three Implementation Perspectives (Keller, 2005)

- 9.15 Making the Connection in a Blended Learning Environment (Aspden & Helm, 2004)
 - 9.16 Does Technology Enhance Actual Student Learning? The Case of Online Discussion Boards (Krentler & Willis-Flurry, 2005)
 - 9.17 UBC CTLT Educational Technologies Introduction
 - 9.18 UBC Faculty e-Learning Resource Guide
 - 9.19 UBC E-learning Methods
 - 9.20 Emerging Technologies
 - 9.20.1 The 2011 Horizon Report - Emerging Technologies (Johnson et al., 2011)
 - 9.20.2 Going Fully Online: Reflections on Creating an Engaging Environment for Online Learning (Wegmann & McCauley, 2009)
 - 9.20.3 SoTL in Online Education: Strategies and Practices for Using New Media for Teaching and Learning Online (Kurtz & Sponder, 2011)
 - 9.20.4 The Indicators of Instructor Presence that are Important to Students in Online Courses (Sheridan & Kelly, 2010)
-

Instalment 3 - Formative Review of a "Trimedia" Course Website

Our final instalment focuses on the formative review of the **EECE 361 - Signals and Systems Laboratory** course website.

I refer to EECE 361 as a trimedia course because we deliver content to the students in three ways: Lectures, Lab Assignments and On-Line. According to Melody Buckner's taxonomy, EECE 361 is a **web-hybrid** course because significant course content is delivered on-line.

- - -

When I took over EECE 361 in September 2003, I inherited a course that was held in very low regard by students. I have since transformed EECE 361 into one of the most popular courses in third year. I did so by revising the lab assignments, strengthening the supporting lectures, setting high expectations and, importantly, by building a strong course website.

The course website plays an important role because EECE 361 has just one hour of lectures per week. (The three-hour labs are held every other week.) Accordingly, one of my objectives in building the website was to provide important supplementary material that could be consumed outside of class time, including multimedia demonstrations, video tutorials, Java applets, etc.

To save time, I didn't develop any of the multimedia materials myself. They were all taken from other sources.

I declined to use Vista/WebCT at my students' request. They wanted access to the

course materials after EECE 361 was over and Vista/WebCT courses don't permit such access.

Organization of the website was key. To my surprise, one of the aspects that students really like is the way that I colour code the material according to its type.

COLOUR CODE					
Lecture Notes	Lab Assignments	Templates	Supplementary Material & Application Notes	Computer/Web-based Tutorials	Practice Problems

The attached teaching reviews confirm the high level of student satisfaction with the course. However, the course website has never been formally peer reviewed.

Therefore, I invite you to visit the website and provide constructive feedback including recommendations for improvement, alternative strategies, etc.

The website can be found at

<http://courses.ece.ubc.ca/361>

The password protected area can be accessed using the following username and password:

user: sotl
password: sotl1102

You might wish to pursue this over the weekend when you have a bit more time. Please provide your remarks no later than noon on Monday.

In the meantime, here's a reflective question that we can discuss via the sotl@lists.ece.ubc.ca mailing list today and over the weekend..

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Reflective Question

When I first started building course websites, I added Java applets and similar multimedia content simply to add variety and spark interest.

As we decide whether to deliver course content via lecture, PDF download, podcast, videocast, or profcast, I wonder how we should interpret Marshall McLuhan's claim that "the medium is the message". Does it apply here?

- a. strongly agree
 - b. agree
 - c. neutral
 - d. disagree
 - e. strongly disagree
-

IV - Wrap-up

Thank you for participating in our on-line SoTL presentation on **Learning Technologies in Higher Education: Challenges and Considerations**.

We discussed several issues, including:

- how on-line technologies originally developed to facilitate distance education will likely transform courses that are conducted in campus settings and how this will affect our teaching
- the extent to which student and instructor expectations of on-line technologies differ and how to manage students' expectations in order to best achieve our objectives

We also touched upon criteria for selecting the most appropriate on-line technologies for our courses.

I was particularly struck by the depth and diversity of opinion regarding the details even when we are in general agreement regarding the base issue.

It was a very interesting experience that underscores the need to solicit input even when agreement seems to be unanimous!

Reflection

The on-line presentation was designed to engage participants in a rapid fire exchange of ideas concerning the role of on-line technologies in supporting web-hybrid or blended courses and the differences between the faculty and student perceptions of the effectiveness of such technologies.

The presentation was conducted in three parts, each a little more intense than the last and using radically different delivery techniques. The first was based on a short (7-minute) podcast concerning on-line learning by Melody Bruckner of the University of Arizona, the second was based on two academic papers concerning faculty-student perceptions of teaching and learning issues that were supplied in PDF, and the third was based on the EECE 361 – Signals and Systems Laboratory course website. The intent was to mimic the excitement of a rollercoaster in an online format. The use of an email list rather than a web discussion forum was intended to promote participation by pushing the content and discussion into the participants' mailboxes. The original intent was to include content, review questions and reflective questions in each instalment. However, I dropped the review questions in the second and third instalments out of concern that the time required to complete them was deterring participation.

A threaded list of partial mail headers is presented on pages 13-14. The transcript of the online discussion is given on pages 15-53. The participants' responses are rich and detailed and reflect both the relevance of the questions posed and the participants' own deep interest in the topic. I was particularly struck by the diversity of opinion and perspective even when there when participants are in general agreement regarding the base issue. This underscores the need to solicit input even when agreement seems to be unanimous.

During the activity, which nominally lasted three days but actually continued for a few more days afterwards, participants displayed considerable interest and enthusiasm. Several participants expressed considerable satisfaction with the detailed planning and underlying structure of the activity. When asked to provide written feedback, however, several expressed concern that the pace had been too fast and that they had trouble keeping up. I was quite disappointed to learn this as I usually find that students appreciate such rapidfire exchanges. I suppose the difference is that we were not discussing insights or techniques that would help the participants achieve higher test scores or other assessments, at least in the short term. A contributing factor might have been the two-day delay in starting the activity as our departmental IT staff configured the mailing list that was the primary medium for the activity.

Over all, I was basically satisfied with the result. In similar circumstances in the future, however, I will likely slow the pace a bit. My sincere thanks to all the members of the cohort who participated!

David G. Michelson

Threaded List of Partial Message Headers

- **[sotl] Learning Technologies in Higher Education: Challenges and Considerations,**
Dave Michelson, 02/23/2011
- **[sotl] Presentation Format and Logistics,** *Dave Michelson, 02/23/2011*
- **[sotl] Instalment 1 - Content Only,** *Dave Michelson, 02/23/2011*
- **[sotl] Instalment 1 - Distance and Learner-Centered Courses,** *Dave Michelson,*
02/23/2011
- **[sotl] Dave Michelson- Task 1 Reflective Question,** *Venkatachary, Ranga, 02/23/2011*
- **[sotl] Installment #1, Reflective Question,** *Gail Hammond, 02/23/2011*
- **[sotl] Installment #1, Reflective Question,** *Dr. Arun Verma, 02/23/2011*
- **[sotl] Re: Installment #1, Reflective Question,** *Dave Michelson, 02/23/2011*
- **[sotl] Re: Re: Installment #1, Reflective Question,** *Newton, Christie, 02/23/2011*
- **[sotl] Re: Re: Re: Installment #1, Reflective Question,** *Anne Zavalkoff, 02/23/2011*
- **[sotl] Re: Re: Re: Re: Installment #1, Reflective Question,** *Dave Michelson,*
02/23/2011
- **[sotl] Re: Re: Installment #1, Reflective Question,** *Dave Michelson, 02/23/2011*
- **[sotl] Fwd: Learning Technologies in Higher Education: Challenges and**
Considerations, *Clive Roberts, 02/24/2011*
- **[sotl] Re: Instalment 1 - Distance and Learner-Centered Courses,** *Sibley, Jim, 02/24/2011*
- **[sotl] Re: Fwd: Learning Technologies in Higher Education: Challenges and**
Considerations, *Jim Sibley, 02/24/2011*
- <Possible follow-up(s)>
- **[sotl] RE: Fwd: Learning Technologies in Higher Education: Challenges and**
Considerations, *Newton, Christie, 02/24/2011*
- **[sotl] Instalment 2 - Student and Faculty Perceptions of On-Line Technologies,** *Dave*
Michelson, 02/24/2011
- **[sotl] Re: Instalment 2 - Student and Faculty Perceptions of On-Line**
Technologies - Jim sibley, *Jim Sibley, 02/24/2011*
- **[sotl] Re: Re: Instalment 2 - Student and Faculty Perceptions of On-Line**
Technologies - Jim sibley, *Venkatachary, Ranga, 02/24/2011*

- **[sotl] Installment #1 - The Use of Technology in Teaching**, *Shauna Jones, 02/24/2011*
 - **[sotl] Re: Installment #1 - The Use of Technology in Teaching**, *Jim Sibley, 02/24/2011*
- **[sotl] Installment #2 Reflective Question**, *Hammond, Gail, 02/24/2011*
- **[sotl] Instalment 2 - Student and Faculty Perceptions of On-Line Technologies**, *Loewen, Peter [VA], 02/24/2011*
 - **[sotl] Re: Instalment 2 - Student and Faculty Perceptions of On-Line Technologies**, *Dave Michelson, 02/24/2011*
 - **[sotl] Re: Re: Instalment 2 - Student and Faculty Perceptions of On-Line Technologies**, *Clive Roberts, 02/25/2011*
- **[sotl] Instalment 3 - Formative Review of a Website for a "Trimedia" Course**, *Dave Michelson, 02/25/2011*
 - *Message not available*
 - **[sotl] Re: Instalment 3 - Formative Review of a Website for a "Trimedia" Course**, *Dave Michelson, 02/28/2011*
 - **[sotl] Re: Re: Instalment 3 - Formative Review of a Website for a "Trimedia" Course**, *Clive Roberts, 02/28/2011*
- **[sotl] Re: Re: Instalment 2 - Student and Faculty Perceptions of On-Line Technologies**, *Dave Michelson, 02/25/2011*
- **[sotl] SoTL - Installment 2 - Reflective Question**, *Shauna Jones, 02/25/2011***[sotl] SoTL - Installment 2 - Reflective Question**, *(continued)*
 - **[sotl] SoTL - Installment 2 - Reflective Question**, *Shauna Jones, 02/25/2011*
- **[sotl] Installment #3 Reflective Question**, *Hammond, Gail, 02/27/2011*
 - **[sotl] Re: Installment #3 Reflective Question**, *Dave Michelson, 02/27/2011*
- **[sotl] Thanks...**, *Dave Michelson, 02/27/2011*
- **[sotl] Fwd: Survey - Innovation in Engineering Education**, *Dave Michelson, 02/27/2011*
[sotl] Re: A paper on differences in perceptions, *Dave Michelson, 02/27/2011*
- **[sotl] Re: Re: Re: Instalment 3 - Formative Review of a Website for a "Trimedia" Course**, *Dave Michelson, 03/01/2011*
- **[sotl] Re: Instalment 3 - Formative Review of a Website for a "Trimedia" Course**, *Dave Michelson, 03/03/2011*

Transcript of the On-Line Discussion

From: Dave Michelson <davem@ece.ubc.ca>
Subject: [sotl] Learning Technologies in Higher Education: Challenges and Considerations
Date: February 23, 2011 1:44:09 AM PST
To: sotl@lists.ece.ubc.ca

Hi, all.

Welcome to our on-line SoTL presentation on **Learning Technologies in Higher Education: Challenges and Considerations**.

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If, at any time, you need assistance in completing any of the course tasks or accessing any of the presentation resources, please do not hesitate to contact me.

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- how to select the most appropriate on-line technologies for your course, when to use them and how often

We'll wrap things up by providing you with an opportunity to review an existing course

that uses a combination of face-to-face and on-line teaching methods to achieve its goals: **EECE 361 - Signals and Systems Laboratory**.

Thanks, and have fun!

--

Dave Michelson
davem@ece.ubc.ca

From: Suzie Lavallee <slavalle@mail.ubc.ca>
Subject: RE: [sotl] Learning Technologies in Higher Education: Challenges and Considerations
Date: February 23, 2011 9:47:48 AM PST
To: Dave Michelson davem@ece.ubc.ca

Hi Dave
Got your email and I'm looking forward to getting to work on this!
Cheers,
Suzie

From: Dr. Arun Verma <averma@interchange.ubc.ca>
Subject: Re: [sotl] Learning Technologies in Higher Education: Challenges and Considerations
Date: February 23, 2011 9:50:23 AM PST
To: Dave Michelson davem@ece.ubc.ca

Hello Dave,

Just let me know what to do.

Regards,

Arun

Arun Verma PhD
Instructor
Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences, UBC
2146 East Mall, Vancouver B.C.
V6T 1Z3
e-mail: averma@interchange.ubc.ca
phone: (604)822-7228
fax: (604)822-3035

From: Clive Roberts <crobert@interchange.ubc.ca>
Subject: Re: [sotl] Learning Technologies in Higher Education: Challenges and Considerations
Date: February 23, 2011 9:56:22 AM PST
To: Dave Michelson davem@ece.ubc.ca

Hi Dave; message received
all the best
Clive

Clive R Roberts PhD
clive.roberts@ubc.ca

Associate Professor,
University of British Columbia
UBC Centre for Blood Research
UBC Dentistry
UBC Respiratory Medicine

4th Floor, Life Sciences Centre
2350 Health Sciences Mall
Vancouver BC V6T1Z3
604 822 6819 (tel)
604 822 7742 (fax)

From: Marion Pearson <marionp@interchange.ubc.ca>
Subject: Re: [sotl] Learning Technologies in Higher Education: Challenges and Considerations
Date: February 23, 2011 10:00:11 AM PST
To: Dave Michelson davem@ece.ubc.ca

Hi Dave:

Message received!

Marion

From: Dave Michelson <davem@ece.ubc.ca>
Subject: [sotl] Presentation Format and Logistics
Date: February 23, 2011 10:05:54 AM PST
To: sotl@lists.ece.ubc.ca

Hi, all.

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When you complete the review questions, please send your answers to me at davem@ece.ubc.ca. I'll provide you with immediate feedback.

3. **Reflective Question** (one multiple choice question plus up to 100-word justification)

The reflective question asks you to take a position on a particular issue related to use of on-line technologies in higher education that has been raised or suggested by the content.

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Please feel free to respond to other's answers to the reflective question!

Once again, both the review questions and the reflective question should be completed by noon on the working day after they were issued.

Thanks!

--

Dave Michelson
davem@ece.ubc.ca

From: Dave Michelson <davem@ece.ubc.ca>
Subject: [sotl] Instalment 1 - Content Only
Date: February 23, 2011 10:12:18 AM PST
To: sotl@lists.ece.ubc.ca

Hi, all.

Here is the **content** for Instalment 1. It's a short podcast on Teaching On-Line by Melody Buckner from the University of Arizona.

Please confirm that you can play the content. I'll supply the questions once we're certain that the content is accessible to all of you.

So, if you run into any problems, please let me know!



--

Dave Michelson
davem@ece.ubc.ca

From: Clive Roberts <crobert@interchange.ubc.ca>
Subject: Re: [sotl] Presentation Format and Logistics
Date: February 23, 2011 10:38:34 AM PST
To: Dave Michelson davem@ece.ubc.ca

I have received and listened to the podcast
Clive

From: Venkatachary, Ranga <vranga@exchange.ubc.ca>
Subject: Re: [sotl] Instalment 1 - Content Only
Date: February 23, 2011 10:58:28 AM PST
To: Dave Michelson davem@ece.ubc.ca

Content clip plays fine. Thanks,

Ranga

From: Newton, Christie <christie.newton@familymed.ubc.ca>
Subject: RE: [sotl] Learning Technologies in Higher Education: Challenges and Considerations
Date: February 23, 2011 12:13:28 PM PST
To: Dave Michelson davem@ece.ubc.ca

I have received your e-mails and I am able to listen to the audio clip.

Christie

From: Anne Zavalkoff <anne.zavalkoff@gmail.com>
Subject: Re: [sotl] Learning Technologies in Higher Education: Challenges and Considerations
Date: February 23, 2011 1:08:01 PM PST
To: Dave Michelson davem@ece.ubc.ca

Thanks for the overview, Dave.

Anne

From: Dave Michelson <davem@ece.ubc.ca>
Subject: [sotl] Instalment 1 - Distance and Learner-Centered Courses
Date: February 23, 2011 1:26:05 PM PST
To: sotl@lists.ece.ubc.ca

Hi, all.

I haven't heard any complaints about the audio content so here's the full instalment!

- - -

Instalment 1 is a short podcast on Teaching On-Line by Melody Buckner from the University of Arizona.

The podcast is interesting to us for two reasons.

First, the speaker is obviously knowledgeable and experienced in this field and the content is obviously relevant to this month's SoTL theme.

Second, this is an opportunity to experience listening to a podcast in a formal setting and to consider the added value that the podcast brings (or, perhaps, doesn't bring) to

the learning environment.



Comments:

Melody makes an interesting case that

- courses follow a continuum that extends from "purely face-to-face" to "fully on-line"
- on-line learning is naturally learner-centric
- many of the technologies that are used to facilitate on-line learning can be used in hybrid courses that include both face-to-face and on-line learning
- the range of on-line tools that is available to course designers and instructors is immense
- when combined with careful course design, on-line tools can be used to accommodate the manner in which students learn best

Review Questions:

1. Which of the following is **not** one of four modes of course delivery recognized by the University of Arizona?

- a. face-to-face,
- b. web-facilitated,
- c. web-centric,
- d. web-hybrid,
- e. fully online

2. Which of the following is **not** one of the unique attributes of online learning recognized by the University of Arizona?

- a. time, device and distance independence
- b. asynchronous and synchronous interactivity
- c. multimedia delivery

- d. hybrid delivery
- e. learner-centered

3. Which of the following is **not** one of the student attributes that Melody Buckner warns us to consider when planning online courses?

- a. constant need for motivation
- b. short attention span
- c. need for instant rewards
- d. preference for multimedia stimulation
- e. need for immediate interactive responses

4. Which of the following is **not** one of the techniques that Melody Buckner suggests that we apply when planning online courses?

- a. plan ahead
- b. seek learner feedback
- c. use short modules
- d. segment content
- e. use Twitter or chat rooms

- - -

Reflective Question

Ten years ago, only a fraction of UBC instructors maintained course webpages. Today, virtually every course does.

Although it is likely that the on-campus courses will be transformed by on-line learning technologies during the next ten years, most university instructors will require significant training if they are to take full advantage of them.

- a. strongly agree

- b. agree**
- c. neutral**
- d. disagree**
- e. strongly disagree**

Note that you may disagree or agree with either clause!

- - -

Thanks!

--

Dave Michelson
davem@ece.ubc.ca

From: Venkatachary, Ranga <vranga@exchange.ubc.ca>
Subject: [sotl] Dave Michelson- Task 1 Reflective Question
Date: February 23, 2011 4:12:27 PM PST
To: sotl@lists.ece.ubc.ca

Hi all,
The question from Dave was:

Ten years ago, only a fraction of UBC instructors maintained course webpages. Today, virtually every course does. Although it is likely that the on-campus courses will be transformed by on-line learning technologies during the next ten years, most university instructors will require significant training if they are to take full advantage of them.

I agree with this in full. Teaching and learning on campus is already being transformed by web-based and networking technologies. In the next ten years we will see further evolution of this phenomenon. I would say that this is happening because of (a) the role and impact of such technologies in our lives now (b) what our students bring to the learning context (c) national and institutional drivers for change for a variety of reasons. However, from the literature and from my personal experience in different cultures and institutional settings, faculty development in this regard is also a continuum - with preparatory knowledge & change of beliefs/practice and total innovation and experimentation at the extreme ends. As someone working in faculty development, I see the engagement as an academic partnership rather than skill-based, one time training of 'tips and strategies'. From my point of view, respect for the context is crucial in everything we do - in teaching & faculty engagement.

Ranga

From: Jim Sibley <Jim.Sibley@ubc.ca>
Subject: Re: [sotl] Instalment 1 - Distance and Learner-Centered Courses
Date: February 23, 2011 4:42:29 PM PST
To: Dave Michelson davem@ece.ubc.ca

Reflective Question

Ten years ago, only a fraction of UBC instructors maintained course web pages. Today, virtually every course does.

Although it is likely that the on-campus courses will be transformed by on-line learning technologies during the next ten years, most university instructors will require significant training if they are to take full advantage of them.

a. strongly agree

Faculty will need training on both effective pedagogies and effective and efficient use of the technology. Most current initiatives underestimate the importance of both of these. Many online courses use method that can't be effectively scaled and many use pedagogies that don't work...example...large product based group assignments.

Jim Sibley

Sorry for brief message -sent from my iPad

From: Gail Hammond <ghammond@interchange.ubc.ca>
Subject: [sotl] Installment #1, Reflective Question
Date: February 23, 2011 7:36:14 PM PST
To: sotl@lists.ece.ubc.ca

Hi all:

I take the stance of agreeing that many (not sure about most) university instructors will require significant training if they are to take full advantage of online learning technologies during the next ten years. Why many and not most? I think some of the younger instructors are likely to be more technologically savvy than many senior instructors; however, it is not just about entry level/existing skills, but also keeping pace with and using newer technologies over time. So, in that regard, each of us will likely require a different level of training in the next 10 years.

Gail

From: Dr. Arun Verma <averma@interchange.ubc.ca>
Subject: [sotl] Installment #1, Reflective Question
Date: February 23, 2011 8:02:03 PM PST
To: sotl@lists.ece.ubc.ca

Hello Everyone,

I agree with this. We have students who are technology experienced and I would dare to say, like (or even prefer) to use multimedia tools. On campus, there are many online technology tools available for instructors to use. Some departments, such as ours, have an educational IT person who brings in a wealth of knowledge for using these online technology-based tools as well as other devices either to use certain tools or to help instructors put portion of their courses online. I do not know if significant training will be needed, but instructors will need ongoing training. This training can take place through a university's education and technology department (e.g. CTLT), Faculty expert(s) (as identified in the Online Learning resource guide) or through online media sources, such as YouTube, etc.

Regards,
Arun

From: Dave Michelson <davem@ece.ubc.ca>
Subject: Re: [sotl] Installment #1, Reflective Question
Date: February 23, 2011 8:24:20 PM PST
To: sotl@lists.ece.ubc.ca

Hi, all.

The responses from Ranga, Jim, Gail and Arun have been very interesting!

While we're seeing many common elements in the responses so far, there are also some interesting differences in perspective, too.

I'm looking forward to seeing what the next batch of responses will bring!

--

Dave Michelson
davem@ece.ubc.ca

From: Newton, Christie <christie.newton@familymed.ubc.ca>
Subject: Re: [sotl] Re: Installment #1, Reflective Question
Date: February 23, 2011 9:08:03 PM PST
To: Dave Michelson <davem@ece.ubc.ca>, sotl@lists.ece.ubc.ca

Interesting that patient care parallels teaching. Many physicians are at some point along the continuum of transition from paper-based to EMR based practice; with patients no longer requesting the traditional handout but now presenting with lists of online resources (and requesting more). All of the issues regarding faculty development (teacher/physician perspective) and multimedia, self management /interactive care and 'levelling' (learner/patient perspective) apply.

It is argued that the doctor - patient relationship is negatively impacted by the introduction of technology into practice. Does this hold true for the teacher - learner relationship as well? And is it really a negative impact or just a transition to a different relationship neither good nor bad?

On another slant, two additional issues have come up in practice - one is open source technology, and the other is privacy. In online teaching are there similar issues? Seems as though I have more questions than comments.

Christie

From: Anne Zavalkoff <anne.zavalkoff@gmail.com>
Subject: Re: [sotl] Instalment 1 - Distance and Learner-Centered Courses
Date: February 23, 2011 9:59:33 PM PST
To: Dave Michelson davem@ece.ubc.ca

Hi Dave,

Here are my answers to the multiple choice questions. Thanks for putting together a very clearly structured learning activity.

Anne

From: Anne Zavalkoff <anne.zavalkoff@gmail.com>
Subject: [sotl] Re: Re: Re: Installment #1, Reflective Question
Date: February 23, 2011 10:26:54 PM PST
To: sotl@lists.ece.ubc.ca

Hi all,

I strongly agree: it is likely that on-campus courses will be transformed by on-line learning technologies during the next ten years.

I also strongly agree: most university instructors will require significant training if they are to take full advantage of them.

I offer an example of why an instructor like me would need significant institutional support to integrate online learning technologies into my current face-to-face courses.

This fall I set myself the goal of integrating educational technology into one of my face-to-face courses. I was inspired by someone from EPLT (External Programs and Learning Technologies) who had come to make some restructuring suggestions to the instructors of the Problem-Based Learning Cohort with which I teach. I made an appointment with EPLT to pick their brains about how I might move some of my methods of assessment online, but I encountered some (currently insurmountable) challenges:

- 1) EPLT offered me many (too many?) reasonably generic solutions, but I wasn't sure how to apply those suggestions to my specific course.
- 2) Their suggestions required a steep learning curve from me, both in terms of learning to navigate the different platforms and in terms of thinking through all of the new instructions/guidelines/rubrics that new online assignments would require.
- 3) I wasn't sure whether it made sense to offer one new "on-line assignment" or to completely rethink what assessment might look like in that course. Do I move the same old assignments online (assignments leading technology), or do I use technology to dream up exciting new possibilities for assessment (technology leading assignments)?
- 4) I wanted to be sure that any new online assignments/formats did not amplify the workload for any students who chose that option.

4) I was simply too busy to work through #1-4.

As you might guess, I was not successful in implementing more/better educational technology into my course.

Anne

--

Anne Zavalkoff, PhD
Sessional Lecturer
Department of Educational Studies
University of British Columbia

From: Dave Michelson <davem@ece.ubc.ca>
Subject: Re: [sotl] Re: Installment #1, Reflective Question
Date: February 23, 2011 10:35:55 PM PST
To: sotl@lists.ece.ubc.ca

Good points, Christie! When such parallels exist, best practices in one domain can be important sources of innovation in the other.

From: Dave Michelson <davem@ece.ubc.ca>
Subject: **Re: [sotl] Re: Re: Re: Installment #1, Reflective Question**
Date: February 23, 2011 10:42:03 PM PST
To: sotl@lists.ece.ubc.ca

Thanks, Anne. This certainly underscores how much we depend upon the IT professionals who implement and maintain the new technologies!

From: Jolanta Aleksejuniene <jolantaa@interchange.ubc.ca>
Subject: **RE: [sotl] Instalment 1 - Distance and Learner-Centered Courses**
Date: February 24, 2011 7:51:53 AM PST
To: Dave Michelson davem@ece.ubc.ca

Thanks, I will listen to podcast and respond to it tonight.
Regards, Jolanta

From: Clive Roberts <crobert@interchange.ubc.ca>
Subject: **Re: [sotl] Learning Technologies in Higher Education: Challenges and Considerations**
Date: February 24, 2011 10:14:31 AM PST
To: Dave Michelson <davem@ece.ubc.ca>
Cc: sotl@lists.ece.ubc.ca

Hello Dave & the group:

Clive's reflection of the Melody podcast.

I found the podcast interesting. I agreed with Melody's comments about course delivery and applicability of online learning to teaching current learners.

- (a) I do strongly agree that on-line learning technologies will 'transform' on-campus courses, and
- (b) I somewhat agree that most of us will require significant training to take full advantage of them.

The first part of the reflective question really relates to the learning styles of the learners. We have to acknowledge that (as Melody says) today's young learners learn effectively in ways that weren't available when each of us was a student. This demands that teaching is responsive to these changes in learning styles/learner attributes.

For the second part, (training) - I think that 'depends'. I think an ideal online learning environment will be as easy to use as, for example, facebook is.

Most new technologies are quite easy to use -from editing movies in 'iMovie' to drag and drop posting of text, images and video on websites.

Children in elementary school edit movies (eg iMovie) and sound presentations (eg Garageband). These programs are designed for "learning by doing".

I have yet to see a course aimed at showing people how to use facebook. Facebook is really an incredibly easy to use personalized website.

In summary for (b) I think 'technology' is becoming so user-friendly that 'technical' issues should not drive the need for a lot of training.

What IS going to be needed, and important for all of us, is sharing information about 'best practices' in teaching, that spark our own imagination to help us develop useful tools in our own fields. Critical discussion about 'teaching effectiveness with the new technologies' will be important if we are to use the technology effectively.

For example..... I personally find podcasts very one-dimensional. I doubt the effectiveness of 'podcasts for a significant proportion of learners. Call me a visual or kinesthetic learner if you wish, but I would far, far rather watch a video of Melody delivering the same material, than listen to a 'podcast'. Even one that's very well prepared and lasts less than 7 minutes.

best wishes
Clive Roberts

From: Jim Sibley <jim.sibley@ubc.ca>

Subject: [sotl] **Re: Fwd: Learning Technologies in Higher Education: Challenges and Considerations**

Date: February 24, 2011 11:17:40 AM PST

To: James Sibley <jim.sibley@ubc.ca>, Clive Roberts <crobert@interchange.ubc.ca>, sotl@lists.ece.ubc.ca

To pick up on one of Clive's comments

Audio only podcasts really are one dimensional....since so much of our message is tied up in our body language during delivery....we lose a lot

PODcasts that at least contain some visuals....have a hope of leveraging the dual channel encoding that our brains are so good at

jim

From: Dave Michelson <davem@ece.ubc.ca>
Subject: [sotl] Instalment 2 - Student and Faculty Perceptions of On-Line Technologies

Date: February 24, 2011 12:50:00 PM PST

To: sotl@lists.ece.ubc.ca

Hi, all.

Thanks for your response to Instalment 1. While we generally agree that new learning technologies will indeed have a significant impact on UBC's on-campus courses, it's also clear we must be mindful of the diversity of perspectives concerning the specific role and the utility of these technologies.

While some of new technologies may not exactly match our personal tastes or requirements as requirements, I'm personally amazed at how many *technical* resources are available to help instructors get up to speed quickly. Our friends in IT have done their jobs well!

The problem of deciding when and how to use the new technologies to achieve pedagogical goals is not covered nearly as well. That sets the stage for Instalment 2.

- - -

Before we move on, I'll note that Melody Buckner has produced a series of podcasts concerning Teaching Online and they're available at iTunes U. They're perfect for listening on the ride to or from work (which, I find, is the ideal place to consume audio-only podcasts).

I'll also draw the group's attention to the entries in the FCP Master Library that relate specifically to new technologies. See the listing at the end of this message!

I'll assume that everyone has completed the theme readings that Harry assigned for this month:

<http://ctlit.ubc.ca/educational-technologies/>

(9.17, 9.18, 9.19) in the Vista Library

b. Faculty e-Learning Resource Guide (pdf)

<http://ctlit.ubc.ca/resources/publications/>

c. E-learning methods for consideration

<http://www.elearning.ubc.ca/toolkit/>

- - - -

Instalment 2 - Student and Faculty Perceptions of On-Line Technologies

Instalment 2 focuses on the differences between instructor and student perceptions of the new on-line technologies and, by extension, the problem of deciding when to supplement conventional HTML/PDF on-line content with more sophisticated technologies. These may range from Java applets, video demonstrations, audio-only podcasts, multimedia podcasts, and various real-time interaction tools.

There's a tendency to assume that the more sophisticated technologies will always receive a warm reception from students. In practice, students are a bit more discerning and often for very pragmatic reasons. These may include the length of time required to watch a video or the need to have earphones handy when listening to audio in a public place.

While we have a duty to listen to their concerns, we also have a duty to help reshape student expectations where appropriate. It seems likely that we will be most effective if we have a better appreciation of the differences between student and faculty perspectives at the outset.

I've attached two papers that are germane to the discussion.

The first is

"A Student Evaluation of Teaching Techniques," by Mark B. Freilich.

It appeared in the Journal of Chemical Education back in 1983. It highlights the differences between student and faculty perceptions of traditional teaching issues and suggests a framework that could be used to evaluate new online technologies.

The second is:

"Student Perceptions of Web-based Instruction: A Comparative Analysis" by Dana Tesone and Peter Ricci.

It appeared in the MERLOT Journal of Online Learning and Teaching in 2008.

I'll dispense with the Review Questions for this instalment and get right to the Reflective Question.

- - -

Reflective Question

While course designers always have the best of intentions, the differences between their perception of the value or appropriateness of a new learning technology may not match their students' perceptions and thus render their efforts less effective. Accordingly, special efforts must be made to ensure that we appreciate how new technologies are perceived and consumed from a student

perspective with particular emphasis on pragmatic factors.

a. strongly agree

b. agree

c. neutral

d. disagree

e. strongly disagree

Note that you may disagree or agree with either clause!

Thanks!

Appendix A - Extracts from the FCP Master Library

- 9.12 Lest We Forget: Critical Factors for Success in On-line Learning (Aucoin, 2000)
- 9.13 Student Teams, Teaching, and Technology (Stein & Hurd, 2005-2006)
- 9.14 Virtual Learning Environments: Three Implementation Perspectives (Keller, 2005)
- 9.15 Making the Connection in a Blended Learning Environment (Aspden & Helm, 2004)
- 9.16 Does Technology Enhance Actual Student Learning? The Case of Online Discussion Boards (Krentler & Willis-Flurry, 2005)
- 9.17 UBC CTLT Educational Technologies Introduction
- 9.18 UBC Faculty e-Learning Resource Guide
- 9.19 UBC E-learning Methods
- 9.20 Emerging Technologies
 - 9.20.1 The 2011 Horizon Report - Emerging Technologies (Johnson et al., 2011)
 - 9.20.2 Going Fully Online: Reflections on Creating an Engaging Environment for Online Learning (Wegmann & McCauley, 2009)
 - 9.20.3 SoTL in Online Education: Strategies and Practices for Using New Media for Teaching and Learning Online (Kurtz & Sponder, 2011)
 - 9.20.4 The Indicators of Instructor Presence that are Important to Students in Online Courses (Sheridan & Kelly, 2010)

--

Dave Michelson
davem@ece.ubc.ca

From: Jim Sibley <jim.sibley@ubc.ca>
Subject: Re: [sotl] Instalment 2 - Student and Faculty Perceptions of On-Line Technologies - Jim sibley
Date: February 24, 2011 1:05:23 PM PST
To: Dave Michelson <davem@ece.ubc.ca>, sotl@lists.ece.ubc.ca

Reflective Question

While course designers always have the best of intentions, the differences between their perception of the value or appropriateness of a new learning technology may not match their students' perceptions and thus render their efforts less effective. Accordingly, special efforts must be made to ensure that we appreciate how new technologies are perceived and consumed from a student perspective with particular emphasis on pragmatic factors.

- strongly agree

Tough one here is “what students want” and “what students need”

Students often want instructors to make learning effortless, want be entertained, want to multi-tasking during learning.....all which might not lead to any real learning.

The literature is pretty clear that multi-tasking is not actually possible.....younger people are able to task switch with less cognitive overhead than older learners....but they really can't multi-task.....they will argue that they can.....they are convinced they can.....this is a problem!

Try listening to the Melody PODcast again while subtracting numbers in your head....say 194 minus 7, 187 minus 7, etc....see if you get as much out of the PODcast.

Trouble with technologies is they can increase cognitive load in novice learners....when they really don't have any cognitive load to spare.

My two cents

Jim

From: Shauna Jones <shauna@shaunajones.com>
Subject: [sotl] Installment #1 - The Use of Technology in Teaching
Date: February 24, 2011 1:41:49 PM PST
To: Sotl List sotl@lists.ece.ubc.ca

Hello,

I am certainly enjoying the posts on this topic as I find it very relevant to issues I currently face as an instructor and as a trainer. I believe that on-campus courses will definitely be transformed by on-line learning technologies. Because most our students (depending on the demographic of the students we teach) are so competent in the use of technology, my sense is that there is an expectation to use it. I'm also seeing a change in corporate training that is reflective of the change we are seeing in the university with respect to the use of technology for delivering courses. In fact, many of the things Melody Buckner stated in the podcast as important things to consider when designing on-line learning apply even in face-to-face instruction - again depending on the demographic. The need to address the shorter attention spans of students, the need for immediate interactive responses and instant communication, and the need for multi-sensory stimulation will force us to adapt our way of teaching to incorporate technology in one form or another.

I tend to agree with Ranga, this is not just an issue of developing skills but requires an academic partnership. By being in partnership, we not only learn the technology but, more importantly, we learn how to use it so that we add value to the students' learning experience. To do this requires a shift in how we think and how we behave with respect to technology. Building on Anne's comment, some instructors may not *want* to take the time to wrap their minds around how to effectively use technology because they may *perceive* that it will take extra time to learn all the different technologies that might be used and/or will involve a steep learning curve when already feeling pressured to meet deliverables. Although the technology might be easy to use, the *perception* one has will have more of an impact on how they will embrace and incorporate the technology into courses. What we must remember is to use the technology not just for the sake of "entertaining" the students but to add value to the learning experience.

I, too, felt the podcast somewhat one dimensional. I would rather look at the person delivering the module than just have audio.

Shauna

Risk more than others think is safe.
Care more than others think is wise.
Dream more than others think is practical.
Expect more than others think is possible.

Maxim

Shauna Jones
604-785-2716
www.shaunajones.com
shauna@shaunajones.com

From: Jim Sibley <jim.sibley@ubc.ca>
Subject: [sotl] Re: **Installation #1 - The Use of Technology in Teaching**
Date: February 24, 2011 2:00:52 PM PST
To: Shauna Jones <shauna@shaunajones.com>, Sotl List sotl@lists.ece.ubc.ca

With PODCasts....I should share two compelling uses I have seen

- A quick 10 minute overview prior to an Immunology lecture.....gave students a bit of a framework to learn with
- An instructor who felt they could not give up content coverage for classroom activities....he provided narrated PPT lectures to be viewed before class....then had students do a short 10 minutes directed paraphrase (CAT) at the start of each class....then launched into activities

jim

From: Venkatachary, Ranga <vranga@exchange.ubc.ca>
Subject: [sotl] Re: **Re: Instalment 2 - Student and Faculty Perceptions of On-Line Technologies - Jim sibley**
Date: February 24, 2011 2:47:56 PM PST
To: sotl@lists.ece.ubc.ca

Agree with you so totally, Jim! Talking of cognitive overload today makes sense to me particularly. I signed up for a webinar by Beck Tench,organised by NMC. While the talk itself was okay, there was this hectic side conversation going on in the chat section. Not all of it was pertinent to the talk and there was a lot of 'empty noise', private jokes etc. I found it annoying and it actually lessened my own involvement in the talk indirectly. I was glad to sign out. Reflecting on it, I think in real conferences a personal conversation does not really bother us if we are not part of it. Multi tasking is not always a good thing and often overrated....

Ranga

From: Hammond, Gail <ghammond@mail.ubc.ca>
Subject: [sotl] **Installation #2 Reflective Question**
Date: February 24, 2011 10:06:15 PM PST
To: sotl@lists.ece.ubc.ca

Reflective Question

While course designers always have the best of intentions, the differences between their perception of the value or appropriateness of a new learning technology may not match their students' perceptions and thus render their efforts less effective. Accordingly, special efforts must be made to ensure that we

appreciate how new technologies are perceived and consumed from a student perspective with particular emphasis on pragmatic factors.

Strongly agree to the first premise, and strongly agree to the second premise if we consider convenience an example of “pragmatic factors”. The perception of what is important to learning content, concepts, and context undoubtedly varies from student to instructor. From what I have read, students have been known to choose online education options because of the convenience (e.g., flexible, fitting into lifestyle) rather than any particular type of technology used in a course. So, when using new technologies to facilitate learning we do need to be cognizant not only of best practices but the reasons for best practices in achieving learning goals. This draws me back to my research roots in participatory inquiry and perhaps finding a role for students to be engaged along with designers during the development of courses. When all participants of the learning environment contribute to the process, we may end up with a stronger product (i.e., educational experience) for everyone.

And...those are my two cents to add to Jim's!

Gail

****Please note new email address below****

Gail Hammond, PhD, RD
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214-2205 East Mall
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From: Newton, Christie <christie.newton@familymed.ubc.ca>
Subject: [sotl] RE: Fwd: Learning Technologies in Higher Education: Challenges and Considerations
Date: February 24, 2011 10:05:00 PM PST
To: sotl@lists.ece.ubc.ca

Hello,

Sorry for the late contribution. I strongly agree with both a and b. Technology is changing and will continue to change teaching and learning, and we / faculty will need support in adapting to technology enhanced teaching and learning.

In reading and reflecting on others comments, I was particularly interested in the multitasking points and think it's a great demonstration to do math while listening to a podcast....reminded me of why we now have a law against using a cell phone and

driving. Another point of interest was the one on the importance of body language and what we miss when learning from an audio only strategy. I have taught a communication course for years to first year medical students on the importance of body language during a patient interview - I have only now thought of how my body language adds to (intended or not) my teaching (duh!). This also explains my distaste for teleconferences and my preferences for video links...bringing it back to topic, it is clear that certain technologies will support certain teaching and learning, one size will not fit all and care must be taken when applying different online strategies so as to improve, not detract from, learning.

Christie

From: Loewen, Peter [VA] <Peter.Loewen@vch.ca>
Subject: [sotl] Instalment 2 - Student and Faculty Perceptions of On-Line Technologies
Date: February 24, 2011 10:18:50 PM PST
To: sotl@lists.ece.ubc.ca

Reflective Question

While course designers always have the best of intentions, the differences between their perception of the value or appropriateness of a new learning technology may not match their students' perceptions and thus render their efforts less effective. Accordingly, special efforts must be made to ensure that we appreciate how new technologies are perceived and consumed from a student perspective with particular emphasis on pragmatic factors.

I Agree, and I Agree:

As an early adopter of technologies like lecture-capture (with video) for podcasting starting 4 years ago, I've experienced the highs and lows of trying to do something innovative for students. Thanks and pedagogically positive feedback began to flow in from some students immediately. Simultaneously, the "tech support" questions did too. Issues that were quickly apparent: limitations of using Vista as a medium (with its locked-down browser views) preventing students from downloading the files to their own hardware; video encoding issues that resulted in the files showing fine on mac browsers by not IE on windows, or randomly vice-versa; video format issues that resulted in the files working fine on iPods (as intended), but not on non-Apple MP3 players; iTunes Podcast/RSS issues where some (windows) users could view them on-screen but not on their iPod, etc, etc. Solutions all these problems were well within my locus of control as an instructor with the relevant know-how, but the time-consuming nature of adapting the content to the apparent myriad consumption preferences of the students was challenging and discouraging. Eventually I was posting every file on (1) Vista; (2) My personal website www.peterloewen.com (3) iTunes/iTunes U and keeping a "tech support notes" file constantly up to date.

An additional factor with all similar technologies is that students' consumption preferences change rapidly with time, as does the technology platform. 3 years ago most students were content watching my podcasts in their browser screens. Today many want it on their smartphone screen on the bus without having to pre-sync it there.

I'm shying away from "strongly agree" to leave room for the idea, as Dave has already identified, that we have a role in shaping student perceptions and consumption preferences as well. It is fair and important for teachers to articulate expectations and assumptions about what the intention is, where/when the experience is designed to work, and how to maximize the value of it.

Naturally, efforts by teachers to elicit perceptions about technology from students is critical to closing the loop of inquiry.

Peter

Peter Loewen, B.Sc.(Pharm), ACPR, Pharm.D., FCSHP
Regional Pharmacy Coordinator, Education & Research,
Vancouver Coastal Health/Providence Health Care.
Pharmacotherapeutic Specialist (Medicine), VGH.
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From: Dave Michelson <davem@ece.ubc.ca>
Subject: **Re: [sotl] Instalment 2 - Student and Faculty Perceptions of On-Line Technologies**
Date: February 24, 2011 10:56:33 PM PST
To: sotl@lists.ece.ubc.ca

On 2011-02-24, at 10:18 PM, Loewen, Peter [VA] wrote:

[As an early adopter of technologies like lecture-capture \(with video\) for podcasting starting 4 years ago...](#)

Hi Peter,

Was this the ProfCast software? Or another package?

--

Dave Michelson
davem@ece.ubc.ca

From: Loewen, Peter [VA] <Peter.Loewen@vch.ca>
Subject: Re: [sotl] Re: Instalment 2 - Student and Faculty Perceptions of On-Line Technologies
Date: February 25, 2011 8:04:43 AM PST
To: Dave Michelson davem@ece.ubc.ca

Yup... Profcast Excellent program for OSX. Haven't used the windows version but several colleagues have gotten into it. Non-tech nerds seem to bog down, though, when confronted with decisions about which video encoding format to choose.

Do you have a preferred tool for the straightforward audio/PPT capture scenario, Dave?

Peter

Dr. Peter Loewen
Regional Coordinator, Education & Research
Lower Mainland Pharmacy Services
Associate Professor of Pharmacy, UBC
Chair, UBC Clinical Research Ethics Board
604-374-4446

From: Clive Roberts <crobert@interchange.ubc.ca>
Subject: Re: [sotl] Re: Instalment 2 - Student and Faculty Perceptions of On-Line Technologies
Date: February 25, 2011 10:36:09 AM PST
To: Dave Michelson davem@ece.ubc.ca

Reflective question number 2. I strongly agree with the statement

"While course designers have the best of intentions....their perceptions of value () of a new learning technology may not match their students perceptions, and thus render their efforts less effective. Accordingly, special efforts must be made to ensure that we appreciate how new technologies are perceived and consumed from a student perspective with particular emphasis on pragmatic factors."

We were asked for a short justification/reflection on this, so here here is a justification/qualification of my opinion, based on my own teaching experiences which most recently have been in teaching medical students and dental students.

The question "how valuable is my teaching to the students?" is one we all ask

ourselves, constantly. "Does this mode of delivery promote effective learning?" and "would a different mode be more effective" are follow-on questions to the above. In the case of online delivery/online resources, there may be 'teaching effectiveness' and "technical requirements/issues" (I presume that this is what's meant by 'pragmatic factors').

Table 2 in the Freilich paper (1983) compares student versus teacher perceptions of value (of teaching 'properties') and the rank order is interesting; though this pre-dates current online technologies, some of the parameters ranked in the top 10 by the students have big implications for online learning.

1. "new information is presented in a logical progression" and "new ideas can be related to already established ones" - implication- teacher needs to consider control of 'release' of teaching units in online delivery (eg check understanding (quiz?) as a gatekeeper to allow entry to next level).
2. "They are provided with prompt feedback...."; "they feel confident the instructor knows the material" and "they feel free to challenge the instructor and ask questions" - are all in the top 6, are a challenge with online delivery and are (in my opinion) reasons why a face-to-face component will likely always be desirable in any teaching activity
3. "There are connections among the concepts and principles they are asked to learn" is another desirable that could be satisfied by time-release or gatekeeper-type hierarchy of online teaching resources.

Pragmatic factors that have given us problems with the year 1 medical school class have included:

I post a number of short videos (with permission from original authors) on medicine/dentistry's subset of WebCT "MEDICOL" . I was an 'early adopter' in this area. Our IT had problems posting the videos. At the beginning students used to report lack of internet capacity, compromising their ability to view the videos. These problems have evaporated; either medicol's capacity has improved or (perhaps) students' access to high speed internet /ability to view quicktime videos has improved.

Use of the system as primarily a 'dump' of learning resources (powerpoint presentations, videos of lectures (really, ppts with voice-over), papers to be read or videos to be watched). It is hard to see this system as interesting or up to date from the students' point of view. These are shortcomings of the system we have, which exists in its current form for a variety of reasons including lack of instructor experience with WebCT technology& capabilities, intellectual property issues and lack of IT support, driving a need for IT to control and standardize faculty use of the site; we have a range from "would never use WebCT without dedicated IT staff help" to "would like more capabilities".

best wishes

Clive R Roberts PhD
clive.roberts@ubc.ca

Associate Professor,

University of British Columbia
UBC Centre for Blood Research
UBC Dentistry
UBC Respiratory Medicine

From: Dave Michelson <davem@ece.ubc.ca>
Subject: Re: [sotl] Re: Instalment 2 - Student and Faculty Perceptions of On-Line Technologies
Date: February 25, 2011 11:06:22 AM PST
To: sotl@lists.ece.ubc.ca

Thanks, Peter.

No, I'm still looking for a good tool for doing this. ProfCast caught my eye; I'll likely download a copy this weekend, in fact.

When I read your description and noted how long you had been using it, I figured that you must be using it, too. We should compare notes after I've had a chance to play with it a bit.

For the group:

ProfCast
<http://www.profcast.com/>

From: Jim Sibley <jim.sibley@ubc.ca>
Subject: Re: [sotl] Re: Re: Instalment 2 - Student and Faculty Perceptions of On-Line Technologies
Date: February 25, 2011 11:08:41 AM PST
To: Dave Michelson <davem@ece.ubc.ca>
Dave

We can give you a tool called Camtasia....I bought a hundred copies....probably 4 years ago....currently about 90 of them are in the wild

It is an older version and PC only....but works fine

Luis Linares is the PODCasting guru in the faculty

jim

From: Shauna Jones <shauna@shaunajones.com>
Subject: [sotl] SoTL - Installment 2 - Reflective Question
Date: February 25, 2011 12:53:14 PM PST
To: Sotl List sotl@lists.ece.ubc.ca

While course designers always have the best of intentions, the differences between their perception of the value or appropriateness of a new learning technology may not match their students' perceptions and thus render their efforts less effective. Accordingly, special efforts must be made to ensure that we appreciate how new technologies are perceived and consumed from a student perspective with particular emphasis on pragmatic factors.

I agree to both statements. I continue to think about the importance of perceptions. As I read Peter's post, I noticed that I became overwhelmed by the technology he wrote about and in thinking about all the things he had to learn in order to do this. During this process, I realized how I might have a tendency to make a very strong case for using a particular technology based on my own comfort zone. I also perceive a resistance in some of my colleagues around this. Because of any perceptions one might have about the time and effort involved in learning and using a new technology, a course designer may take longer to see a new technology as valuable and appropriate; unlike an early-adopter like Dave.

I like Gail's comment about finding a way to engage students in the development of a course. I agree that sometimes students' perception of what they need and what would actually help them learn the best may be different. Then, is it a matter of managing perceptions - both the students and the course designers?

Shauna

Risk more than others think is safe.
Care more than others think is wise.
Dream more than others think is practical.
Expect more than others think is possible.
Maxim

Shauna Jones
604-785-2716
www.shaunajones.com
shauna@shaunajones.com

From: Dave Michelson <davem@ece.ubc.ca>

Subject: [sotl] Instalment 3 - Formative Review of a Website for a "Trimedia" Course

Date: February 25, 2011 9:49:26 AM PST

To: sotl@lists.ece.ubc.ca

Instalment 3 - Formative Review of a "Trimedia" Course Website

Our final instalment focuses on the formative review of the **EECE 361 - Signals and Systems Laboratory** course website.

I refer to EECE 361 as a trimedia course because we deliver content to the students in three ways: Lectures, Lab Assignments and On-Line. According to Melody Buckner's taxonomy, EECE 361 is a **web-hybrid** course because significant course content is delivered on-line.

- - -

When I took over EECE 361 in September 2003, I inherited a course that was held in very low regard by students. I have since transformed EECE 361 into one of the most popular courses in third year. I did so by revising the lab assignments, strengthening the supporting lectures, setting high expectations and, importantly, by building a strong course website.

The course website plays an important role because EECE 361 has just one hour of lectures per week. (The three-hour labs are held every other week.) Accordingly, one of my objectives in building the website was to provide important supplementary material that could be consumed outside of class time, including multimedia demonstrations, video tutorials, Java applets, etc.

To save time, I didn't develop any of the multimedia materials myself. They were all taken from other sources.

I declined to use Vista/WebCT at my students' request. They wanted access to the course materials after EECE 361 was over and Vista/WebCT courses don't permit such access.

Organization of the website was key. To my surprise, one of the aspects that students really like is the way that I colour code the material according to its type.

COLOUR CODE				
Lecture Notes	Lab Assignments	Templates	Supplementary Material & Application Notes	Computer/Web-based Tutorials

The attached teaching reviews confirm the high level of student satisfaction with the

course. However, the course website has never been formally peer reviewed.

Therefore, I invite you to visit the website and provide constructive feedback including recommendations for improvement, alternative strategies, etc.

The website can be found at

<http://courses.ece.ubc.ca/361>

The password protected area can be accessed using the following username and password:

user: sotl

password: sotl1102

You might wish to pursue this over the weekend when you have a bit more time. Please provide your remarks no later than noon on Monday.

In the meantime, here's a reflective question that we can discuss via the sotl@lists.ece.ubc.ca mailing list today and over the weekend..

- - -

Reflective Question

When I first started building course websites, I added Java applets and similar multimedia content simply to add variety and spark interest.

As we decide whether to deliver course content via lecture, PDF download, podcast, videocast, or profcast, I wonder how we should interpret Marshall McLuhan's claim that "the medium is the message". Does it apply here?

a. strongly agree

b. agree

c. neutral

d. disagree

e. strongly disagree

From: Hammond, Gail <ghammond@mail.ubc.ca>

Subject: [sotl] Installment #3 Reflective Question

Date: February 27, 2011 12:42:31 PM PST

To: sotl@lists.ece.ubc.ca

Assuming that almost 100% of UBC instructors use technology in some way for teaching and learning purposes, it seems to me that the choices we make in terms of the types of technologies that we use and how much we rely on using different technologies truly reveals something of ourselves to our students. So, in that regard, I agree with Marshall McLuhan that the medium is the message. However, I don't agree that the medium is the entire message, but our choices of technologies do provide insight into our approaches to teaching and learning and can be effective tools in achieving our pedagogical goals.

Dave, your EECE 361 website was refreshing to view, well organized, and easy to navigate even for me as a non-engineer visitor. I found your pedagogical strategies remarkably supportive to the students. Importantly, you counterbalanced this supportiveness by clearly informing the students they are responsible for mastering the material and achieving the course objectives, and you are there to help them on their journeys. Your use of a variety of support resources (e.g., training modules, background material, practice exams...) was appreciated by and useful to the students in moving them along on their learning trajectories. I don't have much to offer in terms of suggestions for improvement.

Thanks for the inside view!

Gail

From: Dave Michelson <davem@ece.ubc.ca>

Subject: [sotl] Thanks...

Date: February 27, 2011 12:55:57 PM PST

To: sotl@lists.ece.ubc.ca

Hi, all.

Thank you for participating in our on-line SoTL presentation on **Learning Technologies in Higher Education: Challenges and Considerations**.

We discussed several issues, including:

- how on-line technologies originally developed to facilitate distance education will likely transform courses that are conducted in campus settings and how this will affect our teaching

- the extent to which student and instructor expectations of on-line technologies differ and how to manage students' expectations in order to best achieve our objectives

We also touched upon criteria for selecting the most appropriate on-line technologies for our courses.

I was particularly struck by the depth and diversity of opinion regarding the details even when we are in general agreement regarding the base issue.

It was a very interesting experience that underscores the need to solicit input even when agreement seems to be unanimous!

- - -

Thanks also for the suggestions regarding the EECE 361 course website.

Best suggestion: You might instrument the site using Google-Analytics in order to track site usage during the term.

Response: *I already do so for my research site but never bothered to do so for my course sites. It's easy enough to do and will resolve usage down to the html page and day. It cannot resolve downloads of individual documents or content. One interesting statistic that would emerge: the fraction of usage while the students are on campus compared to their usage while off campus, e.g., at home.*

<http://www.google.com/analytics/>

Other suggestions:

You should consider breaking the Course Materials web page up into individual pages that correspond to course modules.

Response: *I had thought about that but it would make the page much more difficult to maintain. I might follow that approach when I redesign the **EECE 483 - Antennas and Propagation** web page.*

Thanks, and we'll see you on Friday!

--

Dave Michelson
davem@ece.ubc.ca

From: Dave Michelson <davem@ece.ubc.ca>
Subject: **Re: [sotl] Installment #3 Reflective Question**
Date: February 27, 2011 2:07:52 PM PST
To: sotl@lists.ece.ubc.ca

Thanks, Gail.

Before releasing the reflective question for instalment 3, I did a quick search to determine whether others had tried to draw a connection between McLuhan's claim and on-line teaching. To my surprise, reference to "the medium is the message" is made in literally thousands of web pages or documents related to on-line teaching but few if any try to explain what they actually mean by this. (It is as if they assume that it is self-evident!)

My own thought was that McLuhan's observation implies that student perception of a teaching point is heavily influenced by the method used to present it. The implication is that we can work backwards and ensure that our most important teaching points are highlighted in the most influential media and so forth down the line is, to my mind, an interesting one. It implies that one can derive best practices for designing an on-line or blended course. E.g., "Must Knows" should be presented using this approach; "Should Knows" should be presented using that approach, etc.

Your thought that we are also revealing ourselves seems most relevant. Many studies have shown that instructor presence is as important a consideration for on-line learners as it is for face-to-face learners. If our use of media is inconsistent or even contradictory, the student will assume that we are also inconsistent and we'll lose their confidence (regardless of the validity of our message)! A very good point, indeed!

From: Dave Michelson <davem@ece.ubc.ca>
Subject: [sotl] Fwd: Survey - Innovation in Engineering Education
Date: February 27, 2011 5:39:07 PM PST
To: sotl@lists.ece.ubc.ca

Hi, all.

FYI. Note this is only for engineering educators but am passing it on to the group for interest.

Prior to joining Purdue, Dr. Strobel was an assistant professor in educational technology at Concordia University, Montreal, where he was also a member of the Centre for the Study of Learning and Performance.

Begin forwarded message:

From: Angela van Barneveld <noreply@qemailserver.com>
Date: February 27, 2011 5:00:05 PM PST
To: Dave Michelson <dmichelson@ieee.org>
Subject: Survey - Innovation in Engineering Education
Reply-To: Angela van Barneveld <evanbarn@purdue.edu>

Dear Engineering Educators / Chers éducateurs en ingénierie, *Ce message est*

bilingue. My name is Angela van Barneveld. I am a PhD candidate at Purdue University – Learning Design and Technology. My advisor is Dr. Johannes Strobel, faculty in the School of Engineering Education. My thesis work is focused on the exploration of tensions that engineering educators experience and address (at the classroom and system level) with the implementation of innovative pedagogies (e.g., problem-based, project-based, design-based) into one’s teaching practice. I am specifically seeking engineering educators as survey participants. The survey should take about 20 minutes to complete. In addition to my gratitude for your participation and support, I’d be very grateful if you would forward this email/survey link on to your colleagues who are also involved in the education of tomorrow’s engineers. This research study has been approved by Purdue University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB). Please contact me if you have any questions.

Mon nom est Angela van Barneveld. Je suis une candidate au Doctorat à l'université de Purdue, département de Learning Design and Technology. Mon conseiller est Dr. Johannes Strobel, corps enseignant dans l'école de l'éducation de technologie. Mon travail de thèse se concentre sur l'exploration des tensions que les éducateurs en ingénierie rencontrent ainsi que les solutions employées (au niveau de la salle de classe et du système éducatif en général) dans leurs pratiques pédagogiques en termes de mise en œuvre de pédagogies innovatrices (par exemple, basées sur des problèmes, basées sur des projets, basées fondées sur le design/conception). Je suis à la recherche spécifiquement d'éducateurs en ingénierie comme participants. Vous êtes invités à partager vos expériences en remplissant le questionnaire. Celui-ci ne devrait nécessiter qu'environ 20 minutes. En plus de ma gratitude pour votre participation et appui, je serais très reconnaissante si vous pourriez expédier ce courriel ainsi que le lien au sondage à vos collègues qui sont également impliqués dans l'éducation des ingénieurs de demain. Ce projet de recherche est approuvé par le Purdue University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). N'hésitez pas à communiquer avec si vous avez quelque questions que ce soit. If you have already completed the survey, there is no need to do so again. / Si vous avez déjà rempli le questionnaire, il n'y a aucun besoin de le faire encore.

Follow this link to the Survey / Suivez ce lien au questionnaire (vous pouvez le remplir en anglais ou en français): Take the Survey

Or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser / *Ou la copie et collent l'URL ci-dessous dans votre navigateur*
d'Internet: https://purdue.qualtrics.com/WRQualtricsSurveyEngine/?SID=SV_cZraJsXL8g0WmQQ&RID=MLRP_9ZulvNGduAJ7r5q&_ =1

Angela van Barneveld

PhD Candidate, Learning Design and Technology
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Dave Michelson
davem@ece.ubc.ca

From: Dave Michelson <davem@ece.ubc.ca>
Subject: [sotl] Re: A paper on differences in perceptions
Date: February 27, 2011 7:58:42 PM PST
To: sotl@lists.ece.ubc.ca

Gail Hammond wrote:

Hi Dave,

I'm not sure if you have seen the attached article, but it fits in well with installment #2.

Cheers,

Gail

Martens, Rob , Bastiaens, Theo and Kirschner, Paul A. (2007) 'New Learning Design in Distance Education: The impact on student perception and motivation', Distance Education, 28: 1, 81-93.

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01587910701305327>

From: Venkatachary, Ranga <vranga@exchange.ubc.ca>
Subject: Re: [sotl] Instalment 3 - Formative Review of a "Trimedia" Course
Date: February 28, 2011 11:15:33 AM PST
To: Dave Michelson <davem@ece.ubc.ca>

Dave,

Few quick observations on the course site. (i) Utter clarity and student-centeredness in the design -e.g., the one line blurbs on the sub sections, the division of content for practice, and demonstrative content from other institutions - I found these to be a reflection of your approach to your subject matter and teaching - the organization of this course is only an instance of how you think and function as a subject matter expert/teacher, I would say.

(ii) I liked the idea of fostering critical thinking and problem solving through the emphasis on practice and self study in an online environment. Am still not sure if I would agree with McLuhan's idea of the medium being the message. Probably not. The message comes from your thinking and expression. The medium is well used as a result.

I saw the suggestion from the point of view learning analytics on site usage. It may be interesting to collect qualitative data from the user groups - TAs and student cohorts on

their experience and perceptions.
Thanks for the opportunity to engage with all this. See you Friday
Ranga

From: Dave Michelson <davem@ece.ubc.ca>
Subject: Re: [sotl] Instalment 3 - Formative Review of a Website for a "Trimedia" Course
Date: February 28, 2011 1:35:11 PM PST
To: sotl@lists.ece.ubc.ca

Ranga - Thanks for your thoughts.

I'm glad to hear that you and others found the site easy to follow and navigate.

(While that's my goal, I'm too familiar with the site to be completely sure that I've reached it!)

From: Clive Roberts <crobert@interchange.ubc.ca>
Subject: Re: [sotl] Re: Instalment 3 - Formative Review of a Website for a "Trimedia" Course
Date: February 28, 2011 3:41:11 PM PST
To: Dave Michelson <davem@ece.ubc.ca>
Cc: sotl@lists.ece.ubc.ca

Hi Dave

Like Ranga, I really liked your website. I have not been able to get what I would really like with WebCT vista (though to be fair, I am not an expert and I could have tried harder with WebCT vista). It is interesting to see you develop a completely separate site in order to be able to get the look and feel you desire. It looks really professional and easy to navigate and I have no doubt the students like it.

I followed a couple of your links for interest (having used Lego Mindstorms with some kids in a Robotics event some years ago, I was interested in the Labview stuff). Medium 'is' the message? Well, I'm sure students are more likely to 'get' the message if it comes through a medium like yours. If the medium isn't appealing, or is difficult to navigate, they aren't going to access what we want them to access.

Seeing this made me want to develop something like it for my own course, and tipped me over the brink into 'getting help' from our IT staff to generate something that I hope will be a bit more professional than my current webCT efforts.

I also like WebCT's tracking system, so I can see if the students have actually done the things I asked of them. That's a positive for WebCT.

best wishes
Clive Roberts

From: Dave Michelson <davem@ece.ubc.ca>
Subject: Re: [sotl] Re: Re: Instalment 3 - Formative Review of a Website for a "Trimedia" Course
Date: March 1, 2011 7:29:57 AM PST
To: Clive Roberts <crobert@interchange.ubc.ca>
Cc: sotl@lists.ece.ubc.ca

Thanks, Clive. You'll have to share your new website with the group when it's ready!

--

Dave Michelson
davem@ece.ubc.ca

From: Suzie Lavallee <slavalle@mail.ubc.ca>
Subject: RE: [sotl] Thanks...
Date: March 1, 2011 3:27:34 PM PST
To: Dave Michelson davem@ece.ubc.ca

Hi Dave

I have to apologize for not contributing a thing to the online project you just completed.

This was obviously a lot of work for you.

Unfortunately, my daughter and I were both hit with the flu last week and I have been seriously struggling to keep up with my regular work.

I'm just reading through the responses and emails you and others were sending out and am finding it to be very helpful and interesting.

Thanks so much for your work.

Suzie

From: Dave Michelson <davem@ece.ubc.ca>
Subject: Re: [sotl] Thanks...
Date: March 1, 2011 9:08:09 PM PST
To: Suzie Lavallee slavalle@mail.ubc.ca

Thanks, Suzie.

It's a rare opportunity to interact with colleagues concerning such issues! I'm sorry to hear that you were ill, especially after your initial enthusiastic reply. I hope that you're feeling better now.

From: Shauna Jones <shauna@shaunajones.com>
Subject: Re: Re: [sotl] Instalment 3 - Formative Review of a Website for a

"Trimedia" Course

Date: March 3, 2011 8:43:59 AM PST

To: Dave Michelson davem@ece.ubc.ca

Hi Dave,

It's taken me awhile to respond to your request. I do apologize - it's been a crazy week!

I really appreciated having the opportunity to view your website. It is very clear how much time and effort you put in to organizing it so well.

My comments are as follows:

1. I found the website well organized. Users could easily navigate to the different sections once they understand the colour coding.
2. By using colour coding you are training your user to easily identify the different sections. I'd imagine that within a very short period of time they would no longer have to look at the code for the meaning of the different colours. Initially, it took me a while to determine what the colours meant. I found the section explaining the use of the colours was sandwiched between two other tables. I think it would be helpful to have some sort of brief orientation to the website. Somewhat, like welcoming a person to a new environment. This is something you likely do in class.
3. It's my opinion that you have likely reduced resistance with your audience because of how the site is organized. My sense is that users want "to get in and get out" and don't want to waste time and you've accomplished this. I've recently had a conversation with a colleague, who teaches the same Business Communication course I teach, that students need to learn how to organize their own information and that by me doing it for them (I use WebCT presently) might not help them develop skills around organization their files and information. I'm considering his point. I do find that we have so much information coming at us, that the more organized the information, the easier it is to get at. The easier it is to get at the less resistance I have to the intention of the message and to the message itself.
4. I tend to like consistency and would prefer to see the order of the larger table to be in the same order as the table that provides the link to the different sections. Therefore, put Background Information before MATLAB Training in the larger table.

From: Dave Michelson <davem@ece.ubc.ca>

Subject: [sotl] Re: Instalment 3 - Formative Review of a Website for "Trimedia"

Course

Date: March 3, 2011 9:11:08 AM PST

To: Shauna Jones <shauna@shaunajones.com>

Cc: sotl@lists.ece.ubc.ca

Thanks, Shauna. Much appreciated.

Your suggestions regarding a slight re-ordering of two of the sections of the website makes very good sense! I'll implement them during the next few days.

Your colleague has raised an interesting point. In my experience, trainees learn from three sources: what we say, what we do, and from what their colleagues say and do. I like to think that a well-organized site is 'leading by example'. Perhaps the real trick is to create opportunities for them to demonstrate similar organizational skill, i.e., to follow the instructor's example but on a smaller scale, and to ensure that it is recognized.

I've been most interested to see the responses to the McLuhan question. It certainly underscores that the use of learning technologies is still in its early stages. It will be interesting to see how understanding of the best ways to exploit new technologies unfolds in the next few years!

###