Pedagogy and Strategies to Maximize Learning in On-line courses - Benefits, Limitations and Best Practices of Online Coursework

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Pedagogy and Strategies to Maximize Learning in On-line courses -
Benefits, Limitations and Best Practices of Online Coursework

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BENEFITS, LIMITATIONS AND BEST PRACTICES OF ONLINE COURSEWORK

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Convenience ……or an improved tool for educating?
AN IMPROVED TOOL FOR EDUCATING IF

- Traditional courses are not merely thrown on-line
- Courses are pedagogically rich and diverse
- Courses are built to utilize and optimize the benefits of on-line deployment
POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF ON-LINE COURSEWORK

- Education more accessible and affordable
- Opportunity to interact with peers around the globe
- Students learning is paralleled with professional requirements of the 21st century
- Students are more diverse
  - professionally
  - culturally
  - ethically
  - geographically

Results in educational richness if student interaction is promoted
BENEFICIAL COMPONENTS

- Initial and continuing faculty/student and student/student face to face time
- On-line dialogues
- Interactive assignments (drafts to final)
- Sufficient faculty to student interaction (via email, phone, online dialogue)
- Active learning components (transfer from faculty centered to student centered learning)
Fact: On-line Dialogue Significantly Increases Critical Thinking Skills

Dialogues – on-line discussions where students develop and communicate their understanding on course topics.

- **Promotes active learning** (from spoon fed to student led coursework)
- **Promotes autonomous learning**
- **Facilitates well developed, researched responses**
- **Includes students less likely to participate** in live discussions and minimizes discussion domination
On-line Learning promotes Self Paced Learning

- Increases student performance - students are able to master learning objectives at a faster rate

- Students who need more time are allowed to self pace their learning

- Overall - students stay engaged and move to the next higher level
On-line Learning promotes Reduction in Isolation for Introverted Students

- Additional Psychological support for introverted students by reducing the feeling of isolation
- Reduction in drop out rates
- Moderates conversation monopolizers
Recommendations

Revamp Traditional Coursework

- Do not merely use on-line coursework as an alternative deployment for a traditional course
- Rewrite the course to take advantage of on-line tools and tactics that foster increased critical thinking skills
- Ensure that course are pedagogically sound and diverse
- In Accounting – Review Online Homework tools – WileyPlus, MyAccountingLab (Pearson)
Recommendations
Understand Barriers to Learning

- Age impacted ability to learn on-line,
- Occupation was not a factor
- Students with stronger computer, research and information gathering skills were more successful
Recommendations

Ensure Sufficient faculty/student and student/student interaction.

- More important than the delivery method
- A well developed on-line course results in a significant increase in faculty/student and student/student interaction
- Include on-line dialogue, email, face to face, phone, etc.
- Consider beginning with residency or upfront team building
- Consider a Cohort model to facilitate relationship building
Recommendations

- **Require and train professors** to transform and develop their on-line course development and teaching skills.

- **Plan for sufficient course development time** – Pre-developed curriculum seldom available or appropriate.

- **Effective on-line curriculum requires innovation, time, testing and revision**.

- **Complete and test courses before launch**.

- **Technical Assistance** - Make sure the institution provides sufficient technical support and expertise.

- **Planned down time** – Interaction time can potentially be 24/7 if not managed.
Specific Considerations for Accounting Coursework

- Include dialogue and discussion options
- Select a text with extensive on-line tools and assessments (quizzes, self study computations, etc)
- Utilize virtual team work and projects
- Incorporate webinars and other visual instruction tools for computations and problems
- Determine mechanism for exams
Not all Courses are a Fit for On-line Deployment

- Courses that include theory, research, reading, synthesizing, and discussion are strong candidates for online deployment.

- Courses where visual observation is required (art, physical education) or extensive computational problem solving (mathematics, engineering, certain accounting and finance courses) may not be a good fit for a 100% online curriculum.

- Consider proctored exams.