

Jamie Becker

Instructional Philosophy

As an educator, it is my job to impart knowledge to my students. In the 21st century, we have found the increase of technology that goes along with education. As we continue to grow as a society, I believe that online will be more important than ever. However, online learning generally looks different than in a traditional brick and mortar course. According to Bach, Haynes and Lewis Smith (2007), online learning is about the creative development of knowledge through various interactions.

My job is not only that of educator, but facilitator. Of course I want my students to have mastery of the material. But my job is more than that. It is a collaboration of minds. Not only collaboration between me and my students, but from student to student. Collaboration has the potential to “expand the level of learning achieved” (Palloff & Pratt, 2007, p. 180). A melding of minds, you might say.

Is online learning for everyone? Certainly not. However, I believe that online learning promotes a deeper level of learning versus memorizing facts and figures. It promotes community, shared knowledge, and quite possibly learning more information than what was written on a syllabus.

Technology's Role

The role of technology is paramount to this course. This course will be presented solely online, with no face to face interactions. The Sakai Learning Management System will play a vital part in the course, as this is where all communications will be posted, discussions held, and assignments submitted. It is assumed that students in the course will have a basic understanding of computer literacy.

A basic understanding of the program Adobe Captivate 6 is vital to students wishing to work in the instructional design field, as well as those educators who want to take what they are teaching to the next level. As online learning continues to grow, the understanding and demonstration of specific software will only serve to enhance student learning. It takes learning from simple PowerPoint slides to something more dynamic, more interactive, and more engaging.

Resources

The resources I chose for this course are based on the theme of the course:

Adobe Captivate 6

Adobe Captivate 6 is a program that is designed to create a wide range of different eLearning content. I

wanted to stay with the newest version, as it includes ways to create mobile versions of trainings, can integrate into various Learning Management Systems, and a whole host of other features, which can be found at <http://www.adobe.com/products/captivate/features.html>. The student population would be someone who will be or is currently an instructional designer or educator, so this software is appropriate for the course.

Sakai

I chose Sakai as the Learning Management System for this course based on prior experience. In all the web design courses I have taken previously, we used Sakai in lieu of BlackBoard. I feel that this LMS really allows for use regarding uploading of files, images, or the like. It seems to be more conducive to this type of course.

Student Population

The student population for this course would be graduate students and education professionals who may be returning for a course or two for professional development. They have a sincere interest in technology and how it affects education and training. They are likely also to be passionate about using new technology in interesting ways, such as designing instruction that will keep the interest and attention of 21st century learners, as well as diversify how instruction and training are presented.

Technological Experiences

This population is generally familiar with a whole host of technology, including some basic web design and course design. However, they may not be familiar with this specific software, or even how to create a presentation or training that has multimedia, be interactive, and even provides a way to quiz the user. Like any software, there is a learning curve to understanding and gaining a good grasp of the software, but again, since this population has a decent familiarity with technology, it should not be as difficult as a novice computer user.

Class Dynamics

Due to the fact that this course is completely online, the course dynamic is certainly different than one held in a traditional classroom. However, I tend to see this as a benefit. Students, such as myself, who don't easily ask questions or for help in a classroom will more likely seek help from the instructor or peers. Although there is less or no face to face interactions, interaction does in fact take place and is just as significant (Bach, Haynes & Lewis Smith, 2007).

My role changes from the educator who disseminates information to the educator who facilitates the course. My role is to be fully engaged in order to fully create positive and beneficial learning experiences. This could be by facilitating and participating in various discussions, answering questions,

and gives beneficial information during the course (Bach, Haynes & Lewis Smith, 2007). I should be the person who not only assigns readings and projects, but is there to support, answer questions, and make sure the course participants become more of a community than merely participants.

Benefits

There are a number of benefits to this type of course. As the course is solely online, attendance is not generally an issue. Projects can be worked on at any time of day or night, and questions can be asked right when they occur.

Ideas can be shared, and constructive criticism can occur. As previously mentioned, some students are anxious of speaking in a traditional classroom, where they can see their peers' responses, body language, and facial expressions. This type of course allows those factors to be removed, therefore opening the door to more questions being asked, and more interactivity and communication of ideas and thoughts.

One other benefit is the sharing of knowledge. One student may have more knowledge of a topic, like audio/visual, than another. If a question regarding this topic is asked, the student with more knowledge can assist with sharing their knowledge, not only with the student asking the question, but others who may not have known the solution, either. This can more freely occur in an online setting, where one does not have to raise hands, "show up" the instructor, or have the person asking the question feel stupid.

Challenges

The biggest challenge that I can anticipate is not being able to work directly with students. I will not have a way to directly show them how to solve an issue. This is unlike a traditional classroom, where I could go to the student and assist immediately.

Discussions and creation of learning communities are one of the other challenges to this course. The goal would be to allow supportive learning and prevent feelings of isolation and feeling distressed (Dabbagh & Bannan-Ritland, 2005). Beginning the course with introductions, their computer knowledge, and experiences of online learning can create an engaging atmosphere and community (Palloff & Pratt, 2007). The instructor also needs to make sure discussions are actually occurring, such as by utilizing discussion board assignments to create dialogue.

Copyright Issues

This type of course lends itself to a number of copyright issues. As this course lends itself to using a variety of media, I have to make sure my students are aware of what copyright is and issues that can occur when using copyrighted material. However, because the projects my students would create would likely only be viewed by a very limited amount of people, fair use generally applies (Dabbagh & Bannan-

Ritland, 2005). I can also try to avoid dealing with copyright issues. This can be done by having my students use clipart, images and audio/video files that I create, or have students create their own media.

References

Bach, S., Haynes, P., & Lewis Smith, J. (2007). Online learning and teaching in higher education. Maidenhead, Berkshire, England: Open University Press.

Dabbagh, N., & Bannan-Ritland, B. (2005). Online learning concepts, strategies, and application. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education Incorporated.

Palloff, R., & Pratt, K. (2007). Building online learning communities: Effective strategies for the virtual classroom. (2nd ed.). San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass.