Abstract: A newly developed Internet-based distributed learning system is applied in a course that introduces future teachers to the genres of children’s literature. While the course is being taught to a classroom of onsite students, the system integrates the visual and auditory images of the professor and students through streaming video technology with PowerPoint, the whiteboard, video clips, and web access, capturing the multimedia features of children’s literature and conveying the classroom experience asynchronously.

Description of the Display
Still photos of a class conducted and recorded with the system, including webcam shots of instructor, class discussion; representative PowerPoint slides, whiteboard annotation, and web activities.

Challenges

1. Students want both personalized as well as asynchronous access.

A Fall 2002 survey of students in five UH Hilo bachelor’s degree programs offered via distributed learning technology at sites across the state of Hawai‘i has found that students believe that

- instructor “presence”
- prompt and individualized feedback, email and/or face-to-face
- a sense of belonging to a group of like-minded classmates

are crucial to

- mastery of complex course content
- student motivation to perform at highest levels
- student persistence

The Hawai‘i survey findings confirm those of other student-centered studies (Bishop; Ellsworth; Hara and Kling; van der Veen).

2. An upper-division course in children’s literature demands interaction and multimedia.

- Higher-order intellectual skills
  - the analysis of literary works
  - the study of the social forces at play in such works
  - an understanding of how readers construct texts and texts construct readers
  - negotiation of a “community of interpretation” among students

- Mixed modes of presentation and discussion for the different genres:
  - quality picture books educate the narrative sense as well as the visual.
  - poetry must be heard and spoken as well as scanned verbally and visually
  - classic fairy tales are realized in many cultural artifacts

- Different learning and communicative styles
  - visual, auditory, tactile, and kinesthetic senses
  - writing, reading, and talking
Solution

The D-Learning system

- available on site and at a distance, both synchronously and asynchronously
- the interactive presence of instructor and the voices of other students
- synchronous and asynchronous email contact
- PowerPoint presentations, scanned images, video clips, whiteboard activities, web materials, and video camera shots of real cultural artifacts.

Method

The distributed learning system combines Microsoft, Tegrity, and IBM software. Instructors use Microsoft PowerPoint software to prepare lectures, talks, demonstrations, instructions, illustrations and conferences.

References

Bishop, A. Come into My Parlor Said the Spider to the Fly: Critical Reflections on Web-Based Education from a Student’s Perspective. Distance Education 23 (2000): 231-236.


