

# Designing for the future of webcasting

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**Abstract:** This poster presentation offers an overview of the unique design features that must be considered when using webcasts and other advanced features in an online special education course for teacher candidates. Student comments and suggestions are explored and recommendations are made for those instructors considering on-line course delivery.

## Introduction

Technology can support rigorous, academic learning through course construction and pedagogically sound practices while adjusting to shifts in teacher delivery and changing classroom cultures as more and more students opt for on-line learning environments. This session explores the development of an on-line course from the perspective of a novice user of webcasts and *iPods*<sup>TM</sup>. Student comments and suggestions are explored and recommendations are made for those instructors considering on-line course delivery.

Mobile classrooms are the focus of the future as more and more traditional universities are encouraging on-line course delivery options. In fact, some universities offer full degrees on-line. Given that the revenue that can be generated from web-based courses can be substantial, and students are willing to pay for this option, universities are creating incentives for professors and lecturers to develop on-line learning environments. These courses appeal to a broader base and less traditional type of a student, thus capitalizing on a changing culture, transporting learning and education into alternative modes. The problem, however, is that many instructors who have minimal knowledge of the technology are preparing on-line courses. This session discusses several aspects of on-line courses, especially webcasting.

## Design Issues

Webcasting is a way to deliver instructional material to a much broader educational clientele than just to those who can attend traditional classrooms. The proper use of this technology, however, is not without some difficulty.

First, developing an on-line course in order to compete with rigor of traditional classroom courses and to meet the standards of professional accreditation bodies is challenging. Careful thought must be given to the structure of the content. Content must be presented in a clear, organized manner, providing for easy accessibility to information and instructions for completion and submission of assignments.

Second, students must have characteristics that will lead to successful completion of the coursework. For instance, students must have a certain degree of ability to be self-starters. They need to pay attention to detail and timelines. In addition, students must be computer and technology competent before beginning the course. Finally, students need access to state of the art equipment and programs, including high-speed internet connections.

Third, instructors need to realize that operating an on-line course is similar to flying a jet when a pilot is familiar with a twin engine. Learning the technology for on-line delivery is only the beginning of the complications that an instructor encounters. For instance, while webcasting is a simple concept and fairly easy to use, it takes time to learn the steps that are required for publishing this format. In addition, the time commitment needed after the initial course setup is still extensive.

## **Concluding Comments**

The session further explicates the following: a) structure that is necessary for students to acquire the same knowledge and skills they would if they were in traditional classrooms, b) the attributes that both students and instructors need to have or acquire in order to make on-line learning successful for both the student and the instructor, c) shared responsibility of the university, instructor, and students. Presenters support the above assertions using student comments and suggestions that will help those who are interested in establishing on-line courses using webcasts in order to enrich the learning environment. The session provides recommendations that will help make this endeavor more successful.

## **Reference**

Richardson, W. (2005). *Blogs, Wikis, and Podcasts, and other powerful web tools for classrooms*. Corwin Press.