The Significant Challenge
That Distance Learning Represents to Educators

Abstract

Distance education, e-learning, Web-based courses, etc. represent opportunities for educational institutions, faculty, and students. There is no doubt about that, assuming that these myriad initiatives are appropriately orchestrated.

What educators must realize is that conducting courses within these delivery modes is a tremendous amount of work, plain and simple. They will be challenged at every turn and in ways that they likely did not anticipate.

The success of their course(s) ultimately depends upon how they apply themselves as educators to the task before them or at hand. If they approach these efforts with anything less than the utmost in preparation, comprehensiveness, dedication, and positive attitude they will be risking failure and term-long struggles and disappointment. They and their students will likely have a negative learning experience. This is, of course, just the opposite of what we all want to achieve, every time we enter a classroom, regardless of what form today’s classroom might take.

They are dedicated to learning, determined to do an exemplary job of delivering and facilitating outstanding educational quality. They best be prepared for the associated amount of time, effort, and care that must go into both developing online courses and delivering them with the requisite amount of associated academic rigor.

This short paper and presentation will include but not necessarily be limited to the following:
1. developing the online course
2. producing a comprehensive syllabus
3. setting learner expectations
4. detailing educator expectations
5. taking advantage of all of the available features and resources in a given platform
6. synchronous course components
7. asynchronous course components
8. educator availability issues
9. what can go wrong will go wrong
10. framing the best possible course and learning experience.

This could also be done as an interactive discussion, enabling participants to share, respond to, and offer recommendations for the significant challenges that they face as educators conducting courses at a distance.

Short paper will follow.