Partial Online Learning Environment  
- An Alternative of Online Learning and Face-to-Face Learning

Presenter  
Name: Hao Cen  
Organization: The University of Texas at Austin  
Address: 1300 S Pleasant Valley Rd Apt 159, Austin, TX 78741  
Phone: 512-444-4346  
E-mail address: JEFF_CEN@YAHOO.COM

Topic Area: Distance/Flexible Education

I. Abstract

Online learning is to traditional face-to-face learning what e-business is to traditional companies. Much has been know about the disadvantages of online learning. More and more researchers turn to find learning models integrating both advantages of online learning and face-to-face learning. Partial online learning environment is one of them. This hybrid learning environment has both the traditional face-to-face lectures and computer mediated communication, such as web material, online question posting, and email list. The purpose of this presentation is to outline this emerging environment and determine if it finds its popularity with instructors and students. Three classes with different levels of online elements were chosen to participate in this research. The ratio between online and face-to-face is discussed in this presentation.

II. Summary

Online learning environments can be categorized into five stages based on the ratio of online learning and face-to-face learning. Pure online and pure face-to-face are the two extremes. Online predominant, half-half, and face-to-face predominant are the three middle phases. In this study, partial online learning is limited in the phase of face-to-face dominant with the integration of elements of online learning.

As the traditional courses can easily adopt this partial online learning environment, many instructors prefer to migrate their courses partially online rather than completely online. This presentation chose three classes with different levels of online elements.

a. Class 1: Graduate students in the course of Instructional System Design in College of Education. In this course, the instructor used FirstClass to provide feedback and have students post reading reflection. Sample size n = 16.

b. Class 2: Graduate students in the course of Psychology of Human Learning in College of Education. In this course, the instructor used
BlackBoard to provide feedback and have students post reading questions. Sample size n =21.

c. Class 3: Undergraduate students in the course of Elements of Computer and Program. The students in this course are from all of the departments of UT. The instructor used website to publish syllabus, assignments, students grade. Students asked questions and got answers from the instructor by group email. Sample size n =86.

An online survey was given to the participants. The results show more positive feeling towards partial online learning environment. Interestingly, as asked how much online learning should be put into this course you are taking, the participants gave divergent answers. Through detailed data, the presentation will help K-12 teachers, instructional designers get a better understanding of this partial learning model.

Hao Cen is a graduate student is a graduate student in Instructional Technology at the University of Texas (U.T.) at Austin. He has years of teaching experience in high schools. He also served as the instructor in industry for a period of time. His research interest covers the role of learning style in technology-enriched learning environment, courseware design, and computer-supported language learning.