What does voice have to do with it? Using audio files to connect with students in online courses

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Abstract

The text-based nature of online courses impose natural restrictions to online teaching and learning. Written text, even with visual support, can limit the range and type of learning activity and communication that can be delivered online (Beyond Text Website, August 2007). Switzer (2005) states there are clear ways to establish a "welcoming environment" and a positive "instructor presence" that reach and motivate online students. The "human factor" is not missing online, it merely appears in a different guise. One potential way to create the human factor and to aid in connecting online students is to use audio messages.

Student-teacher and student-student interactions in purely asynchronous distance learning courses are much lacking compared to similar interactions found in face-to-face teaching, potentially causing learners to experience feelings of isolation, thus reducing motivation and increasing dropout rates (Boulos, Taylor, & Breton, 2005). This paper gives an overview of why voice might offer a simple and effective method for enhancing students' experience in the online classroom.

References
