Instructional Resource Creation and Delivery Formats: Practical Considerations for Complex Teaching Situations

Abstract: The problems and solutions related to presenting a graduate course to a complex student audience will be discussed in relation to two parallel courses on technology management that are offered as a block by two departments. Resources were developed/selected in relation to student familiarity and accessibility, institutional resources and related support, program resources and functionality/adaptability, and overall instructional objectives. Topics will include concerns related to combined local and distance attendance in live class sessions, creating and accessing archived class activities, instructional resource and student product management, and incorporating cooperative student projects.

The presentation will discuss the problems and solutions related to teaching a graduate course to a complex student audience. The course actually consists of two blocked courses, one in Educational Administration and one in Educational Technology, and presents the material in relation to the needs and perspectives of the two educational programs. The intent is to have students complete the content and interact with their counterparts in administration or technical development/support positions. Some students attend the weekly classes via distance and some are present in the university classroom.

Instructional activities are completed utilizing live Internet and web-based resources and include in-class discussions, joint individual/group article reviews, instructional resource development (database and glossary submissions, web site development, wiki editing), discussion forums, and technology grant proposal writing. Contributions from outside presenters were included utilizing videos created in schools, in-class presentations/discussions, and teleconference presentations/discussions.

The presentation and management resource decisions were made in relation to both student and faculty/institution needs and perspectives. While the university offers WebCT, this course utilized Moodle as the management system as it is preferred in the program and it offers the students with a comparison to the format used in other courses; this also provided curricular content as instruction management systems is one of the topics in the course. Some resources were utilized due to the fact that they were supported by the university. The Trans Texas Video Network (TTVN) is a state system for Internet streaming of the live class sessions, and Centra was used for providing Internet-based live audio and text chats and sharing of the instructor’s screen content. Alternative options were considered and will be presented for comparison. The content of each of these systems is recorded and made available as archives for students who missed class or desired a review. These two systems contained redundant information, with the TTVN being used as a back-up presentation and recording. In addition, program specific resources were utilized, e.g. the Instructor’s screen was recorded directly creating an independent archive that could be edited and augmented with text, graphics and specific topic access to desired portions rather than linear viewing. Due to these inclusions, future offerings will likely eliminate the TTVN component as it is now redundant, it converts screens to video so there is a loss of resolution, and it requires scheduling a special facility. The others can be initiated from any classroom with a computer, Internet connection, and a projector. The instructional experiences will be presented from the view points of the two faculty in relation to practical issues, quality of resources, student acceptance/participation, and resource management.