Course Development for Distance Learning Using PowerPoint

This paper describes the process and procedures for the development of a distance learning course using PowerPoint as the design software.

Multimedia and Distance Learning for Business in Borovichi, Russia funded by the United States Department of State was a grant to provide course materials for Russian business education. These materials were developed by individuals from Broome Community College, in Binghamton, NY and the American-Russian College of Commerce “InterBiz,” in Borovichi, Russia. The materials used in the demonstration course were developed by faculty members at Broome Community College (BCC) in Binghamton, N. Y. Anne Blakeslee, Professor of Business at BCC (blakeslee_a@sunybroome.edu), was responsible for course content; while Alice McNeely, Director of the Teaching Resource Center (mcneely_a@sunybroome.edu), and myself, George Guba, Multimedia Instructional Designer, organized and designed the technical aspects of the project.

The grant required the trainers from Broome Community College and the instructors from Interbiz College in Borovichi, Russia to develop distance learning courses that could be delivered via the Internet, a computer network, or via CD-ROM. An additional requirement was that the materials be convertible to HTML. PowerPoint was chosen because it was available to the grant participants in both locations. It met the requirements for potential tools to: provide the required means of delivery, be available to the Russian instructors, be available in Russian language software, be easy to use, and have a relatively low learning curve.

The sample course, Small Business Marketing, was designed to be instructor paced, with the lectures and most of the supporting materials contained within the course on the CD-ROM. Some of the examples used were selected to fit the Russian culture and included case studies of businesses in Borovichi. The material on the CD-ROM was also designed to coordinate with an available Russian language textbook. The pluses and minuses of the software will be discussed along with course and template design and evaluation.

Contact with the course’s instructor was designed to be flexible based on the accessibility, needs and abilities of the students. The course was designed for multiple means of delivery to meet student needs. The content was designed to allow for the possibility of delivery via multiple channels including the Internet, computer networks, CD-ROM, and print.