Overview of Technology Tools

The project for the Distance Learning Course is to create an online orientation program. We are to choose from three scenarios. I chose to develop an orientation program for a Philosophy hybrid course. Below I have listed the two technology tools that I will include in this course.

Scenario number one deals with the hybrid online model. This model highlights the vibrant nature of faculty-student interaction as well as student-student interaction. I chose this scenario because I feel that this approach ensures my mission of education: “a quality education with a personal touch.” This is a blended learning Philosophy course in which graduate students are expected to participate in lively asynchronous debates. The challenge is to find the optimal mix of online and face-to-face student and instructional interaction. Information and discussions from these debates will continue when students and the instructor meet in the face-to-face classroom. Distance learning exploits various means and methods to convey course material and education to students, who could be dispersed throughout various parts of the world. Distance learning, today, uses various means like regular mail, high-tech tools like the internet, and audio-video conferencing to help teachers correspond with students, and vice versa (Simonson, Smaldino, Albright, & Zvacek, 2009). Today, a host of synchronous and asynchronous tools are available for individuals who are involved in distance learning.

Simonson, Smaldino, Albright, & Zvacek (2009) explain hypercontent design instruction as categorized in modules and once the learner has finished one module the learner can proceed to the next module. To support the argument from these debates, I will present a wiki-based educational platform, the WikiDesignPlatform (WDP), developed in the group lab of the university. The wiki has numerous properties that are mainly agreeable to building support for online geographical distance collaborative learning activities (Larusson & Alterman, 2009). Students will find the wiki pages are stored online and are edited in an editor available through the standard Web browser.

Discussion forums are another technology tool that is a great way for continuing discussion following the completion of the course. It comes in many flavors. A discussion forum would permit people of diverse culture to share thoughts among each other. Markel (2001) indicated that online discussion forum permits learners to collaborate on projects in small groups, participate in on-going discussions focused on course content, as well as present information to the rest of the class. Discussion in the discussion forum will be use as a form of assessment. There is no single accepted process for assessing learner participation in asynchronous discussion forums (Andresen, 2009). Online discussion forum permits students to work mutually on projects in small groups, participate in on-going discussions focused on course content, and to "present" group project products to the rest of the class (Andresen, 2009). All of this is done autonomous of student place and time of authentic contribution in the discussion forum. There are several quintessential examples

of full-featured discussion forum software on the internet. The forum found at http://www.forum-software.org/simple-machines is a forum to learn about distance learning and technologies that go with the topic. It is identified as one of one of the oldest existing forum software on Internet and has many features and easy to understand.

The attached resource will provide learners with the training necessary to be a successful distance learner. Learners are expected to complete the online orientation and read through the linked documentation. This will enable them to navigate through the course with minimal difficulty and the greatest opportunity for success. Should students have questions regarding online instruction, they should contact the academic advisor. For more information, visit the videos below:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=geXtj9vCWug&feature=related

http://youtu.be/7q90qzQnfsI

http://youtu.be/hv2XORELA5s

PBWorks (Wiki)

Students will participate in a wiki in which they will be expected to participate in lively asynchronous debates as designated by the course syllabus. A membership to PBWorks is required for all students. Students can view this site using the PBWorks API.

http://pbworks.com/content/biz+webinars

Forum (Discussion Board)

Through different modules of the course, students are expect to participate in a forum discussion to support the arguments of the debates. A separate forum has been created for each module that students will participate in that will contain all of the posts made by the students. Within this forum, students are expected to post thoughtful responses to the discussion and appropriate feedback to one another.

Presentations

Different presentations will be available to students throughout the course. They will be posted under the content heading, on the page dedicated to the pertaining module. These must be downloaded by the student to view on their personal computers.

Videos

All correlated videos will be in .mpeg format and will be posted to each module under the content heading. They will be linked to their internet location on YouTube. Students will not need to download the videos, but will be able to view them on the course website.

References

Andresen, M. A. (2009). Asynchronous discussion forums: success factors, outcomes, assessments, and limitations. *Journal of Educational Technology & Society*, 12(1), 249-257.

Larusson, J., & Alterman, R. (2009). Wikis to support the "collaborative" part of collaborative learning. *International Journal of Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning*, 4(4), 371-402. doi:10.1007/s11412-009-9076-6

Markel, S.L. (2001). Technology and education online discussion forums: It's in the response. *Journal of Distance Learning Administration, 4*(2), Available at http://www.westga.edu/~distance/ojdla/summer42/markel42.html

Simonson, M., Smaldino, S., Albright, M., & Zvacek, S. (2009). Teaching and learning at a distance: Foundations of distance education (4th ed.) Boston, MA: Pearson.