Recommendations of Agriculture Professors in Teaching Online Courses Effectively

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Introduction

Demand for Online Education:

• There is a growing demand for online classes (Charron and Koo, 2007; Young and Duncan, 2014).

• University students’ online enrollment as a percentage of total enrollment increased from 9.6% in 2002 to 32% in 2011 (Allen and Seaman, 2013).

• Higher education institutions continue to meet the student demand for online learning (Capra, 2011).
Introduction

Challenges of Teaching Online:

• Teaching online is different from classroom teaching (Nishikant, 2009; Sammons, 2003).

• When teaching online, instructors have to play a different role from their traditional one (Sammons, 2003).

• Limited student-teacher interaction is a common concern for students and teachers (Capra, 2011).
Introduction

Views about Effective Online Teaching:

• When instructors redesign their face-to-face classes for online delivery, the major question they encounter is what instructional activities are effective in teaching online.

• The instructional strategies that create learner’s inquiry, expand learning experience, and reflection of learning experience were found effective in online teaching (Keeton, 2004)

• Variety of instruction is need to foster student engagement, stimulate intellectual development, and build rapport with students (Brinthaupt et al., 2011).
Introduction

Effective Online Teaching Strategies:

• Clearly specified learning goals, threaded discussions, and complementary use of technologies such as videos are necessary instructional activities (Hutton, 1999).

• Power Point presentations and video recorded lectures were the most beneficial online instructional activities (Glass and Sue, 2008).

• Students like quizzes and they had a positive effect on student learning (Salas-Morera et al., 2012).
Purpose and Objectives

Determine the best practices in planning and delivering effective online agriculture courses.

The main objectives of this study were to:

1. Identify the greatest challenges in teaching courses online.
2. Determine the best practices in planning and teaching online courses,
Methods and Procedure

• The modified Delphi techniques was used.
• The study was conducted with a group of 20 selected faculty members in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.
• Three rounds were used.
Delphi Study Questions

• First Round:
  1. What do you see as the greatest challenges in teaching courses online?
  2. What do you consider to be the "best practices" in planning, organizing and teaching online education courses?

• Third Round Scale:
  1. Not important at all
  2. Slightly important
  3. Somewhat important
  4. Important
  5. Extremely important
Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Challenges:

• Time commitment for delivering and managing the course
• Determining academic integrity violations
• Encouraging student involvement and creating an interactive environment for establishing rapport with students
• Emulation of the face-to-face classroom environment in online setting

When we develop online courses, we need to pay attention on these challenges.
Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations

- Organizing the course content on a software platform such as Moodle is necessary to facilitate delivery process.
- Learning objectives should be specified and followed through to help students follow the course.
- Response time for students to complete the assignments and instructors to provide feedback should be clearly stated and followed to manage time efficiently.
- Introduction of the instructor and providing relevant credentials for teaching the course is important for gaining students’ trust.
Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

- The instructor needs to keep the course content up-to-date and demonstrate knowledge of the subject matter throughout the course for retaining the attention of students.
- Providing a mix of low and high stakes assessments with rubrics on how the assignments will be graded and examples is needed to students understand the expectations of the instructor.
- Use of a variety of assessment tools relate to the course objectives and suited to the digital format of the class is necessary to facilitate learning.
Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

- Grading assignments promptly is needed to provide timely feedback.
- Instructors need to timely response to student queries for being responsive to students.
- Students need to hear from instructors throughout the course to help students feel like a person worthy of the instructor's attention.
- It is important to make assignment and test due dates flexible for accommodating student needs.
Take-Home Message

Use Best Practices for Managing Challenges:

• Understand the challenges of managing time and creating an interactive learning environment

• Plan to use technology for managing time efficiently and creating an interactive learning environment
Questions?