Effective Instruction within Online Educational Arenas:
Implementing Multiple Instructional Strategies

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This case discusses an instructor's experiences in teaching a basic online communication course in the community college context.

INTRODUCTION

Online education, or distance education, offers the non-traditional student increased accessibility and flexibility. A non-traditional student might be defined as a stay at home parent, an employed individual striving to gain additional skills, a baby boomer returning to the academic world, or an individual attempting to gain insight in regards to a specific subject. Adams (2006) elaborates that distance education offers opportunities for individuals in rural areas, homebound individuals, stay-at-home parents and also many other individuals in situations that do not allow full-time local enrollment. Daily commitments often restrict individuals from participating in traditional face-to-face classroom schedules. Online educational programs offer the flexibility and convenience non-traditional students require for success.

The purpose of this chapter is to develop the following:

1. Suggestions and tips for facilitating an online course are made, which recognize and embrace students of diverse learning styles.
2. Material is provided to benefit instructor as they create and/or facilitate an online course through direct guidance and strategic ideas.
3. Information is offers with the hope that instructors might better understand the need of an engaging learning environment.
4. Elaboration is offered regarding undemanding ways to utilize technology and Learning Management Systems to enhance student involvement and progression.

ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

Research has been completed in regards to the effectiveness of online education; however, additional research must be completed to encourage innovation in the online classroom. For example, students typically enjoy social interaction as a segment of their learning experience. This appears to be especially true for one of the largest groups served by online classes, non-traditional or adult students, whose expectations are likely to include dynamic interaction with others and learning constructed through discussion (Brandt, 1997). Research will prove helpful in aiding online instructors in incorporating additional interactivity within the classroom.

Online Education has Common Goals, which include the following:

1. Instructors hope to encourage student success and growth. This can be measured by assessing discussion and assignment completion.
2. Instructors seek to encourage and motivate students regarding the course content.
3. Instructors aim to facilitate interactive and progressive course discussions.
4. Instructors intend to promote self-accountability.
5. Does the classroom offer a sense of community?
6. Instructors desire to make themselves available and attempt to provide multiple and open lines of communication.
7. Students should complete the course with satisfaction and an increased knowledge of the course content?

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