Chapter XVI

Supplemental Web Sites: An Innovative Use of Information Technology for Instructional Delivery

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Abstract

*The population of today's learners can be described as being more than 25 years old, with a job and/or family responsibilities. The vast student body requires a flexible program that can accommodate job-related travel, need for a more mobile learning environment and a learning method which may be more entertaining and interactive than the traditional "stand and lecture" method. In the process of innovating with technology in the **college curriculum**, business schools are confronted with the issue of achieving a balance between the issues of "richness" and "reach." While members of the faculty see an opportunity to enrich education, administrators see an*

opportunity to realize economies of scale. Results from this empirical study show that students perceive a face-to-face course supported by a web site to be useful in enhancing their academic performance. Almost all the students made use of the classroom lectures and web site resources and did not feel the need to stay away from lectures.

Introduction

This chapter is organized around the following topics. The first section presents some figures and facts about the many reasons for pursuing distance education and builds a case for conducting research in the area of Web assisted education. This is followed with a section where information and distance education literatures are reviewed to develop the theoretical foundation for the study. Next, the chapter describes the purpose of this study and then the chapter describes the sample, measures and data analysis techniques used in this study. Following this, the results of the study are presented and a discussion of these results follows. In the concluding sections of the chapter, the strengths and weaknesses of the study are discussed and suggestions for future research are presented.

Statement of the Problem

Business schools are facing rising pressures to increase the value added by their services. To meet this challenge, business schools are undergoing fundamental changes in the way they operate and are continuously seeking ways to create future value (Bailey, Chow and Haddad, 1999). In an effort to determine the forces of change that business schools face, Kemelgor, Johnson and Srinivasan (2000) surveyed deans of business schools. They report that deans from public institutions expect distance learning and using the Internet for research and instruction to be significantly more important in the future. Further, they report that in order to attract good students, educational institutions must continually strive to innovate.

As a step toward innovation, business schools are clamoring to integrate Web-based instruction into the college curriculum, varying anywhere from supplementing face-to-face courses with web sites, to offering a complete M.B.A. curriculum entirely online. A 1999 study reports that even the top business schools in the country have come to offer their M.B.A. programs entirely online (Mangan, 1999). MIT's Sloan School offered their courses online in 1997 (Evans

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