Pedagogy of Teaching Online Courses

Kelvin Thompson, Ed.D.
Partnership for the Advancement of Distributed Learning (P-ADL)
University of Central Florida
What Are We Doing Here?

- A framework for considering online pedagogy will be considered
- Specific examples from online courses will be shared
- Goals of this session include awareness of how to
  - ensure student engagement
  - facilitate learning
  - foster learning communities
Who Are You?
What Is Pedagogy?

From Dictionary.com:

- the function or work of a teacher; teaching.
- the art or science of teaching; education; instructional methods.
What Is Pedagogy?

From Wikipedia:

- Pedagogy is the art or science of teaching.... [S]ome like to make the distinction between pedagogy (teaching children) and andragogy (teaching adults).
Two Dimensions

Course Environment

Course Experience
A Foundation

Theoretical basis (for comprehensiveness)

+  

Synthesis of many online course standards (for practical relevance)
A Foundation

- Two dimensions of online courses
- Nine “should” statements
- Integrated best practices
Literature Base

- Schwab’s (1973) Commonplaces
  - Learners
  - Teachers
  - Subject matter
  - Milieus
Literature Base

- Learning Environment Facets (Perkins)
- Modular Reusability (Thompson)
- Community of Inquiry (Garrison et al)
- Spectrum of Teaching Styles (Mosston & Ashworth)
Online Course Environment

1. Clearly communicates scope, sequence, and length of learning activities to students while providing automated feedback on progress.
2. Integrates reputable subject matter content resources.
3. Provides tools for student communication/authoring.
4. Incorporates opportunities (real life or simulated) to apply course concepts or practice skills.
5. Balances contextualization and reusability in all aspects.
Online Course Experience

6. Instructors and students exchange substantive ideas related to course content.
7. Instructors and students provide facilitation/guidance of the course experience.
8. Instructors and students represent themselves as “real people” in the course experience.
9. Power roles of instructors and students are clear and consistent throughout the course experience.
Instructors and students exchange substantive ideas related to course content.

- Content-based Interactions Between Instructor and Students
  - Student-content interactions
  - Student responses to discussion prompts
  - Follow-up responses by instructors and students
  - (Discussion rubrics can help!)

- Instructor Feedback on Student Work
  - General
  - Specific

- Online Group Work
Message no. 65
Posted by Instructor on Monday, August 29, 2005 9:03pm
Subject: Nonvalue-added activities

Mr. Smith is in charge of finance and operations for a large corporation in the funeral industry. The company operates funeral homes in major U.S. metropolitan areas. Mr. Smith has been under pressure, for some time, to reduce costs and improve profitability. He has studied every aspect of the business model, in an effort to determine where to make the "cuts." The company has had a long-tradition of making coffee, tea, and mints (candy) available to visitors, potential customers, and grieving families in the lobby of their funeral homes. Mr. Smith decides to do away with this tradition and eliminate the cost of providing these items; his justification, "this service represents a nonvalue-added activity."

In chapter one, the textbook describes the concept of nonvalue-added activities and how it came about. Based on your understanding of this concept, comment on the following:
1. Can the company's tradition be considered a nonvalue-added activity? You must answer yes or no, and why?
2. Was Mr. Smith correct in his decision to eliminate these items?
3. What would have been your recommendation to Mr. Smith?
4. Would you have done something different in order to reduce costs and improve profitability?

Message no. 74[Branch from no. 65]
Posted by Student X (wings) on Wednesday, August 31, 2005 7:26pm
Subject: Re: Nonvalue-added activities

1. Yes, the tradition could be considered a nonvalue-added activity, as it is a technically not adding value to the product (funeral items & funeral services). These items could still be done whether the tradition is followed or not, and work process of providing them would not change at all. Personally, I do consider it a value activity. I place it under customer service/advertising.
2. I do not believe he was correct to eliminate these items. The items would have been a very minor cost out of all the costs accrued in a funeral home. The benefits (goodwill) of the customers outweighs the cost of the refreshments.
3. I would have recommended Mr. Smith maintain the tradition and take a closer look at any other costs that do not directly relate to providing the funeral services.
4. This is difficult to answer, as I'm lacking the information on the other costs Mr. Smith reviewed. Just brainstorming, I would suggest looking at any advertising/marketing expenses the corporation has. Based upon personal experience, advertising isn't the driving force in the selection of a funeral home - mostly it is convenience, location, and word of mouth. Possibly the advertising costs could be reduced or eliminated. I would also take a look at the hours of operation for the funeral homes. Are they open earlier or later than needed? The customer service areas, that is). If they are, then costs for administrative labor and utilities could be reduced, as generally, customers would not be in very early or very late.

P.S. I talked with an examiner at work, and she said it's almost impossible for a funeral home to lose money. Apparently, she's audited a few of them. Just a note of interest for everyone! (So maybe Mr. Smith should be looking for unexplained costs (theft)). :-)

Message no. 75[Branch from no. 74]
Posted by Instructor on Wednesday, August 31, 2005 10:04pm
Subject: Re: Nonvalue-added activities

I normally do not participate in the students' boards, but I couldn't resist. It's true that it's almost impossible for a funeral home to lose money. Nevertheless, I have firsthand
Instructors and students exchange substantive ideas related to course content.

- Content-based Interactions Between Instructor and Students
  - Student-content interactions
  - Student responses to discussion prompts
  - Follow-up responses by instructors and students
  - (Discussion rubrics can help!)

- Instructor Feedback on Student Work
  - General
  - Specific
- Online Group Work
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Application of module reading</td>
<td>very clear that readings were understood and incorporated well into postings</td>
<td>readings were understood and incorporated into postings</td>
<td>postings have questionable relationship to reading material</td>
<td>not evident that readings were understood and/or not incorporated into discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsiveness to discussion assignment prompt</td>
<td>All components of discussion prompt incorporated into posting(s)</td>
<td>1 prompt component not incorporated</td>
<td>Up to half of the prompt not incorporated</td>
<td>More than half of the prompt not incorporated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timely discussion contributions</td>
<td>5-6 postings well distributed throughout the week</td>
<td>4-6 postings distributed throughout the week</td>
<td>3-6 postings somewhat distributed</td>
<td>2-6 not distributed throughout the week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsiveness to group discussion</td>
<td>More than one point from another participant built upon/refuted in posting</td>
<td>At least one point from another participant built upon/refuted in posting</td>
<td>Posting makes at least an oblique reference to a general theme that has emerged in the discussion</td>
<td>No evidence that any other postings have been read/Unwitting repetition of questions or points made by others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adherence to discussion protocols</td>
<td>all on-line protocols followed</td>
<td>1 online protocol not adhered to</td>
<td>2-3 online protocols not adhered to</td>
<td>4 or more online protocols not adhered to</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Instructors and students exchange substantive ideas related to course content.

- Content-based Interactions Between Instructor and Students
  - Student-content interactions
  - Student responses to discussion prompts
  - Follow-up responses by instructors and students
  - *(Discussion rubrics can help!)*

- Instructor Feedback on Student Work
  - General
  - Specific

- Online Group Work
Subject: Instructor feedback for Week 2

Message no. 2091
Author:
Date: Friday, January 20, 2006 9:05pm

Hello everyone,
I have just had the pleasure of reading through your responses to Week 2. Great job.
Very thorough and I even noticed some citations- excellent!
You all seem to have a good grasp on the importance of biology and environment.
Although you are born with a “range of reaction” or potential to develop certain skills,
physical traits, and psychological characteristics, your environment often plays a big part
in if, or how much of, a trait, will be expressed.
I am happy to see that most of you have an extensive social/family network, so very
important in maintaining balance in life.
I like the interaction that is going on among you. That is a very important aspect of
classroom learning and one that we can experience by sharing of ourselves and
responding to other students in this format, perhaps even better than in a face-to-face
environment. I will let you be the judge of that!
Until next week, fantastic start to what I am sure will be an interesting semester!
Keep up the great work,
Professor C
Instructors and students exchange substantive ideas related to course content.

- Content-based Interactions Between Instructor and Students
  - Student-content interactions
  - Student responses to discussion prompts
  - Follow-up responses by instructors and students
  - (Discussion rubrics can help!)

- Instructor Feedback on Student Work
  - General
  - Specific

- Online Group Work
Subject: Re: What I have learned so far about understanding the Thesis

Message no. 2707 [Reply of: no. 2703]

Author:
Date: Monday, January 30, 2006 10:59am

Hi Marianne:

Sounds like you have a good sense of what the thesis is. What you described in the first part of this post is called freewriting. It is a useful prewriting tool (that helps you get ideas out), but eventually, the thesis must take over :)

Professor T:
Instructors and students exchange substantive ideas related to course content.

- Content-based Interactions Between Instructor and Students
  - Student-content interactions
  - Student responses to discussion prompts
  - Follow-up responses by instructors and students
  - *(Discussion rubrics can help!)*

- Instructor Feedback on Student Work
  - General
  - Specific

- Online Group Work
Grammar Machine Exercise

For this exercise, you will use two different grammar machines to create sentences: the Grammar Slot Machine I, and the Grammar Slot Machine II.

Grammar Slot Machine I Experiment

1. Pull the handle and write down the word the grammar machine selects. This word will be the first word of your sentence. Pull the handle four more times. Write down the word the grammar machine selects each time. This will be the second word of your "sentence." Don't worry if the "sentence" doesn't make any sense—just write down the five words in the order this grammar machine produces them.

2. Repeat step 1 four more times. You should have created a total of 5 five-word "sentences." Make sure to write these sentences down as you create them.

Start Playing

Grammar Slot Machine II Experiment

3. Pull the handle one time. This grammar machine will produce a five-word "sentence." Write this sentence down.

4. Repeat step 3 four more times. You should have created a total of 5 five-word "sentences." Make sure to write these sentences down as you create them.

Start Playing

Analyzing Results

5. Compare the results from the Slot Machine I to the results from the Slot Machine II. Which experiment was more likely to produce grammatical sentences?

6. Post the results from both experiments, and your answer to #5, to your team topic.
Instructors and students exchange substantive ideas related to course content.

- Content-based Interactions Between Instructor and Students
  - Student-content interactions
  - Student responses to discussion prompts
  - Follow-up responses by instructors and students
  - (Discussion rubrics can help!)

- Instructor Feedback on Student Work
  - General
  - Specific

- Online Group Work
Instructors and students provide facilitation/guidance of the course experience.

- Manageable system for addressing “procedural” questions
- Establishment of “Technical Help” or other topics in which students are expected to take the lead
- No-credit opportunities for students to practice with the technology prior to submitting work for a grade
  - “Orientation Quiz”
  - “Getting to Know You” posting
  - Email to instructor after orientation
Instructors and students represent themselves as “real people” in the course experience.

- Sharing of individual photos, audio, video, or biographical statements.
- Communications in which individuals share emotions and tell something of their lives while talking about some other topic.
Faculty/TA Profile

Biography:
I've taught at UCF since 1995, but I've considered Orlando to be my home a lot longer than that. My family moved here in 1977, and I attended Matlind Jr. High, Winter Park High, and Rollins College before moving Los Angeles to attend graduate school. After completing my Ph.D. in English (the Rhetoric, Linguistics, and Literature program), I worked at Rollins College, and then the U of Alabama in Huntsville, before returning to central Florida. UCF had changed quite a bit by the time I left for grad school, but I've been truly astounded by the changes since then. (My husband is tired of hearing me say, "This used to be "all trees" ") Even with the growing pains (traffic!), this is an exciting place to be. I teach English and direct the University Writing Center (UWC).
Instructors and students represent themselves as “real people” in the course experience.

- Sharing of individual photos, audio, video, or biographical statements.
- Communications in which individuals share emotions and tell something of their lives while talking about some other topic.
Subject: absence from messaging

Message no. 279

Author:

Date: Wednesday, July 9, 2003 6:08pm

I apologize for not signing on for the last day and a half. My 12 year old was bitten on his face by a dog and required plastic surgery to fix the bite. I've been watching him like a hawk because he has developed an infection in the wound and it is precariously close to his eye.
Instructors and students represent themselves as “real people” in the course experience.

- Sharing of individual photos, audio, video, or biographical statements.
- Communications in which individuals share emotions and tell something of their lives while talking about some other topic.
Power roles of instructors and students are clear and consistent throughout the course experience.

- Directive
- Egalitarian
  - Learning Contracts
  - Solicitation of Feedback from Students
  - Alternative Assignments from which Students May Choose
  - Cultivation of a Learning Community
Recommendations

- **Student Engagement**
  - Provide structured student-student/instructor interaction
  - Require responses
  - Share scoring rubric

- **Learning Facilitation**
  - Link specific objectives-readings-activities-authentic assessment (assessment ≠ quiz)
  - Establish protocols for non-learning minutiae so that they don’t detract

- **Learning Community**
  - Interject personal (but professional) tone in all communications and materials
  - Model appropriate self-disclosure and communication of emotion
Results?

- At UCF these principles are pursued
  - Success and withdrawal rates of fully online and reduced-seat-time courses are comparable (or better) than face-to-face counterparts
  - Faculty and student satisfaction is high
  - High quantity and quality of interaction is perceived
Q&A
Kelvin Thompson, Ed.D.
http://onlinecoursecriticism.com

http://p-adl.ucf.edu
kthompso@mail.ucf.edu
407.823.0462