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**Journal of Ed. Technology Systems**

*Web Conferencing Software in University-Level, e-Learning-Based, Technical Courses*

By J.W. Coffey

“Faculty who offer university-level technical courses through e-Learning environments must surmount several difficult challenges. Traditionally, learning in technical courses takes place through real-time interactions between instructor and students in the course of solving actual problems—a form of activity that is not possible in asynchronous e-Learning systems. The current study contains an account of experiences gained in using Web Conferencing software to provide a spoken synchronous component to a project-oriented senior-level computer science class. Strengths and weaknesses of this undertaking and a sketch of a different type of hybrid course are presented.”

**Journal of Library & Information Services In Distance Learning**

*Breaking out of the Asynchronous Box: Using Web Conferencing in Distance Learning*

By J. Lietzau & B.J. Mann

“A discussion of a university library’s use of Web conferencing (real-time synchronous instruction) which addresses the questions (1) Is Web conferencing a viable option for distance students in online only classrooms? (2) Do faculty and students benefit from this type of instruction? Four different scenarios are presented with assessment results gathered from surveys and debriefings. Scenarios range from use in an online-only class, to one-shot sessions with faculty and students, supplementing week-long library instruction sessions, and one-on-one sessions with students in Taiwan.”

**Distance Education**

*Synchronous Collaboration Competencies in Web-Conferencing Environments--Their Impact on the Learning Process*

By M. Bower

“Based on a three-semester design-based research study examining learning and teaching in a web-conferencing environment, this article identifies types of synchronous collaboration competencies and reveals their influence on learning processes. Four levels of online collaborative competencies were observed—operational, interactional, managerial, and design. The relative importance of students and teachers..."
possessing the different levels of competencies depended on the degree of interactivity in the learning designs being applied. Both misunderstandings and misuses impacted on learning and collaborative processes, with misuses occurring more persistently throughout semesters than misunderstandings. The distinction between developing students’ technical skills and their collaborative capabilities is drawn. Strategies for developing each are recommended.”

**Educational Technology & Society**

*Redesigning a Web-Conferencing Environment to Scaffold Computing Students’ Creative Design Processes*

By M. Bower

“Based on a three-semester design research study, this paper argues the need to redesign online learning environments to better support the representation and sharing of factual, procedural, and conceptual knowledge in order for students to develop their design capabilities. A web-conferencing environment is redesigned so that the modalities facilitate more socio-constructivist pedagogies whereby students co-construct knowledge and share their design thinking. The design-based research methodology explicates how redesign not only allowed more effective student representation and sharing of the different levels of knowledge required for abstraction to occur, but also enabled better teacher assessment and, hence, remediation. On the basis of the emerging findings of the study a set of principles for designing web-conferencing (or other online) environments to support creative design learning is proposed.”

**Quarterly Review of Distance Ed.**

*The Impact of Web Conferencing Training on Peer Tutors’ Attitudes toward Distance Education*

By J. Dvorak & K. Roessger

“This study investigated the attitudes of peer tutors who received web conferencing training in preparation for synchronous online tutoring. A quasi-experimental design was employed to evaluate changes in peer tutors’ attitudes toward distance learning following participation in an online tutor training program. Peer tutors were found to have: (a) an increased sense of the importance of distance learning offerings to adult learners’ success, (b) an increased sense of the effectiveness of distance education programs compared to face-to-face, (c) an increased sense of experience level using distance learning tools, and (d) an increased sense of comfort using distance learning tools. Participants also demonstrated an increased overall positive attitude toward distance education. No significant difference in training effects between gender and age groups was found. Implications and suggestions for future research are discussed.”

**Computers & Education**

*Web Conferencing for Synchronous Online Tutorials: Perspectives of Tutors Using a New Medium*

By K. Kear et al.

“This paper reports on a pilot investigation into web conferencing in a distance learning module. It focuses on the perceptions and experiences of the tutors, all of whom were new to the web conferencing environment, but were experienced in online teaching. A number of web conferencing tutorials were studied through the collection of various datasets, mostly qualitative. The data were analysed by a team of researchers, informed by key literature in this area. The main findings from the pilot indicated that tutors experienced challenges in creating social presence and in managing cognitive load when dealing with multiple tasks online. There were also technical obstacles to improvisation in response to students’ emerging needs... Overall, experiences from the web tutorials indicate that tutors and students reacted positively to the opportunities web conferencing provides for interactive learning and teaching.”