

CED ONLINE COURSE CONSIDERATIONS

Prepared by the CED TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE March, 2013

Online courses already exist within CSULB and the College of Education. Nevertheless, faculty accept them cautiously, wanting to make sure that students will have rich learning experience that lead to demonstrable competence commensurate with the results of face-to-face and hybrid courses. It should be noted that if instructors do not use technology within a human context, then a different learning experience occurs.

To this end, the CSULB College of Education Technology Committee was charged to investigate the terrain of online courses, and to identify factors that should be considered when making decisions about offering online courses.

The North American Council for Online Learning (<http://www.inacol.org>) provides a sound grounding in online education. For background information, read: Watson, J. F., & North American Council for Online Learning (2010). *A national primer on k-12 online learning*. North American Council for Online Learning, available at <http://www.inacol.org/research/bookstore/detail.php?id=22>.

This council has also developed *National Standards for Online Teaching*, available at http://www.inacol.org/research/nationalstandards/iNACOL_TeachingStandardsv2.pdf. These standards include useful concrete indicators that can guide assessment, including a basis for professional development initiatives.

Lastly, the council also developed a Readiness Assessment (<http://www.inacol.org/col/readiness.php>) that would be a valuable instrument for the college leadership to use to gauge the college's capacity for offering and supporting online courses.

In addition, the college Technology Committee posed several questions and identified several factors that need to be addressed when considering online courses. They follow.

Status of candidates: Online methods courses do not seem appropriate for preservice candidates because interaction and timely learning moments/interventions cannot be modeled well by online instructors. Practitioner candidates (e.g., for master's degree or added authorization) are more able to learn and apply online curriculum because they can draw from prior F2F experience. In general, online courses are more appropriate for mature practitioners, such as for continuing education. Instructors also need to address candidate dispositions and socialization when designing courses. Furthermore, candidates may need to have formal orientation to online learning beyond any one course.

Equity: Is the online course ADA-compliant? Is Elluminate/Collaborate ADA-compliant? How should the college support candidates who do not have access to adequate Internet connectivity (bandwidth) to take online courses?

Community context: How is technology being used in K-20 educational settings? How is online learning being incorporated in K-20 educational settings? What is the perception of current teachers and administrators in terms of what candidates learn in online courses (i.e., are they as well prepared as F2F/hybrid learners), candidates' and graduates' self-perceptions of the quality of learning in online delivery vs. F2F/hybrid? What is the market for online courses?

Finances and oversight: Who oversees the courses: CCPE, CED, CSU Online? What are the financial implications (e.g., how much money does CED receive in each case?), how does a CCPE-based or CSU Online offering impact instructor workload (total number of units of workload expected)? To whom does the instructor report to under these different oversight options? Who owns the course's intellectual property?

Degree of flexibility in online course delivery/ academic freedom: For the spring CCPE initiative, the instructors cannot have any F2F aspect. Some schools (e.g., SJSU, University of North Texas) have F2F orientations/institutes at the beginning to enable candidates to socialize. Elluminate/Collaborate can serve in this capacity, but limits paralanguage cues (and people can't share food, etc.). What is good practice relative to offering online courses: should there be some kind of F2F orientation (at least at some point before the course begins; e.g., candidates can take online courses only if they have already taken F2F/hybrid courses in the program)? Faculty should have freedom to ascertain what F2F mechanisms are needed.

Combination of courses: It might be doable to pair an online course with a F2F/hybrid course so that the same candidates can have some F2F interaction and socialization. Candidates probably should not take ALL courses online, even in one semester. It would probably be good for every candidate to experience online learning, even if it is just one unit within a course (e.g., hybrid); all candidates should learn how to design and deliver instruction in online learning environments. At least for now, at least one section of all courses should be offered in a F2F/hybrid manner within the usual program timeframe (e.g., once every two years) so that candidates have a choice in course delivery. The majority of courses should be F2F/hybrid unless CED wants a WASC waiver/exception.

Education-specific issues that cannot be met in online-only courses: Many courses need F2F socialization and real-time physical experiences in seeing how instructors diagnose and address learning issues (especially for methodologies), differentiated instructional strategies, real-time experiences in learning how to read and address paralanguage (i.e., facial cues, body language), F2F experiences in building small group collaboration skills, F2F experiences in presenting before "live" audiences and responding to their paralanguage and other interactions. The bottom line is that preservice candidates must be prepared to teach and collaborate in F2F K12 settings.

Preconditions needed for online courses:

- Most instructors need some professional development for online instructional design, instructional design support (ideally with some assigned time for consultants), tech support, and incentives (e.g., RTP advantage, public recognition, assigned time, stipend).
- Candidate must have the ability to access online course and features 24/7, which requires technical logistics (e.g., workplace filters, need for special plug-ins).
- If instructors require added technology in the course, they should seek open source/free applications/software in order to cut down on candidate expenses.
- Instruction need to be provided for candidates on how to take an online course (perhaps a checklist to determine if candidate is likely to be successful)
- A marketing survey needs to determine if a sizeable audience and interest exists for the course.
- Online courses will need a valid and reliable online student evaluation method.

Criteria decision-making: A college committee should develop criteria to serve as guidelines for determining which courses could be feasibly offered online. A beginning list includes: course's content, course SLOs, target learner population, frequency of course being offered, service/community-based learning experiences that can be integrated, sequence of course within the program (e.g., second year), course matter impact (e.g., gatekeeper course), delivery timing (e.g., synchronous with Elluminate/Collaborate versus asynchronous), whether the course is a stand-alone course (e.g., CE), basic vs. supplementary program vs. CE. Emundson's cultural model (globalization versus localization) can be applied to this process: basic objective low-context content may be offered online versus complex high-context constructivist soft skills that need F2F, experiential value, need for cooperative learning (see details below).

A basic progression exists in terms of technology incorporation: 1) WHAT technology can do a function? 2) HOW can I learn/use the technology? 3) SHOULD I use the technology?

The committee recommends that the college:

1. Conduct a readiness assessment
 2. Develop criteria for deciding which courses can be feasibly offered online.
 3. Identify courses that would be most feasible to do online, such as educational history
 4. Strategically plan online course deployment and support.
 5. Identify CED online developers and experts; develop and deliver relevant PD.
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GLOBALIZATION/LOCALIZATION: with application to online/F2F options

By Lesley Farmer

In researching cross-cultural e-learning, Edmundson (2007) developed a two-pronged approach in her cultural adaptation process (CAP) model of instructional design accommodation in order to address cultural differences both between the instructor and students as well as among the student population. One prong focuses on the learner, and the other prong analyzes the course. Edmundson posits a four-step process, aligned with the complexity of the content.

1. Evaluate the content along a continuum from simple, core information (such as basic procedures and products) to complex knowledge and soft skills (such as project management and conflict resolution. The e-learning delivery dimension can range from one-way lectures and handouts to social networking
2. Identify instructional methods and activities along the spectrum from objectivist/rote to constructivist-cognitive/high context communication.
3. Identify cross-cultural dimensions relative to learning.
 - a. Cooperative learning: from unsupported to integral
 - b. Origin of motivation: from extrinsic to intrinsic
 - c. Learner control: from non-existent to unrestricted
 - d. Teacher role: from didactic to facilitative
 - e. Value of errors: from errorless learning to learning from experience
4. Identify culturally-contextualized e-learner preferences.
 - a. User activity: from multiple access methods to the same content to learner-generative processing
 - b. Experiential value: from abstract to concrete
 - c. Accommodating individual differences: from non-existent to multi-faceted

In e-learning environments, the degree of cooperative learning and the origin of motivation are particularly culturally-sensitive, and need to be addressed when designing instruction.

For basic, objective learner outcomes in low-context cultural norms, materials just need to be translated, typically using global English with simple grammar and standard phrases. Examples should try to be culturally neutral, such as climate and mathematics. The only cultural dimension that may impact e-learning would be orientation to time so culture-sensitive accommodations for synchronicity and sequencing need to be made.

With increasing complexity and culture sensitivity, courses need localization where resources and examples reflect the daily life and cultural context of the target learner. Sometimes learners, particularly adults, can locate or generate such examples. The burden is on the instructor to determine if the learners' selections are relevant and appropriate.

Further complexity and socially-constructed courses can be modularized, with culture-specific learning objects. When cultural soft skills constitute the central learning outcome, it is probably best for that culture to originate the instruction design and delivery, even for e-learning environments.

Let's take the example of a popular North American fast-food chain. It expands and opens new chains worldwide, across Europe, South America, Asia, Australasia... This process is known as **globalization**.

By thinking ahead, the company plans and creates its products so they can easily be adapted to suit different locales. As part of the expansion, the fast food chain may adapt the menu to cater for differing local tastes or cultural needs. Replacing beef products with chicken or lamb products in Indian countries, or one soft-drink brand with another in others. This process is known as **internationalization**.

Localization refers to adapting a product or service to a particular language, culture, or other needs of the target market or 'locale'. In the majority of cases, a large part (and cost) of localization involves the **translation** of content from one language to another.

However, localization is more than just translating text. Other considerations for localization include:

- Ensuring the appropriate regional standards such as measurement terms (metric vs. imperial), Date/Calendar formats (mm/dd/yy vs. dd/mm/yy), paper size (A4 vs. Letter) and so on, are used.
- Including the correct legal requirements in a warranty statement, or the appropriate contact information and telephone number of a technical support department.
- Possibly replacing diagrams or graphics, particularly those that contain text or a screenshot of a differing user interface
- Recognizing any factors that may be specific to a culture or country. Take for example a traffic light (also referred to as a 'stop light'). In the US these lights are red, orange and green. However in Japan, while the colors look the same, they translate to being red, orange and blue...

As you can see, the list goes on. Use the wrong term or the wrong graphic, and your viewers can be left scratching their heads in confusion, or highly offended by your seemingly innocent mistake.

Edmundson, S. (Ed.) (2007). *Globalized e-learning cultural challenges*. Hershey, PA: Idea Group, Inc.

Additional resources:

<http://www.magnapubs.com/newsletter/distance-education-report/>

<http://www.westga.edu/~distance/ojdla/fall53/valentine53.html>

<http://www.nvcc.edu/oir/reports/DistanceEducationReport.pdf>

<http://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/EDU0015.pdf>

http://www.case.org/browse_by_professional_interest/education_and_campus_issues/onlinedistance_education_programs.html (contains several documents)

http://www.eduref.org/Resources/Educational_Technology/Distance_Education/Distance_Education.html (contains several documents)

<http://oregonone.org/DEissues.htm>

<http://www.facultyfocus.com/free-reports/faculty-development-in-distance-education-issues-trends-and-tips/>

<http://staff.washington.edu/sherylb/summit.html>

<http://campustechnology.com/articles/2011/02/23/assessment-beyond-the-paper.aspx>

<http://www.thefreecountry.com/webmaster/htmleditors.shtml>