Teaching Large Courses Using Online Technologies: Lessons Learned and Future Challenges

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Abstract
Courses delivered entirely online allow universities to enroll a large number of students, but these large classes pose several challenges to educators. Two major challenges of large online learning environments are the development of appropriate learning activities and the encouragement of significant learning interactions between students. This presentation will discuss strategies used to encourage participatory learning and student interaction in a technology course with an enrollment of 170-200 students. Recommendations for managing other details of large courses in an online format will also be offered.

Disciplines
Agriculture | Bioresource and Agricultural Engineering | Educational Methods | Engineering Education | Higher Education | Science and Mathematics Education

Comments
The paper, "Teaching Large Courses Using Online Technologies: Lessons Learned and Future Challenges" (Gretchen A. Mosher and Steven A. Freeman), as published in the Proceedings of the ATMAE 2011 Conference (2011 ATMAE Annual Conference, Cleveland, OH, November 9–12, 2011) is a copyrighted publication of ATMAE, the Association of Technology, Management, and Applied Engineering, 1390 Eisenhower Place, Ann Arbor, MI 48108. This paper has been republished with the authorization of ATMAE, and may be accessed directly from the ATMAE website at http://atmae.org/index.php/conference-20#pastconfpaper.
Teaching Large Courses Using Online Technologies: Lessons Learned and Future Challenges

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Need: Courses delivered entirely online allow universities to enroll a large number of students, but these large classes pose several challenges to educators. Two major challenges of large online learning environments are the development of appropriate learning activities and the encouragement of significant learning interactions between students. This presentation will discuss strategies used to encourage participatory learning and student interaction in a technology course with an enrollment of 170-200 students. Recommendations for managing other details of large courses in an online format will also be offered.

Overview: Courses with student enrollments of 100 or more provide an efficient means of delivery, but may prohibit conventional ways of introducing learning activities and providing for interaction between students. The strategies used by instructors to both actively engage students and utilize new online course technologies will be discussed. Challenges of managing a large online course will be presented, with an emphasis on planning appropriate learning activities and assessing student learning within the large course learning environment. Unresolved issues related to large online courses will also be discussed.

Major Points:
- Challenges of large enrollment online courses
- Strategies used to encourage learning and interaction of online students
- Suggestions for planning and assessment with large numbers of online students
- Discussion of continuing issues in large enrollment online courses

Summary: Attendees will learn strategies for optimizing engagement and interaction between students in a large enrollment online technology course. Suggestions and future challenges of managing large online courses will also be shared.