26th Showcase on Teaching and Learning on 8/17/2011

Session D – Seminar 4 from 11:15-11:45 am in STRO 203

Getting Comfortable with Multimodal Approaches to Traditional Class Delivery

Sam Dyer, Ph.D.
Department of Communication
School of Communication Studies

Total participants registered for this course: 47
Cybernetic andragogy?

• I grade online education with a D; three of them.
  1. Potential for dehumanization of the student (get your whole degree online? Then try to get a job!).
  2. Potential to debride the university brand (deleterious to brand).
  3. Potential to be too dedicated to the business model of higher education management (Sure, form and content are very accessible and quantifiable with online education but at a cost).
Online education appeals to education managers:

– Results are frequently in the form of measurable institutional impacts and student learning outcomes that can be communicated largely quantitatively to management. Management loves numbers!

– But we are not, as University teachers, just a mass commodity.

– And we are not just numbers.
Are we robots? Current robot nomenclature:

- **Widgetophora**: Structure online classes in the utilitarian mode, and pack it in no matter how ugly (Example: BB. Visualize the Swiss army knife approach only the knife is too big to use).
- **Anthropoidea**: Structure for student self-direction (Instructors appear human but are not. Instructors are digitized. Visualize T.V. tapes, etc.).
- **Zoomorpha**: Multimodal teaching is to structure class with the notion of dialog and the humanization of discourse (The human approach: Teach the critter we are).
I oppose instruction that is totally web-based (generally).

- Seven to nine percent of higher education is for-profit (Think University of Phoenix).
- They have 50% of student loan defaults.
- They cost up to 70% more than we do.
- Students are saddled with too much debt for the rest of their lives...
What I do not like about online education:

• Robot grades the papers (a set of algorithms rather than a human).
• Grades online (no safety assurance).
• Hiring out the grading (no instructor responsibility for feedback).
• Reliance on just one cyber-space platform (inflexibility and potential for down-time).
• Loss of University brand.
• Potential to take more instructor time than traditional classrooms.
Dyer’s preferred mix for multimodal instruction:

- iTunesU
- Bearmail
- Direct to student file-swapping
- Skype
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Every class meets in a computer lab.
Traditional classroom enhancements from this approach:

• All lectures are recorded and online in either .mp3 or mp4 formats.
• All lecture notes are direct to the enrolled student by group email.
• Skype office hour!
• Facebook allows more organic discussion threads than BB.
• Twitter facilitates faster functional sharing in hand and on the go.
Enhancements continuing:

• All assignments are submitted to the instructor by direct Bearmail attachment.
• All performance evaluations are typed and transmitted directly to each student by Bearmail.
• All class time is in a computer lab where every student, when the put their hands to a keyboard, has possible access to the current sum of human knowledge.
Discussion:

• Advantages and disadvantages of this approach.
• Legal issues.
  – Trademark
  – Copyright
  – Property
  – Libel and slander
• Tech issues.
  – Yes you can!
Dyer contacts:

- Home: 417-887-1355
- Office: 417-836-6612
- Fax: 417-836-4774
- Email: samueldyer@missouristate.edu
- FB: Samuel Coad Dyer
- Skype: samuel.coad.dyer.jr
- Twitter: drsamuelcoaddyerjr
Dyer brief bio

Sam is a tenured Associate Professor of Communication at Missouri State University. He joined instructional staff there in 1997. Sam teaches the senior and graduate level courses in PR at MSU. He earned his PhD in Communications with a major in PR at the University of Tennessee in 1991. He earned an MA in Communication from Eastern New Mexico University in 1986 and a BSBA in Marketing from Central Missouri State University in 1985. He worked five years overseas at the Waikato Management School in Hamilton, New Zealand as a Senior Lecturer. He has published in Public Relations Quarterly, Public Relations Review, the Journal of Public Relations Research and many others. He is also a visual and musical artist specializing in pen and ink drawings, water color, and traditional musical arts. Originally from Marshall, Missouri, Sam resides in Springfield, Missouri with his spouse Trish. He has two grown daughters Sophia (24) and Synthia (23).