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TE150: Punya Mishra, Matthew Koehler / THR110: Rob Roznowski THR 110 TE 150

Sharing the distinction of 1st place both courses TE 150 and THR 110 offer a wide variety of technological and pedagogical achievements that raise the bar of online teaching.

TE150: Reflections on Learning



Moodle, FaceBook and a rich range of media formats combine in this grand design experiment to embody and teach learning principles, informed by design critiques and rigorous research...

TE150: Reflections on Learning offers an engaging and memorable learning experience for students, relying strongly on the idea of a spiral curriculum — ideas need to be revisited in multiple contexts if they are to be learned and assimilated by students. The course uses the Moodle course management system rather than Angel because Moodle allowed the design team to modify the underlying PHP code and change it to meet their needs. The customized TE150 website aims to be dynamic, easy to use, and in some intangible way, capture the excitement and fun that instructors wanted to convey.

The design of TE150 is based both in the theoretical and conceptual knowledge of the design of technology for teaching and also by formative and experimental data that the team continually collects. The design and instructional teams meet every week to review and discuss what happened in the past week, what needs to be done in the coming few weeks, and what changes need to be made in the future.

"...TE 150 offers an engaging and memorable learning experience for students, relying strongly on the idea of a spiral curriculum"

- Punya Mishra

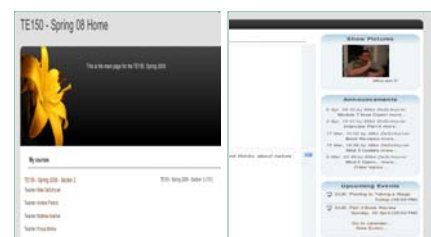
[Click to listen to Punya Mishra, Matthew Koehler](#)

"...for THR 110 the Karaoke Theatre experiment was more successful than imagined"

- Rob Roznowski

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semester survey provided important feedback for the design of the new version. This semester the team is conducting a “true” experiment where students from the two sections were combined and randomly assigned to either a complete Moodle section or a Moodle + FaceBook section. The team intends to collect data from the discussion forums as well as implement a survey on social presence to see how these two technologies influence student perception and learning. At the end of the semester, they will be comparing the quality and quantity of student communication to determine if FaceBook provides a better platform for class discussion than Moodle. They will also survey the students regarding the use of FaceBook in class. By combining instructional innovation with rigorous research the team believed this project may provide the foundation for important inquiries related to social networking and online learning.

Another innovative aspect of TE150 is the creative use of multiple media formats (both for instruction and evaluation). From video clips to Flash based magic tricks, from memory games and experiments, from Internet searches to quizzes, from course based readings to discussion forums, TE150 has them all. The idea behind this rich range of formats is to allow students to see the world of learning from multiple perspectives, and approaches. Each of these varied representational formats has differing strengths and weaknesses and our goal is to utilize each in its appropriate context for maximal impact on student learning.

Multiple sources of evidence suggest that the design of TE150 was effective for promoting student learning. For example, in each module of the course, quizzes were used approximately half way through the module to see if students understood the theoretical concepts before advancing to more complex assignments that asked them to apply these concepts. The majority of students passed these quizzes on the first attempt (indicating the concepts were understandable to the majority of students), and students who failed on the first attempt were readily able to go back and revisit the material and then pass the quiz on a later attempt.

A “movie montage” in Module 1 introduces several of course concepts. Students write their interpretations of the educational elements in these clips three times: once in the first module, and twice in the final Module. Big differences were also observed between students’ analysis of the video montage at the beginning and end of the course. After engaging with the material over a period of fourteen weeks, students were much more able to “see” and apply theories of learning as they played out in the situations depicted in the video. The contrast was noted by students as well, who compared their initial and final analysis and were able to see the evidence of their own applied learning. Similar high quality application of concepts and principles in the book occurred in students’ review and interview assignments.

End of semester survey evaluations revealed that students like teaching themselves and they like the multimedia approach to learning that is employed in TE150. Further, the students seemed to enjoy the videos and activities used. In line with the design goal of making the course accessible and meaningful, one student wrote that he/she “liked watching the media clips because they helped me to see and better understand the actual course topics that were embedded in movies that we see every day.” A second student wrote that he/ she liked “The videos, they made the class more engaging.”

Team:

Punya Mishra, Associate Professor, Counseling, Educational Psychology and Special Education (CEPSE)

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Anne Heintz, Graduate Student, CEPSE: Content designer and Instructor

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Andrea Francis Graduate Student, CEPSE: Instructor

Ashish Dore, Graduate Student, Computer Science and Engineering,
Programming and Technology support



Michael S. Lee, Graduate Student, TISM: Media designer
Tianyi Zhang, Graduate Student, CEPSE: Content designer
Jinjie Zhang, Graduate Student, CEPSE: Content designer

THR 110: Theatrical Play Analysis



“KARAOKE THEATER” interactive readings with an actor, in-depth readings and dramaturgical analysis deepen critical thinking when approaching a theatrical experience..

Creating THR110: Theatrical Play Analysis as a fully online course for literature meant to be performed live offered unique challenges. This course is also a discussion-based course in the classroom. Thus, the exploration of the limitations and advantages of online learning were assessed.

In showcasing the performance aspect of the course, many taped or filmed versions of the plays were included to enhance the experience and assist the students in understanding the style of the piece. Also, interactive readings with an actor for the course were created (see below). Numerous links to unique websites, audio interviews, still photos or podcasts were included to enhance the performance quality of reading theatrical texts.

A discussion-based course when taught in the classroom, the online version required numerous postings to purposely vague statements. Students were required to post their responses but were also required to respond to another’s analysis. Monitoring this aspect of the course was crucial as students were ardent in their responses. Sharing dramaturgical assignments from the students was another way to create a discussion-based atmosphere online.

The advantages of online learning were many. The in-depth nature of the readings and varying methodologies of analysis paved the way for more critically thoughtful responses. The immediate feedback of the student postings and responses from fellow students as well as professor response made for a more collaborative aspect to the work and also allowed for greater growth in the students. The creativity in analysis projects was also an advantage online. Quite simply, the online version allowed a way to steer the work of the students in a clearer more organized fashion. Ultimately the instructor found the online version more successful in creativity and thoroughness than its classroom counterpart.

The highlight of the course innovations was the use of “Karaoke Theatre.” Students can often get a much better feel for the meaning of the text of a play if

they go through the exercise of speaking the lines out loud. The team came up with what they believe is a unique approach to doing this. For each text covered in the course, an actor was videotaped speaking the lines for one part of the dialogue in a selected scene. Students were then asked to act with the actor as their lines were shown on the screen. This process is akin to karaoke. The actor through the magic of green screen would read lines of Oedipus, Hamlet or Willy Loman with the appropriate background behind him. Students were then directed to address a certain aspect of acting the lines. Avoiding the rhyme in Tartuffe or finding the rhythm of Topdog/Underdog was assigned before the actual reading. This experiment was more successful than imagined as students regularly looked forward to performing at home.

The students reading of their lines was facilitated by the use of Flash encoded video. Through the use of Flash ActionScript the display of the lines to be read was synchronized with the appropriate moment in the video. That worked much like a teleprompter, displaying the lines immediately below the video so that the students could watch the actor and be prompted, typically one line at a time. This ensured that the student's readings did not get out of sync with the actor, which would detract noticeably from the desired effect.

The possibilities for recording the students' readings and uploading those as an optional exercise on their end are being pursued and may be incorporated in later versions.

This Karaoke Theatre exercise as part of an online course has at least two obvious benefits. In the classroom time doesn't permit this type of activity, and many students would be reluctant to participate anyway. Being able to do this on their own encourages them to try it out. It also made the course material that much more engaging.

Team:

Rob Roznowski, Assistant Professor, Theater

Bob Matson, VUDAT, eProducer

Chris Irvin, VUDAT, Artist/Videographer