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Changing Perspectives: Analysing how the role of the lecturer has changed at a campus-based university with the adoption of an on-line communication system

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Title:

Changing Perspectives: Analysing How the Role of the Lecturer Has Changed At a Campus-Based University with the Adoption of an Online Communication System

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The adoption of multimedia and online communication systems to enhance the teaching and learning process is becoming more prevalent. However teaching approaches that work well in face-to-face situations may not necessarily transfer well to the online system. Indeed [1] Naidu et al. argues that 'a CMC-based teaching-learning environment prescribes a different set of tasks for the instructor' while [2] Seufert envisage the instructor's role varying according to the level at which students were studying. This project involves the investigation of a Computer Supported Co-operative Learning Environment from the tutors' perspective. The focus is on the lecturers' perceptions of their changing role as they make use of WebCT in their teaching at a campus-based university. This paper will identify how lecturers adapt themselves and their teaching approach in the online situation as compared to face-to-face teaching in a campus-based university. Ten different modules in the computing discipline are being used to facilitate this investigation. Three modules are at level one, two modules are at level two and five modules are at level three. The student populations range from thirty-six students up to four hundred and fifty students. The majority of these ten modules have large cohorts of students. This cross-section of modules and differing student numbers allows a detailed investigation to be undertaken into the different teaching approaches that can be adopted to enhance the students learning experience.

A comparison is made between the ten lecturers use of the online environment for teaching as compared to their traditional face-to-face lecture and tutorial sessions. The data gathered through open responses in interviews will be analysed to assess the benefits of each medium. The results indicate the benefits of each medium and particular instances indicate where one medium was preferred over the other.

With this base of knowledge about the tutors' experience of online teaching at a conventional university it will be appropriate to undertake future research into the students experience of making use of the online system to assist with their learning. The longer-term goal is to submit a follow up bid for larger scale funding to investigate the students' perspective on the same ten modules.

Acknowledgements

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References

[1] Naidu, Som, Barrett, John and Olsen, Peter (1995). 'Improving instructional effectiveness with computer mediated communication'. *Association for Learning Technology*, Vol. 3 No. 2, pp. 63-75.

[2] Seufert, Sabine (2000). 'The NetAcademy as a medium for learning communities' [online]. In Hartley, Roger (ed.), *Educational Technology and Society* Vol. 3 No.3. Available from http://ifets.ieee.org/periodical/vol_3_2000/a08.html [accessed 17 April 2001].

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