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Content connections: Student views on the use of print versus online digital course content

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Introduction



- AU's experience:
- Audience Experience:
- Print to online?
 - Combination?
 - Online only?



Introduction

- Our Premises Concerning
Distribution of Learning Material:
If going from print to online then one
must consider one's commitments
to access, removal of barriers
If going online as first venture in DE,
decisions in material distribution
may deny access to a certain
population, certain learning
preferences, and miss important
markets



Background



- "in moving to an all-electronic delivery
of our courses, do we as a learner-
centered institution do a disservice to
our learners?" (Spencer, 2006, p. 34)
- "students should no longer be perceived
as a homogenous group...Rather than
maintaining a fixed view of what all
students want or what all students need,
we have an obligation to find out what
their preferences and choices are."
(Beyth-Marom et al., 2005, p. 247)



Background

Provide a mixture of delivery
methods in order to:

- Accommodate different learning
styles and preferences
- Encourage students to move
beyond their comfort zones

Do not merely replicate printed texts
online but incorporate into overall
pedagogical approach



The study



Master of Distance Education	108	79%
Advanced Graduate Diploma in Distance Education Technology	9	7%
Non-program student	20	15%

N = 137 invited or accidental sample

"Recently, the MDE program has begun to distribute
less print material in its course packages and place
more of this material on line, (e.g., course readings,
study guide). Are you in favor or are you not in
favor of the move to put more material online and
distribute less print material through the mail?
Please explain your answer."



Findings

137 individual comments - 5,426 words

Average of 40 words per student

Inter-rater reliability 81% (94% negotiated reliability)

Open coding rubric with counts

Print preference	73
Support for move to online material	50
Both	47
General student learning issues	19
Cost	51
Hardware issue	11
Undecided	4



Examples

Print preference	I prefer the print material because reading that much material online would irritate my eyes. Many students are older (40s & 50s) and have deteriorating sight, use glasses, etc. Extensive reading from a computer monitor causes eye strain.
Support for move to online material	Please put more online and save paper; if a student needs a hard copy, the ultimate decision belongs to the student, he/she can always print the text.
General student learning issues	...engage meaningfully and actively with the content (highlighting, writing, underlining, circling, color coding, etc.) at a time and place of student choosing.
Both	I prefer to have a hard copy of the course study guide I like accessing the course readings online but would still prefer to have the course textbooks in hard copy format.
Cost	The cost of each course is high enough, and to download and print study guides and articles adds to the cost for students.
Hardware issue	...adds an obstacle for students living in remote areas where hardware support or internet connections are not dependable.
Undecided	Does not matter.



Axial coding

Print preference	Flexibility/convenience Reading ease/comfort Age related concerns Timing of access to material Portable material Archiving material after course-site is closed Avoids problems related to online material
Hardware issues	Access to technology/hardware Printing considerations Support for PDAs or handhelds and mobile learning



Axial coding

Support for online material	Ecological concerns Space consideration File maintenance Text manipulation/font size choice Currency, flexibility Academic freedom Affective experience Flexibility and convenience	Reading ease and comfort Print lifespan Plagiarism Broken links Complex navigation Accessibility issues Timing of access to material
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Axial coding

Both	Want both print and online Want some things online, some in print Will except online under certain conditions Choice considerations
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Issues

Administrative

1. Support systems
2. Costs

Pedagogy

1. Assessment
2. Links, glossaries
3. Currency, dynamic



Questions and Discussion



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Thank You

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