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Developing an example-based faculty training course

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Creating Online Faculty Training Modules to Support Continuous Quality Improvement

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RIT Distance Learning

- 20 yrs of distance, 10 yrs online
- “Anywhere, Anytime” focus tied to consumer desktop technologies
- NY State Education Department rating of **“Excellent”**
- 8000 enrollments, 400+ courses, 15% FT faculty teach, 25% All faculty teach

Ongoing Faculty Development

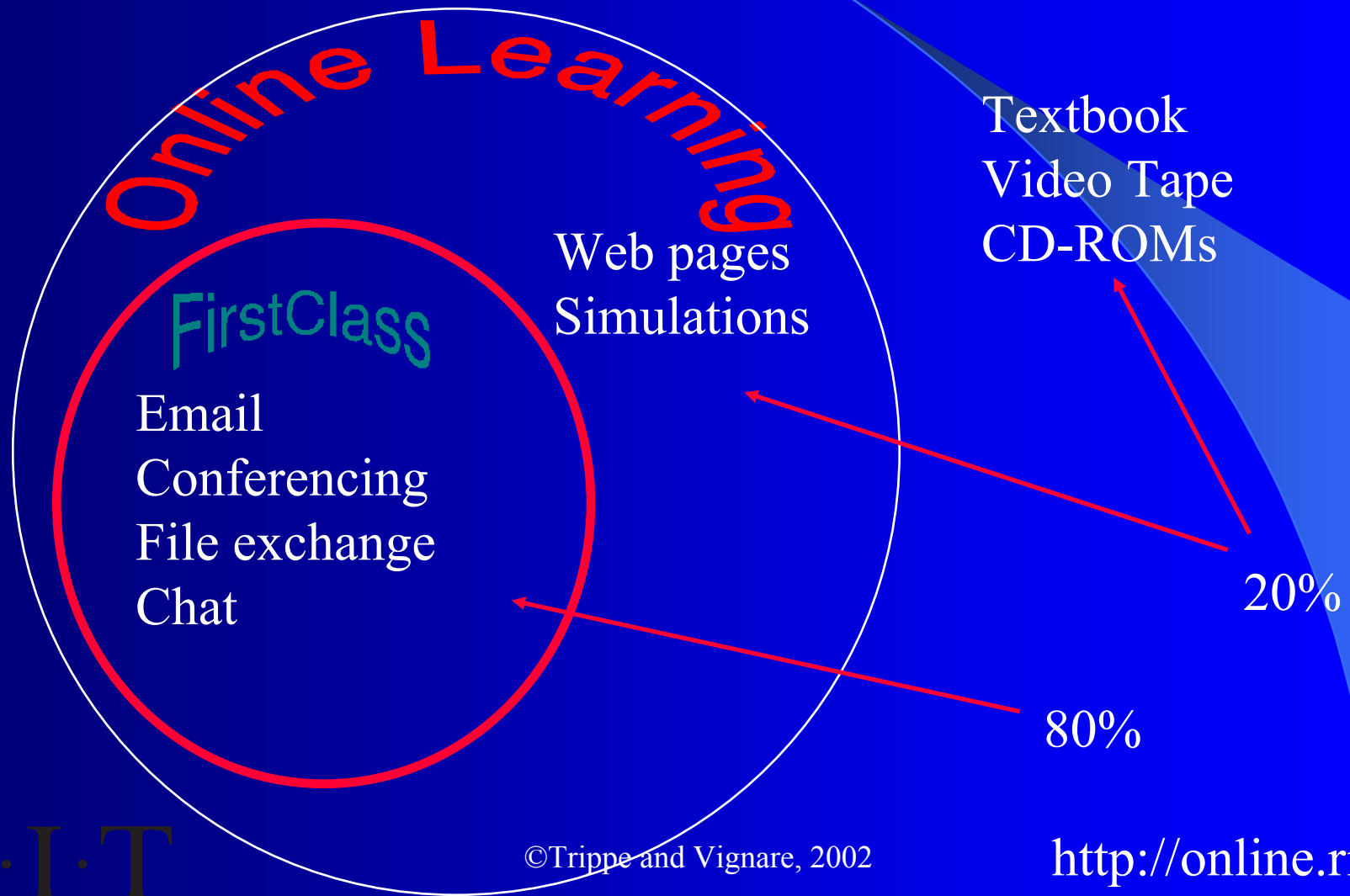
- RIT has an ongoing faculty development process for more than ten years
- Faculty development origins started with technology training only
- Further developments included a side by side approach
- Last two years a more organized instructional design approach used

Delivery Models

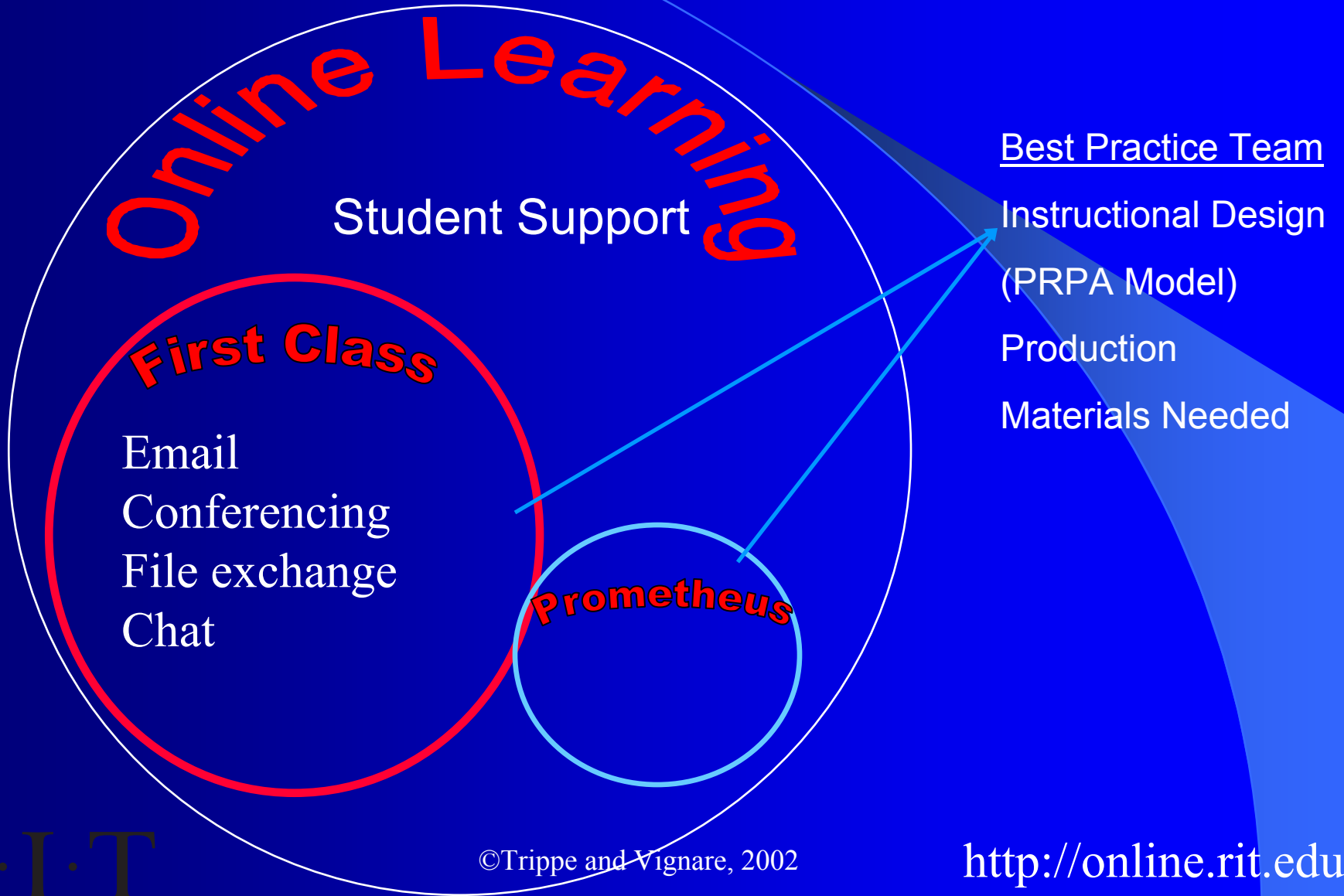
	Same Time	Any Time
Same Place	Classroom	Learning Center
Any Place	Phone Conference	Online Learning

RIT

Pre 2000 Course Development Approach



Course Development Approach

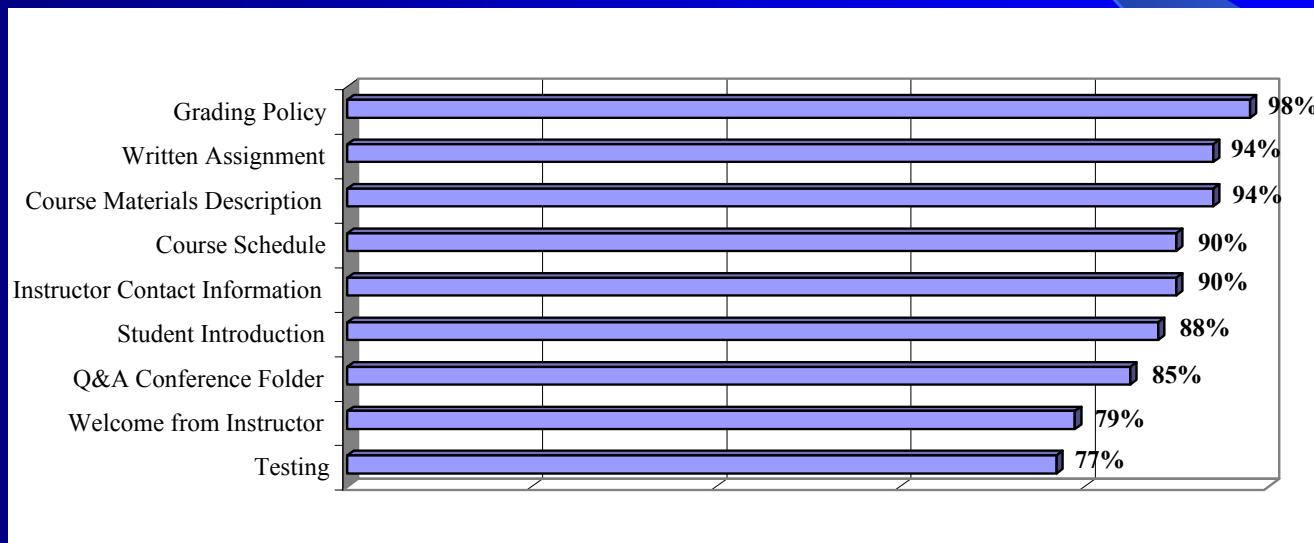


Course Inventory Fall 2001

- Best practice approaches adopted
- Broad variety of teaching strategies and tools
- Multi-modal approach overall and online still text based
- Technology defaults influences adoption of standard practices

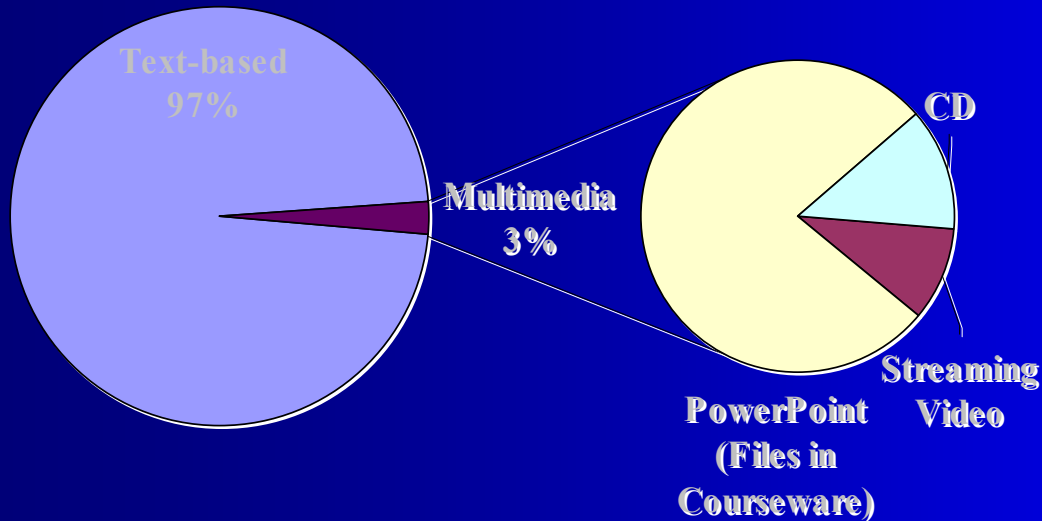
Course Inventory Fall 2001

Standard Elements found online

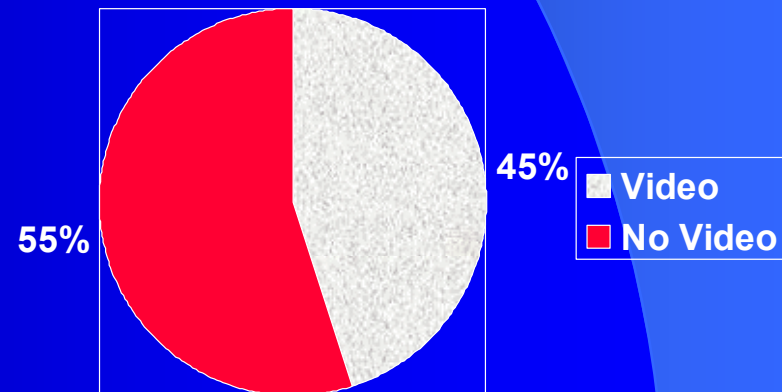


Course Inventory Fall 2001

Online = Text



DL Courses Using Video



Faculty Research

- Baseline Technology all RIT Faculty
- Distance Student Satisfaction
- Distance Faculty Satisfaction

Faculty Research

- Baseline Technology all RIT Faculty
 - 99% RIT faculty use Email and Internet
 - 15% teach online (6% nationally)
 - 63% had assignments sent electronically
 - 37% developed materials for Web

Faculty Research

- Distance Student Satisfaction
 - Diverse population 30% full-time (traditional), 70% part-time (grad and undergrad)
 - 75% of students on cable/DSL or better
 - Mostly satisfied with distance (85%)

Faculty Research

- Distance Faculty Satisfaction
 - Ongoing surveys show consistent satisfaction
 - Highly satisfied with distance (Spring 2002, 90%)
 - Strong support for faculty development
 - Strong support of services (student and technology)

Faculty Involvement

- Faculty Associates
- Rewards/Release time by college for development
- Part of regular workload
- Faculty advisory board
- Faculty co-development of training

Faculty Seminar

Assist in the Transition

Distance learning courses have been growing and the Internet is now a commonly accepted channel for instructional delivery

The transition from classroom to Internet may involve changes in course materials, textbooks and testing tools and methods

However, the course outcomes remain unchanged
Therefore, many similarities between DL and CR

Seminar Purpose

- The project objective is to provide new online teaching faculty exposure to many of the basic skills (best practices) which faculty need to effectively teach an online course
- The seminar is intended for new online faculty and is offered in a distance learning format
- Pass/No Pass grade is awarded participants

Demands of the Seminar

- Seminar participants are expected to join in online activities relating to the subject materials at least five days a week
- The class activities take place in virtual classrooms as assigned by the instructor in the course syllabus
- Students are expected to read, analyze, and respond to questions and comments from the faculty member and fellow students

Demands of the Seminar

- Some assignments are designed for the study group environment
- Cooperative group of 3-6 seminar participants who work together and share their talents, experiences, and knowledge in order to complete group assignments
- Study group members work together as a team to complete tasks that enforce and amplify course topics

Basic Seminar Message

- Faculty member is the **course manager**
- Plan your operating procedures
 - Syllabus
 - Course content and Text Selection
 - Learning Modules
 - Assessment techniques
 - Student feedback and grades (The End Game)
 - Consider various student learning styles

The Syllabus For An Online Course

- Just as for a classroom based course, the syllabus is the instructor's most important document
- The syllabus describes a contract between the faculty member and the student
- provides the foundation for a successful class
- Seminar presents a syllabus checklist
- Seminar syllabus is an example that can be used as a template

Week One Objectives

1. Selecting a course management system
2. Start the course and create a learning community
3. Defining what students are expected to learn
4. Decomposing the course into learning modules
5. The distance learning syllabus

Week One Assignments

- Prepare a syllabus for an online course which you expect to teach online
- Each group will develop a check sheet containing a list of elements which the group considers to represent quality in an online syllabus
 - This check sheet will be used in Week Two to evaluate the syllabus of each group member.

Week Two Objectives

1. Arranging the virtual classroom into learning areas (subdirectories)
2. Selecting the content and format for DL Lectures
3. Using current events articles for supplemental readings
4. Creating online assignments to support learning outcomes

Week Two Assignments

- Prepare a specific assignment for a course you expect to teach in the near future
- The team will use the Syllabus Check List to review the syllabi prepared by individual group members
 - The group is expected to prepare a written, constructive critique of each syllabus

Week Three Objectives

1. Frequent student feedback enhances participation
2. Grades provided in an evolving growth pattern
3. Online testing alternatives
4. Encouraging student participation to share knowledge and experience
5. Dealing with commonly encountered online problems (plagiarism)
6. The pros and cons of using multimedia tools
7. Ending activities – How to gracefully finish your course

Week Three Assignments

- Complete an online, timed test of the principles and approaches of the seminar
- Each group will develop a PowerPoint presentation based on best practices and activities for the virtual classroom
 - The presentation should also examine the link(s) between the best practices and reinforcement of student learning.

Content, no matter what the discipline

- Commonly accepted knowledge of the discipline provides the foundation for the course
- A set of topics that the course expects to address
- Development of a set of activities (readings, lectures, problem solving exercises, and even testing) which assist this student learning
- Require students to attain a level of competence within the specific body of commonly accepted knowledge - Brief introduction to rubrics
 - **The distance learning instructor must clearly see what he wants the students to learn**

Learning Modules

- Arranged content in predefined modules
 - Each contains a few closely related topics
 - Each might contain a theory-based reading, a lecture addressing the faculty member's emphasis of specific points, an applied case study, current events, a hands-on laboratory exercise or a performance assignment
 - Some faculty prefer to include testing within each module while others wait to complete several modules

Text Selection

- Select a text which completely covers the material which makes up the foundation body of knowledge for the course
- Text must be technically accurate, readable, concise and hopefully filled with graphics (to accommodate visual learners)
- Allows students to learn the foundation material from the text with little or no faculty assistance
 - **Self-directed learning process**

Student Participation

- Make classroom participation 30 – 40% of the student's overall grade - asynchronous exchanges
- Student messages address key course topics or respond to faculty's discussion questions
- Students are encouraged to share their knowledge or experiences with each other or to ask questions which require deeper research into a topic
- Discourages students who lurk in silence
- Supports students learning from each other
- **These regular journals of online discussion assist the faculty member to assess student learning**

Challenge the Students

- Consider the gray areas of specific topics
 - **neither black nor white**
 - **neither right nor wrong**
- Initial interactions may consist mostly of students addressing and asking questions of the faculty member - Promote “We Learn From Each Other”
- Use gray areas to promote and sustain interactive communications and peer-to-peer interactions
- Gray area topics can effectively be used to encourage student-to-student learning interactions

Develop a Set of Discussion Questions

- Interjection of probing questions by the faculty member forces the student to use the newly acquired knowledge
 - Tie knowledge to current events
 - Encourage students to share personal experiences
 - Promotes wrestling with answers which fall into gray areas usually not covered in the textbook

Supplemental Course Activities

- Add group/team activities to the course
 - Reinforce learning
 - Make best use of the delivery channel
 - Case studies
 - Games
 - Simulations
 - Essay assignments (share experiences)
 - Research projects
 - Compare and contrast this and that

Testing

- The purpose of testing: measure the level of learning on a student by student basis
 - A change of the testing protocol is often needed for the virtual, distance learning environment
 - Select a testing protocol which allows students to demonstrate mastery of topic skills
 - Essays and timed tests
 - Multiple choice and True/False format
 - Draw on personal experience format
 - discourages plagiarism

Student Feedback and Grade

- Grade criteria clearly defined in syllabus
- Week-by week grade accumulation
- Individual feedback message within a few days after a module ends (frequent feedback)
 - **Messages inform each student of how many points were available and how many were earned**
 - **Message comments on demonstrated performance**
- A laborious task but the effort definitely results in a more productive classroom

Lastly - Faculty Level of Effort

- If you have not conducted a distance learning course, don't kid yourself into thinking it is easy
- The amount of work required of the faculty member before and during the course is significantly more than the amount of work for a traditional classroom course

Computers are FUN

