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A Blended Learning Course in Operating Systems for Telecommunications

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Rochester Institute of Technology



Computer Engineering Technology

Delivery of an Integrated Distance and Blended Learning Course

By
Anthony P. Trippe
Rochester Institute of Technology

Traditional Classroom Environment - Gone Forever!

Listening student & Lecturing professor

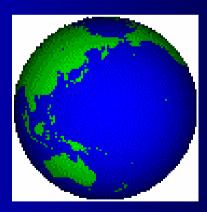


Courseware
like D2L
can be used
online or
in classroom

Course in Project Management

Students from Around the Globe

- Ten week duration
- 20 students (9 on campus and 11 distance)
 - San Jose, California (1)
 - Maryland, Pennsylvania, North Carolina (4)
 - Upstate New York (2)
 - Spain (1)
 - Germany (2)
 - Malta (1)



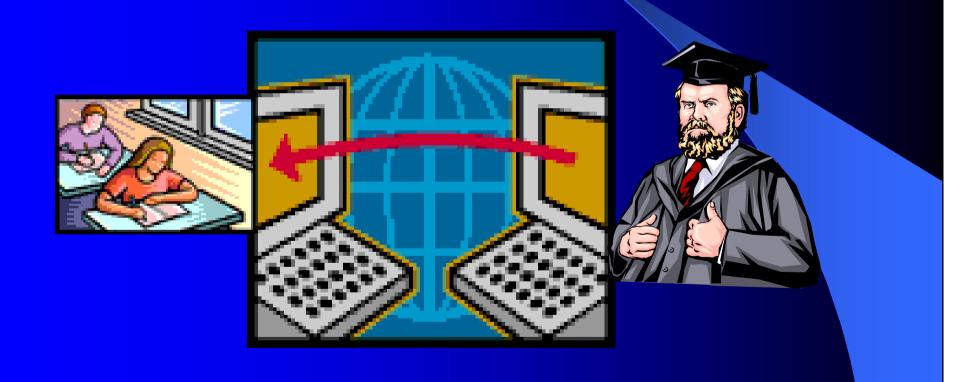
Course in Project Management

- Key topics included in the course are project lifecycle, planning templates, project deliverables, project work breakdown structure, estimating resources and task costs, Gantt charts, PERT techniques, project team duties and responsibilities, project team management techniques, project audits, project termination and software tools for large projects
- The course includes an applied project planning assignment in which students define an industrial project and use Microsoft (MS) Project software and "best practices" to properly plan, schedule and budget

Course in Project Management

- Student Learning was measured by
 - Participation
 - Discussion board required, rubric, % of grade
 - Weekly summary of learning
 - Written reports on key topics
 - Small group activities
 - Plan and execute a group-selected project
 - Two quizzes and a midterm exam

Technology has shifted the professor's lecture role to being a guide, a mentor and a facilitator



Dr. Trippe's Philosophy

- This course is blended F2F and asynchronous
- I assume that students are motivated to learn, otherwise you wouldn't be here
- Students are considered as a learning resource the same as the textbook and instructor
- Student responsibilities include having to think about the assignments and being prepared at the start of each week
- I envision the role of the instructor as being a mentor, facilitator, therapist, and cheerleader

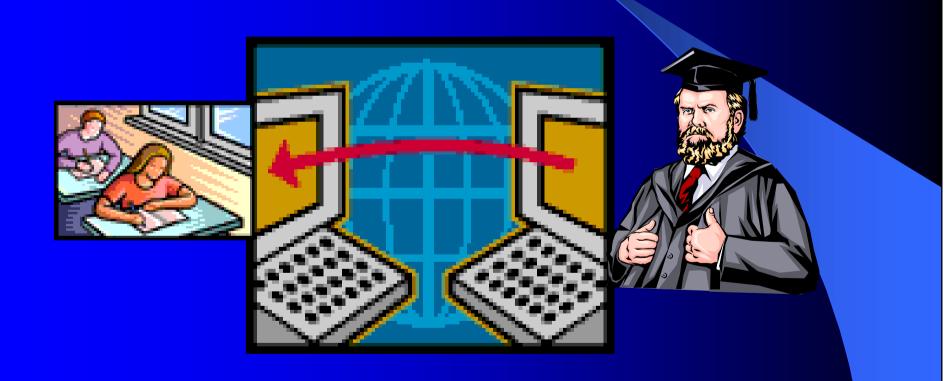
Dual Online Course Formats Distance Learners and Blended Learners

- Distance Learning Course
 - All content and interactions are conducted in an asynchronous environment with no face-to-face (F2F) contact between course participants
- Blended Learning Course
 - This section met F2F once a week while conducting the remainder of its activities at a distance over the Internet
- Lecture Enhanced Distance Course

Distance and Blended Same Course – Different Environment

- Same Faculty and Grading Criteria
- Same Textbook
- Similar Assignments
 - All assignments submitted electronically
 - All testing done online
- Students Drawn From the Same Population
- All students interact with each other

Section 90: Asynchronous at a Distance



Participation Expectations of Distance Learners

- All learners were expected to read and monitor the weekly class discussions
- Those in the distance learning section posted at least three substantive messages on three of the seven days of each week
 - A substantial message promotes learning for everyone in the class and is at least 350 words long
 - These messages constitute an asynchronous discussion which promotes student learning
- Post a weekly summary addressing personal learning – approximately 350 words long

Section 89: Blended



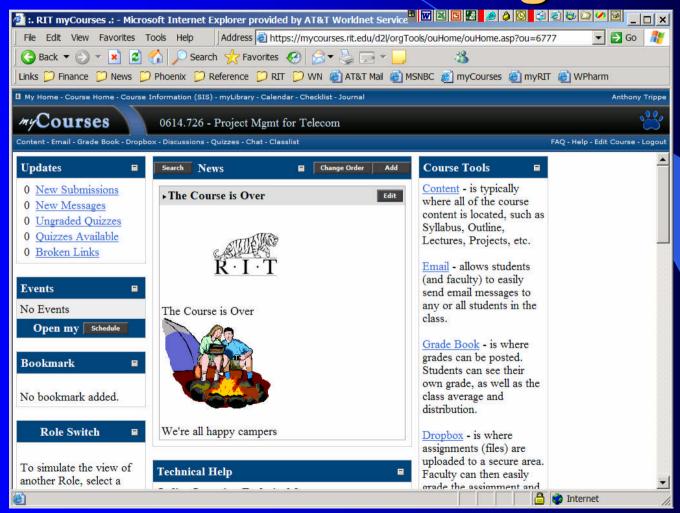
Participation Expectations of Blended Learners

- The three substantive messages are replaced with a weekly 75-minute long, F2F meeting wherein each learner must contribute knowledge
 - Attendance recorded and participation noted
 - Learners are expected to contribute content and/or raise questions on the topics of that week
- BL students post a summary message to review events and activities for F2F session for that week
- Interaction between the DL and BL sections

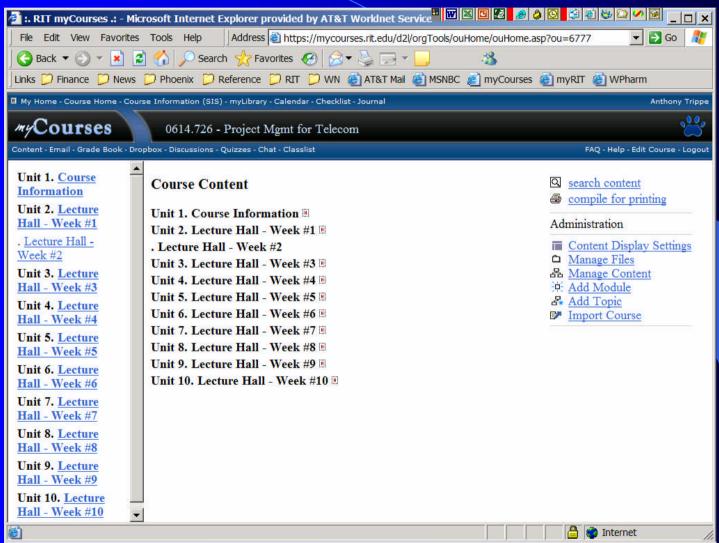
Unexpected Benefit

- Traditional students have little work experience
- Distance students are away from study/class experience for several years
- Ice breaker activities for first week
- Once the questions and discussions started, the faculty member had to get out of the way of the students!

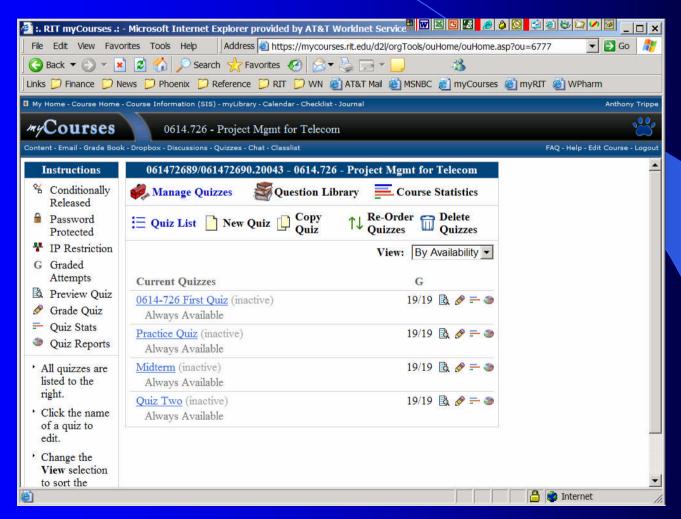
D2L Home Page



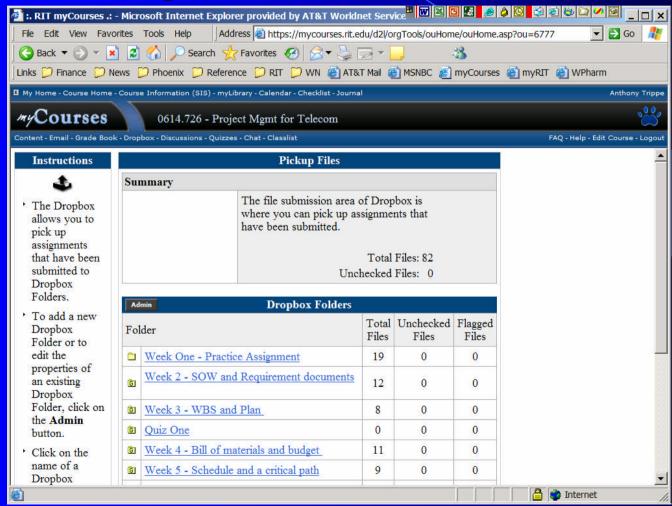
Content Conference



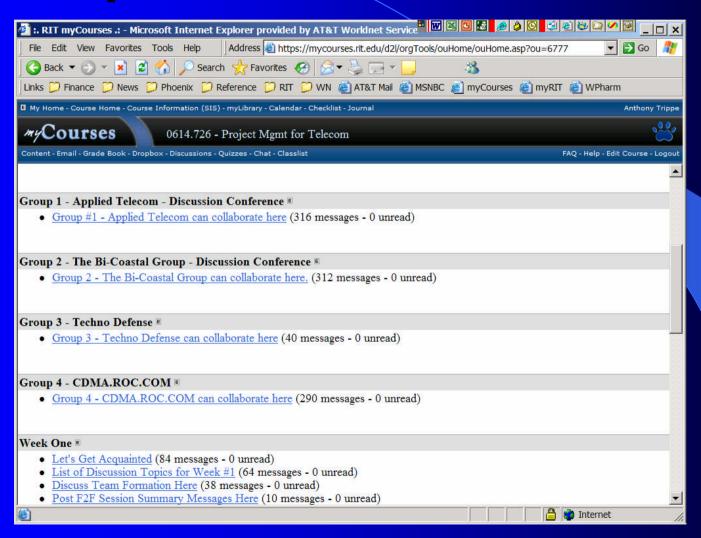
Quizzes Conference



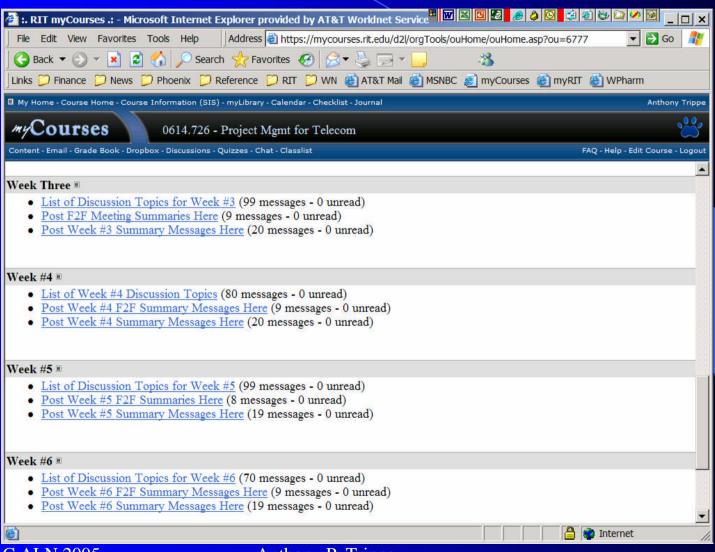
Drop Box Conference



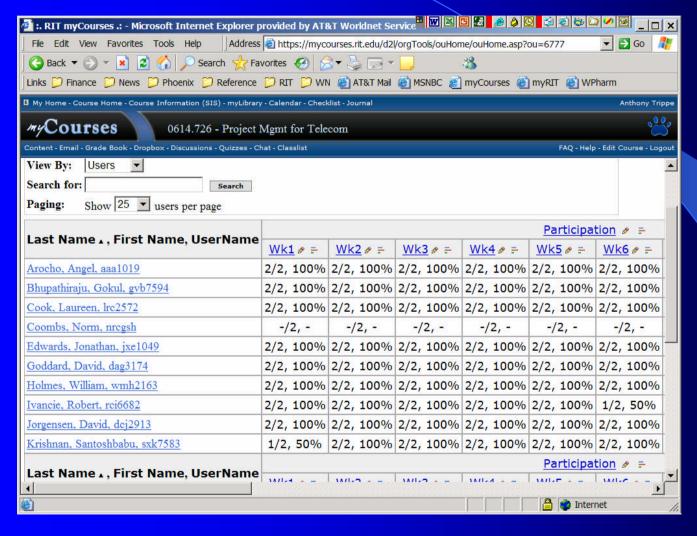
Group Discussion Conferences



Weekly Discussion Conferences

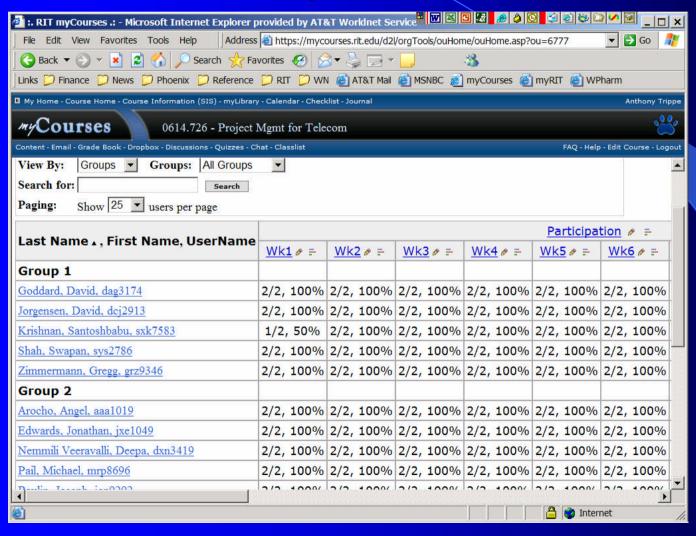


Gradebook Conference -1



Gradebook can be viewed in 3 formats

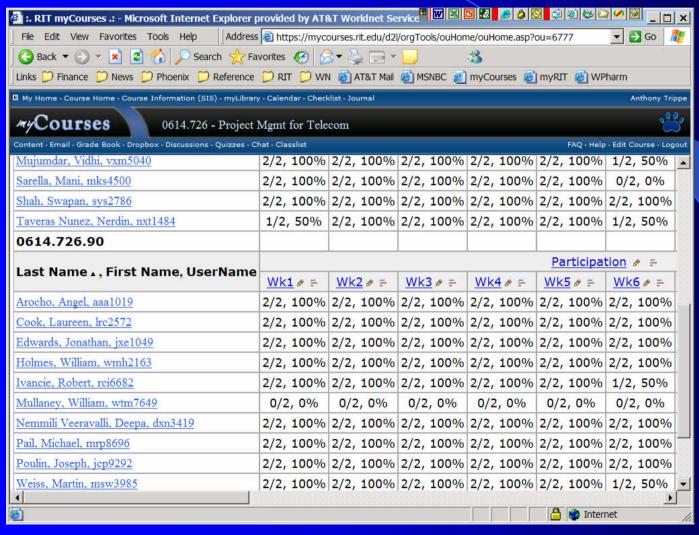
Gradebook Conference -2 by Small Groups



Grades
can be
exported
to Excel

Gradebook Conference -3

by Section



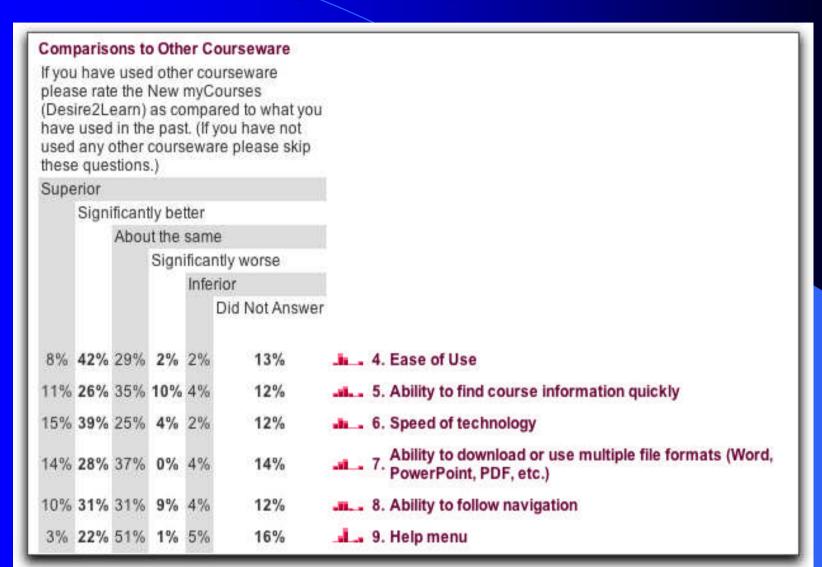
Students
can view
their
grades
at any time

Measure Student Satisfaction

 Student satisfaction opinions were surveyed for both the distance and the blended students

 Responses reported on a 5-point Lickert scale (5 = best)

Measure Student Satisfaction



Student Comments

"I would like to say that i was able to learn a lot from the course, not just about project management but also about working in groups, both face to face and virtually. I think i am much better at working in virtual groups than i was before. The knowledge about the procedures and the technical aspects of Project Management that i gained will be very helpful when i work on actual projects."

Question: How could the online components of this course be made better?

Answer: "Allow students to delete only their posted messages sent by mistake."

Student Comments

"I thought that myCourses provide a very good online examination environment."

"I fully enjoyed this course, the instructor and the experiences with my classmates. I have learned a great deal from this experience - Thank you."

"I liked the combination of the onsite students and the distance learning students within the same course."

Student Comments

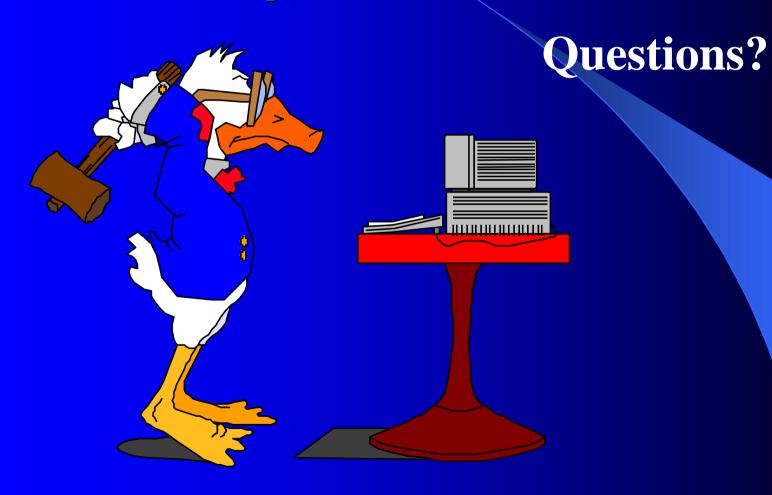
"Much easier to find out what the assignments are than the previous courseware. Just click on content and the assignment you wish to download. Online notes much easier to access. Gradebook and statistics very informative and useful."

"You were not able to look at different sections of the site at the same time. for example if I'm the discussion area and want to refer to something in the content area and stay within the site it is not possible. I would have compose something external on MS-Word while referring to the content section and afterwards post the document or copy and paste the text."

Conclusions

- Blended Course Format Works for Everyone
 - Traditional, on-campus students
 - Distance students, geographically dispersed
 - Faculty interacts with both types of students
- Faculty appreciate the versatility of Blended
 - Faculty acts more like a mentor or a coach
- Students especially like 24x7 availability
- Blended Students Learn from each other
 - Discussion Conference is easy to use

Computers are FUN



Sloan-C ALN 2005

Anthony P. Trippe