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# A Qualitative Analysis of Best Practices in IA Online Synchronous Instruction

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# What are we talking about?

- Faculty perceptions of IA distance instruction
- Student perceptions of IA distance instruction
- Emergent best practices based on these perceptions in a case study context



# Motivation for the study

- Faculty perceptions established in previous research
  - Where are the student perceptions?
- Observed increasing IA knowledge & skill set of incoming MSIA students
- Literature supports:
  - Use of technology increasing (adoption)
  - Expanding (replacing more traditional pedagogical methods)



# Questions that directed this work

- What are MSIA student perceptions of Capitol's hybrid learning environment?
- How do such student perceptions compare & contrast with previously analyzed faculty perceptions?
- Can higher education institutions better harness technology in hybridized learning environments?

# What do we mean, hybrid learning environment?

- Centra (synchronous)
  - Live audio discussion & lecture
    - Limited video capability
  - Application sharing for hands on laboratories
- Blackboard (asynchronous)
  - Assignment upload & grading
  - Discussion threads



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# What is the problem?

- Little or no literature examining faculty and student perceptions of online hybrid IA learning environments that utilize the Centra and Blackboard platforms.

# Why are we talking about this?

- Create awareness of gap in literature
- Contribute to the body of literature centered on IA online instruction
- Create potential foundation for larger investigation into faculty & student perceptions
- Provide information for educators to consider when re-evaluating online learning environments



# How did we do the study?

- Extend our existing study of faculty perceptions
- Qualitative survey instrument to collect student perceptions
- Syntactical content analysis method
  - Indicators: good, great, more, less, same, poor, bad, etc.
- Coded responses grouped by *majority* and *minority*
- Examined both data sets for agreements & disagreements in *perceptions*



# Limitations of the study

- Scope
  - Case study at a single institution
- Sample size
  - Student sample size matches previous faculty study
- Purposive sampling method
  - Nature of the study necessitates purposive sampling



# So what did we discover?

- Eight emergent themes for faculty perceptions
- Seven emergent themes for student perceptions
- Coalesced into six categories for discussion purposes



# Six categories of faculty perceptions

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Majority Perception</b>	<b>Minority Perception</b>
Role of faculty	Facilitator	Instructor; multiple roles
Synchronous lecture	Primary mode of course delivery; no change	Split between more lecture time & less lecture time
Asynchronous environment	Compliment synchronous	Support tool; posting course material
Use of Centra technology	Utilize multi-media capabilities; training critical	Use is intuitive
Use of Blackboard	Effectively used for assignments, labs; training critical	Use is intuitive; under utilized
Expectations – faculty of student	Quality participation key; all faculty support online learning community	Participation is good but not absolutely necessary



# Six categories of student perceptions

Themes	Majority Perception	Minority Perception
Synchronous lectures	More lab exercises	Do not change
Asynchronous lab exercises	Compliment synchronous	Support tool; posting course material
Switch synchronicity of lectures & lab exercises	Lecture synchronously with some lab demos	Favor change
Use of Centra technology	Centra is well utilized for live lecture and discussions; intuitive	Faculty could expand use of Centra to deliver lectures
Use of Blackboard	Blackboard is well utilized for asynchronous assignments; technology is intuitive	Faculty could expand use of Blackboard technology to deliver assignments, discussions, and support.
Lab support	Not needed	More lab support



# Supported conclusions

- Commitment to quality & use of technology
- Common agreement on utilization of Centra
  - Students want more labs
- Fundamental disagreement on utilization of Blackboard
  - Faculty appeared to use basic features; students want more from the platform
- Disagreement on training



# Recommendations

- More examination of blended real-time learning platforms (i.e., Centra, Adobe Connect, Blackboard, etc.)
- Continue ongoing IA education share between CAEs for best practices discussions



# Ideas for the future

- Expand study to include other CAE institutions with MSIA programs
- Further research into IA laboratory exercises in online hybrid learning environment
- Integration of additional or new technologies

# An example of a response to these findings

- Examine new platforms
  - Adobe Connect
- Testing pedagogical changes
  - Taking lectures asynchronous
  - Taking Q&A and lab support synchronous