

Chapter 18

Use “hhh” Technology in the Transformative Models of Online Education

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ABSTRACT

All People Internet University (“hhh”) technology is a hybrid distance education approach that provides students with opportunities to explore real-world issues through authentic learning experiences within collaborative learning environments. This chapter defines this online distance education approach, outlines an “hhh” framework, and showcases an “hhh” archetype. In “hhh” environments, classroom teachers are not positioned in the role of teacher/facilitator/designer in the online learning spaces. The “hhh” online spaces are collaborative spaces where students, teachers, subject experts, and “hhh” team members interact with one another; these are community spaces where traditional hierarchical classroom roles are blurred. Students’ roles transform due to the flexibility and design of the “hhh” learning environments as they move from student to reflective practitioner, providing for new ways of learning and teaching.

INTRODUCTION

Education delivered via the Internet is given many terms throughout the world, ranging from virtual education to Web-based learning. A snapshot of distance education practices reveals great variation from country to country, as well as in the extent and form of implementation. One view of distance education is online education within the

USA where the landscape of K-12 education is rapidly changing.

Online education in K-12 schools is gaining a great deal of attention as more school districts utilize the Internet, which provides increased educational opportunities and flexibility for teachers and students. Online education is both feasible and supported by the high percentage of K-12 classrooms with Internet access: 92% of public schools have Internet access in instructional rooms and the ratio of students to instructional comput-

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ers with Internet access in public schools is 4.8 to 1 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2008). Ninety percent of children aged 5–17 years use computers and 75% of 14–17 year olds use the Internet (National Telecommunications and Information Administration, 2008). Moreover, in the 2008–2009 school years, approximately one-third of public school districts had students who were enrolled in an online distance education course and, in 2009, nearly 300,000 high school students were engaging in online classes in the USA. With this high percentage of individuals connected to the Internet and with students and educators embracing distance education using online strategies, a variety of instructional design guidelines and pedagogical approaches are being implemented to guide online education.

One trend in online education is the utilization of hybrid learning environments, primarily at higher education institutions, which offer a combination of online and face-to-face (F2F) instruction. The goal of hybrid learning is to improve the educational experience for students by joining together the best features of in-class teaching with the best features of online learning to promote active independent learning and reduce class seat time. Mkrttchian and Minasyan at the “hhh” Technology Inc. a leading institution in hybrid course development—assert that hybrid courses offer many advantages over F2F or completely online courses including convenience, interaction, flexibility, and increased learning and retention. Research on the effectiveness of online education in general also shows that students who learn at a distance do not learn any worse, or any better, than traditional students.

Hybrid learning is not being discussed in such detail at the K-12 level; however, many high schools such as the Tourism Virtual School are implementing this hybrid approach. In fact, some educators believe hybrid learning could become the norm in K-12 settings. Two different approaches to K-12 hybrid learning are being utilized within the USA: (a) students taking courses

in school in a F2F environment and *out of school* in an online education course, and (b) students enrolling in online education courses in school while teachers are facilitators assisting when necessary and instructing lessons that enhance and/or complement what they are learning online.

The “hhh” technology encapsulates this second approach to K-12 hybrid learning, providing students with opportunities to explore real-world issues through authentic learning experiences within collaborative learning environments.

The “hhh” technology utilizes both F2F and online learning environments but is subtly different from traditional hybrid environments. For example, in “hhh” technology environments, classroom teachers are not positioned in the role of teacher/facilitator/designer in the online learning spaces. “hhh” technology learning online spaces are collaborative spaces where students, teachers, experts, and “hhh” technology learning team members interact with each other; these are community spaces where traditional hierarchical classroom roles are blurred and learning is transformed. Learning is transformed as students no longer initially look to their classroom teachers for knowledge, but utilize the online collaboration zones to interact and search for answers while developing new questions with other learners throughout the world. Additionally, students’ motivation to enter the online learning environment is significantly enhanced as real-time features and unknown locations of “hhh” technology environments provide a hook for learners to enter and return to the online environment frequently. Furthermore, students’ roles also transform due to the flexibility and design of the “hhh” technology learning environments as they move from student to reflective practitioner. The “hhh” technology students become more assertive, directive, enthusiastic, and motivated as they collaborate, construct, and learn with others around the world.

As a result of the changing roles of the teachers and students, “hhh” technology encourages transformative learning model; learning

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