

Minimizing the Distance in Online Courses with Adobe Connect

Dr. Paula Williams & Joan Dalrymple

Bergen Community College

March 31, 2017



“

...distance education is not simply a geographic separation of learners and teachers, but, more importantly, is a pedagogical concept. It is a concept describing the universe of teacher-learner relationships that exist when learners and instructors are separated by space and/ or by time.

”

THEORY OF TRANSACTIONAL DISTANCE, 1972

MICHAEL MOORE

Transactional Distance

teacher



separation

learner

Impact on
patterns of
behavior,
teaching, and
learning

Transactional Distance

- ❓ Physical separation leads to psychological and communication gap, a space with the potential misunderstanding between the inputs of instructor and those of the learner. It is a continuous rather than a discrete variable, a relative rather than an absolute term.
- ❓ In any educational program, there is some transactional distance, even where learners and teachers meet face to face. Special teaching-learning strategies and techniques are essential. (Michael G. Moore)

Transactional Distance

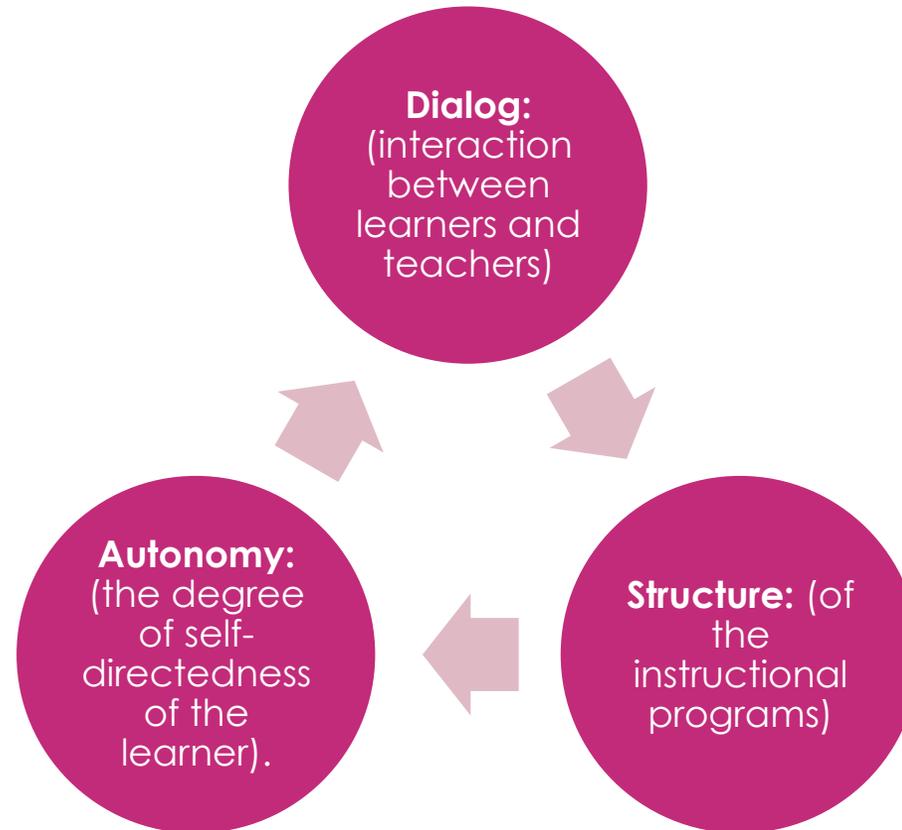
Feeling of
isolation,
disconnectedness

Reduced
motivation &
engagement

Attrition problems

Transactional Distance

Three key interactive components that must work together to reduce the transactional distance and provide for a meaningful learning experience



What We Know

- ❑ Richard Light's two symptoms of students in academic trouble:
 - ❑ A sense of isolation from the community.
 - ❑ A student in trouble is unwilling to seek help (50% of struggling students).

What We Know (cont'd)

- ❑ Distance students do not have the same access to the professor as face-to-face students.
- ❑ Making instruction available to students where they are and at a time that is convenient for them increases their confidence in preparing and completing their assignments and provides opportunities for rapport-building with faculty, which lessens their sense of isolation.
- ❑ Access encourages student-faculty contact, the first principle for effective undergraduate teaching.
 - ❑ Being available to students increases both communication with them and opportunities for rapport-building, both of which are related to higher teaching evaluations.

Benefits

- ❓ You won't have to come to campus to talk to your students.
- ❓ Your students don't have to come to campus (or to your office) to talk to you.
- ❓ You can offer sessions at more popular times (such as evenings) when more students can attend.
- ❓ It's easier to talk to several students at once — especially important for large lecture courses.
- ❓ All students in the office hour or online session can participate and discuss with one another, instead of waiting for email or in a line outside the instructor's door to get individualized attention for their question.
- ❓ E-mail can be frustrating, when it would be more effective to pick up a pen and write an equation or draw a graph.

Benefits (cont'd)

- ❑ If discussions are archived, then students who weren't able to attend can benefit from peers' questions and discussions.
- ❑ Anonymity (more important than you might think, apparently).
- ❑ Prompting student discussion beyond the discussion board forums.
- ❑ The chance to see what other students are asking.

More Benefits

- ❑ Can be used to:
 - ❑ Clarify course content.
 - ❑ Do make-up work.
 - ❑ Figure out their grades.
 - ❑ Get advising for scheduling courses or for their future career.
 - ❑ Ask questions about upcoming coursework or tests.
 - ❑ Socialize/connect with their professor.

Communicating with Students

? Communication tools:

- ? Social media
- ? Virtual meetings
- ? Email
- ? Instant messaging
- ? Web conferencing
- ? Blogs
- ? Discussion boards

? Videoconferencing:

- ? Use by individuals and groups
- ? Interaction with other groups and within groups
- ? Instructor may or may not be present

Videoconferencing

- ❓ Videoconferencing is an effective method for integrating face-to-face interaction in online courses, and meetings can range from full class participation to one-on-one meetings.
- ❓ The use of synchronous tools offers a means ... to support the institution's strategic objective of offering online courses and address issues relating to the accessibility of our services to students off-campus.

(Williams, Report on Pilot Project for Online Information Literacy Instruction 2010-2011)

About Our Student Population

- ❑ Bergen CC serves a diverse student population of over 14,000 students from over 140 different countries
- ❑ 74% of our students are under age 25*
- ❑ Many students work full or part-time
- ❑ Many students have family responsibilities



*Source: Bergen Community College Fact Book, 2016-2017

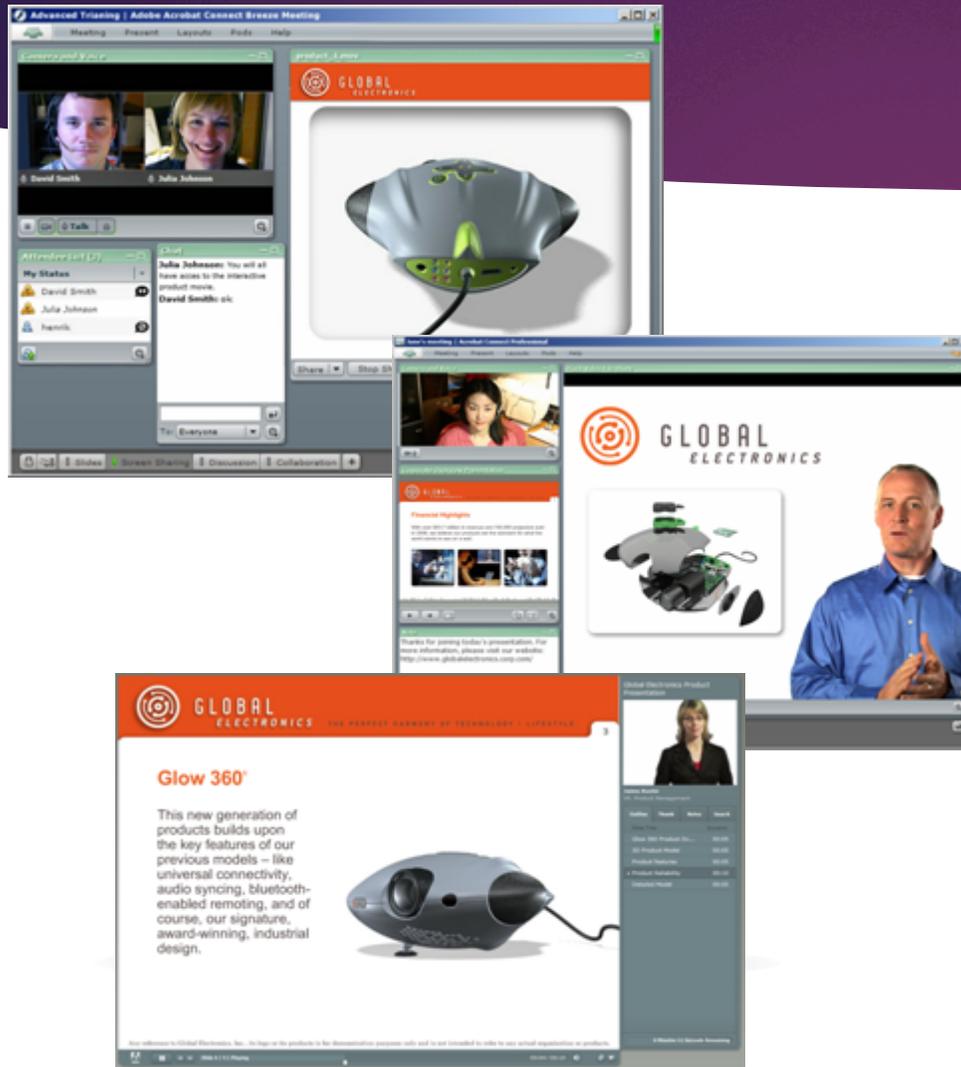
Student Success Course, IST-123

- ❑ 3 credits
- ❑ Required for students enrolled in developmental courses
- ❑ Can be taken as an elective
- ❑ Available face-to-face or online via Moodle
- ❑ Topics include: active learning, information literacy, self-management, self-awareness, academic skills

Mode of Delivery in Our Online IST Courses

- ❑ Adobe Connect
 - ❑ Web-based service
 - ❑ Provides easy access and use
 - ❑ No software installation required by students or instructor
 - ❑ Since Adobe Connect is deployed using Adobe Flash Player, already installed on more than 98% of browsers, audiences can join Adobe Connect online meetings, courses, and presentations instantly
 - ❑ Entire session can be easily recorded, saved and distributed

Adobe Connect Solution Summary



Adobe Connect allows you to:

- Deliver rich and engaging, highly interactive and impactful online instruction.
- Provide students with the skills they need to succeed.

Key benefits:

- Ensure easy access and attendance
- Capture students' attention and keep them engaged
- Prepares students to better access, understand, and use course materials

Features Include

- ❑ Chat
- ❑ Audio and video
- ❑ One or Multiple Students
- ❑ Whiteboard or drawing surface
- ❑ Digital Ink Technology (something to write with!)

How Adobe Connect is Used in IST Online Courses

- ❑ Conduct virtual meetings
- ❑ Online class sessions (e.g. library instruction session)
- ❑ Virtual office hours, synchronous presentations
- ❑ Hold one-on-one meetings with students
- ❑ Conduct virtual meetings with IST online instructors
- ❑ Problem-solving tutorials
- ❑ Online workshops (webinars) conferences
- ❑ Collaborate in small groups
- ❑ Conduct interviews.

How Does It Work?

- ❓ Videoconferencing software is used to deliver instruction
 - ❓ Adobe Connect
 - ❓ The session may be accessed on virtually any device
- ❓ Students receive a URL to access the class.
- ❓ Students enter the online class on the date/time scheduled.
- ❓ Instruction is delivered in a highly interactive setting
 - Students can
 - ❓ view resources
 - ❓ ask questions
 - ❓ work individually or in groups
 - ❓ Take quizzes and polls
- ❓ The session may be recorded

Integration into Moodle

Homework

 Attend the Online Library Instruction Session February 23rd at 7:30PM

 Discussion Forum 6: Interview Questions & Strategies

 Journal 9 prompt_download this file 

 Journal 9_Upload here

 Career Research Worksheet_upload here (NEW: Due date extended to Sunday, March 5th!)

 Watch the recording of the library instruction session (Added 2/23/17)

- Recording of live session on finding career resources. Watch this first before taking the quiz!
- If you attended the live session, you do not have to watch the recording or take the quiz.

Career Research Quiz (take this only if you missed the live library session)

- If you did not attend the live library session, take the quiz by SUNDAY, MARCH 5th.

Hardware & Software Requirements

❑ Software Requirements for Students and Professors

- ❑ Flash player

 - ❑ In over 98% of browsers

 - ❑ Free to download

- ❑ URL

❑ Hardware requirements for Students and Professors

- ❑ Webcam with built-in microphone

- ❑ Speakers or Headset

Microphones & Camera Recommendations

- ❓ We recommend that you obtain a USB headset that you find comfortable. Headsets are available in multiple styles, including wired and wireless types, and some headsets will cover only one ear or both ears. The [Plantronics website](#) is a good place to start when looking for headsets.
- ❓ If you are interested in adding video to your Connect meeting and you do not have an integrated webcam with your computer, we recommend purchasing a USB webcam. One place to start looking for USB webcams is the [Logitech website](#).

Virtual Meeting Room Setup

- ❓ **Option 1:** You could create one room that is always available.
- ❓ **Option 2:** You could create one room that is available only when you turn it on.
- ❓ **Option 3:** You could create a separate room for each virtual office hour meeting (i.e. create a room once you have scheduled the meeting with the student.)

Preparing to Access the Meeting Rooms

- ❓ Inform your students that they will need high-speed Internet connection, especially if you are using the *Application Sharing* feature.
- ❓ It is recommended that users access Adobe Connect using the Internet Explorer or Mozilla Firefox browser.
- ❓ Many companies do not allow employees to download software, so if students plan to access Adobe Connect while at work, they should check to ensure that they have the necessary permission to download and install software plug-ins and updates.

Using Rich Content in Adobe Connect

- ? You can upload any of these content types:
 - ? Microsoft PowerPoint slides (PPT and PPTX)
 - ? video for Flash (FLV)
 - ? interactive Flash Player compatible content (SWF)
 - ? audio (MP3)
 - ? PDF
 - ? Adobe Captivate® demonstrations and simulations (SWF)
 - ? prerecorded Adobe Presenter courses
 - ? images (JPG and PNG)
 - ? compressed packages (ZIP) containing valid content.

In addition, live screen sharing allows you to share any content you have on your screen regardless of file type.

Virtual Office Hours



Strategies for Successful VOHs

1. **Structuring VOHs** : Set a specific virtual office hours for the semester. Usually, virtual office hours are set one day a week, and more appointments based on student's demand.
2. **Guidelines**: Create a short how-to guide to use the virtual office hour system for the students. Some faculty members make an addendum to their course syllabus containing rules/guidelines for VOH use.
3. **Boundaries** : Make a boundary to this virtual office hour to avoid being a “24 hour professor.” Posting specific office hours on the syllabus will help making the boundaries.
4. **Image** : During the virtual office hours, beware of using text abbreviations, poor grammar, etc. This might give positive or negative impact on student-professor relationship. Always consider how the conversation would impact the students when you are chatting.

Survey Results

After attending a virtual meeting with my professor, I felt more motivated

- ❑ 50% strongly agreed
- ❑ 26% agreed
- ❑ 16% somewhat agreed
- ❑ 3% disagreed
- ❑ 3% did not attend

Survey Results (cont'd)

Based on the Career Research Workshop, I now feel more confident in my ability to complete the career research assignment successfully

- 46% strongly agreed
- 33% agreed
- 17% somewhat agreed
- 3% disagreed
- 1% did not attend

Survey Results (cont'd)

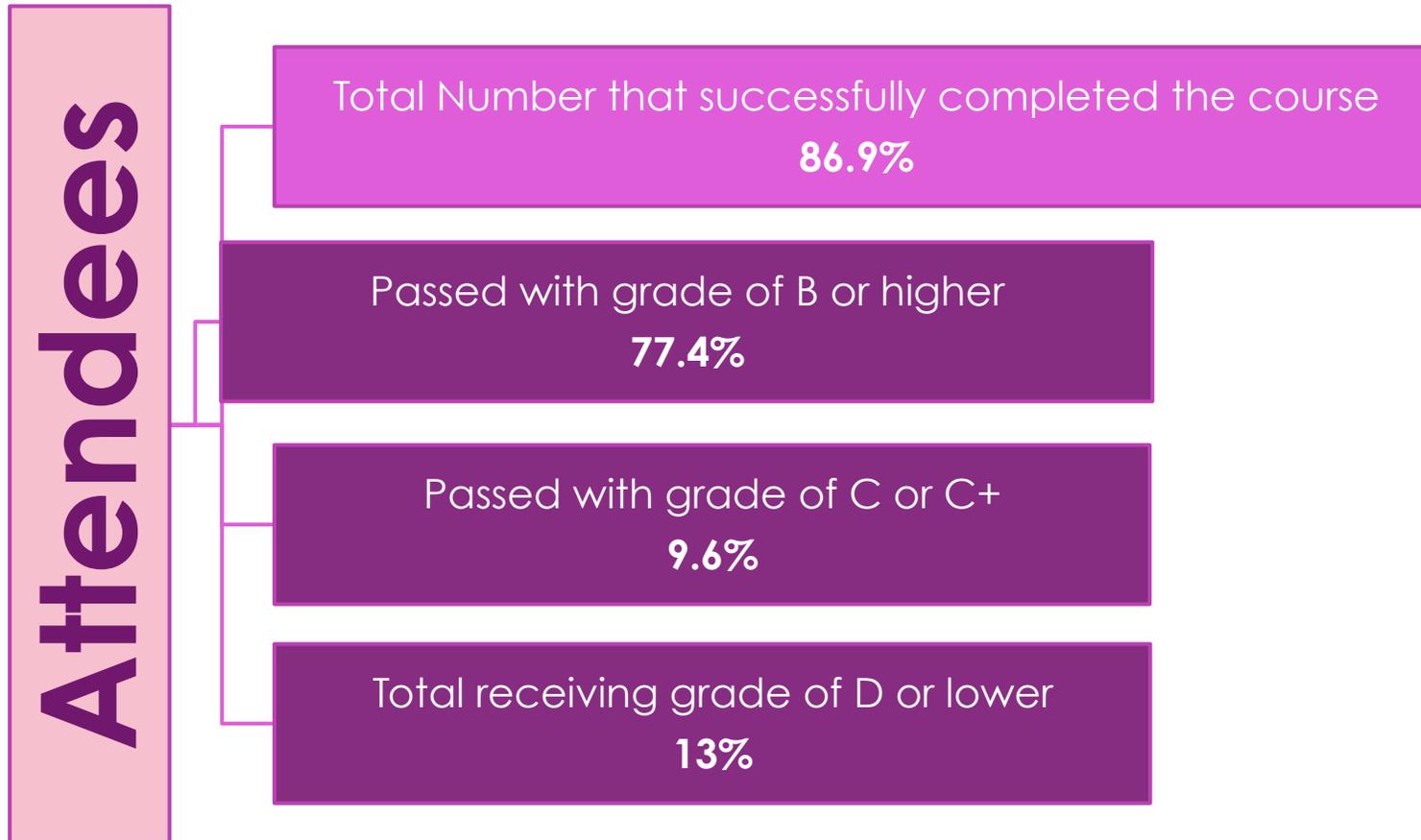
The weekly video messages (MMMs) helped me to better understand the assignments

- ❑ 47% strongly agreed
- ❑ 40% agreed
- ❑ 13% somewhat agreed
- ❑ 0% disagreed
- ❑ <1% did not attend

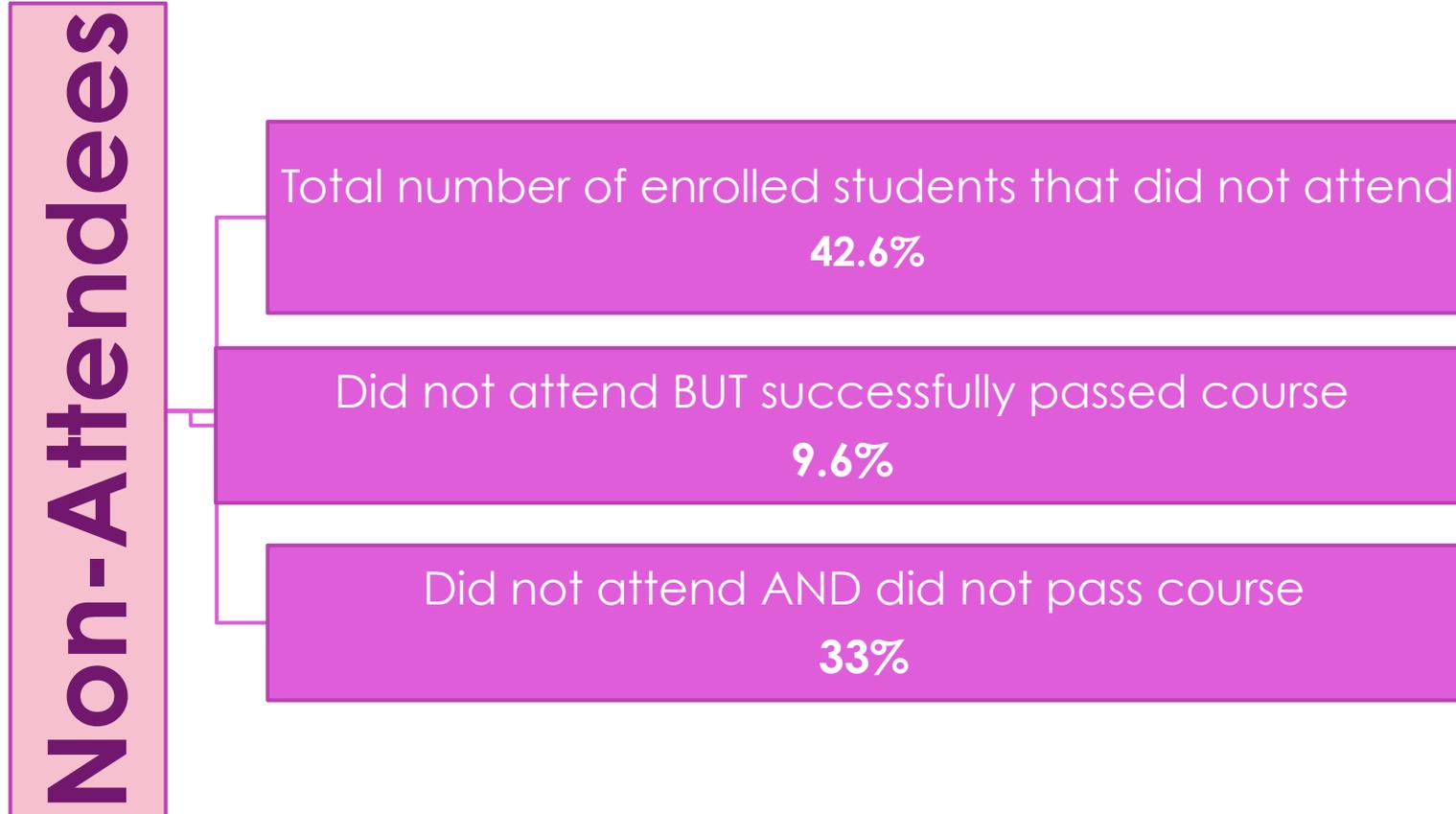
Analysis of Impact on Grades

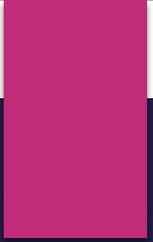
- ❓ Total number of students: 54 (3 classes)
- ❓ Percentage of enrolled students who attended the mandatory meetings: 57.4%

Success Rate of Students that Attended Mandatory Meetings



Success Rate of Students that Did Not Attend Mandatory Meetings





Questions?

Thank you!

References

- ❓ Compton, L. K. L., Davis, N., & Mackey, J. (2009). Field Experience in Virtual Schools—To Be There Virtually. *Journal of Technology and Teacher Education*, 17(4), 459-477.
- ❓ Edwards, J. T., & Helvie-Mason, L. (2010). Technology and instructional communication: Student usage and perceptions of Virtual Office Hours. *Journal of Online Teaching and Learning*, 6(1), 174-186.
- ❓ Kohorst, K., & Cox, J. R. (2007). Virtual office hours using a tablet PC: E-Illuminating biochemistry in an online environment. *Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Education*, 35(3), 193-197.
- ❓ Light, R. Making the most of college: Students speak their minds. (2001). Cambridge, MA: Harvard Press.
- ❓ Moore, M. "Theory of transactional distance." Keegan, D., ed. "Theoretical Principles of Distance Education (1997), Routledge, pp. 22-38. <http://www.c3l.uni-oldenburg.de/cde/found/moore93.pdf>
- ❓ Myers, S. C., Bishop, D., Rajaman, S. S., & Kelly, J. (2004). Virtual office hours: tutoring distance students in statistics and economics. *Ohio Commons for Digital Education, Columbus, OH*
Williams, P. (2011). Report on Pilot Project for Online Information Literacy Instruction 2010-2011). Unpublished manuscript.