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Using Elluminate (and Similar Products) for Distance Learning Teaching

Fricker, Ronald D.

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Using Elluminate (and Similar Products) for Distance Learning Teaching

Associate Professor Ron Fricker

Operations Research Department

Naval Postgraduate School

Fundamentals for Naval Analysis II (OS3080) Course Design and Conduct

- Designed to be synchronously taught by VTC
  - Weekly three-hour class sessions
  - Summer quarter 2007, beta tested Elluminate by simultaneously broadcasting via VTC and Elluminate

- Self-contained Blackboard site
  - Lecture PowerPoint slides and course materials repository
  - On-line quizzes and project

- Pedagogical philosophy: Attend class in medium most useful/convenient to student
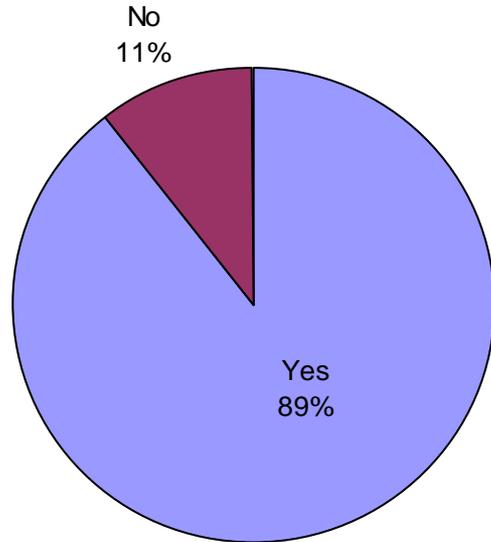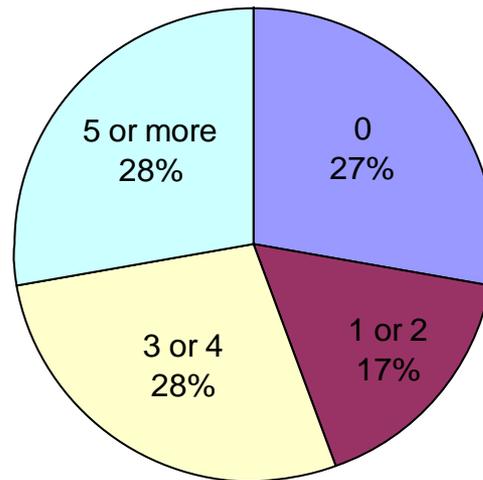
Master of Systems Analysis

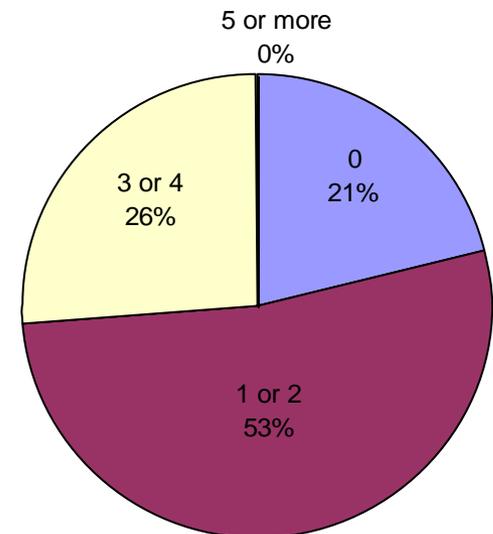| Qtr #	Qtr offered	Asynchronous Web-based Courses	VTE Courses
1	Spring/ Fall	(SA Cert – MSA Core) **OS2080 Fundamentals for Naval Analysis** (3-0)	(MSA Core) **MO1180 Topics in Mathematics for Systems Analysis** (3-2)
2	Summer/ Winter	(SA Cert – MSA Core) **OS3380 Combat Systems Simulation** (3-1)	(MSA Core) **OS3080 Fundamentals for Naval Analysis II** (3-0)
3	Fall/ Spring	(SA Cert – MSA Core) **OS3680 Naval Tactical Analysis** (4-0)	(MSA Core) **OA4702 Cost Estimation** (4-0)
4	Winter/ Summer	(SA Cert – MSA Core) **OS4680 Naval Systems Analysis** (4-0)	(MSA Core) **OS3211 Systems Optimization** (4-0)
5	Spring/ Fall	(Defense Resource Management Track) **MN4053 Defense Budget and Financial Management Policy** (4-0)	(MSA Core) **OS4011 Risk Benefit Analysis** (3-2)
6	Summer/ Winter	(Defense Resource Management Track) **MN3510 Defense Financial Management Practice** (3-0)	(Thesis Equivalent for MSA) **OS3081 Systems Analysis Cases I** (3-0)
7	Fall/ Spring	(Defense Resource Management Track) **MN3221 Systems Acquisition and Program Management I** (3-0)	(Thesis Equivalent for MSA) **OS3082 Systems Analysis Cases II** (3-0)
8	Winter/ Summer	(Defense Resource Management Track) **MN3222 Systems Acquisition and Program Management II** (3-0)	(Thesis Equivalent for MSA) **OS4083 Systems Analysis Cases III** (3-2)

OS3080: Elluminate Usage
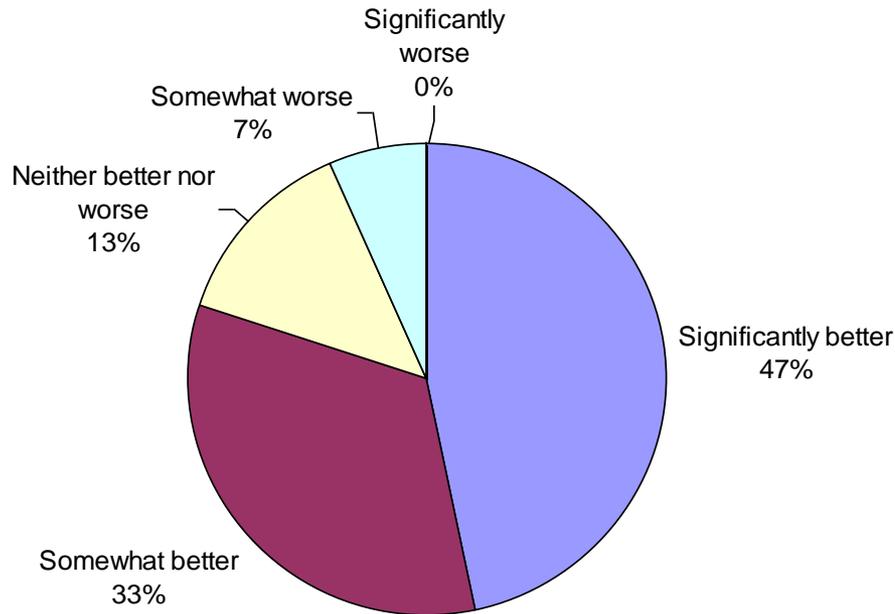

"I have tried/tested Elluminate."

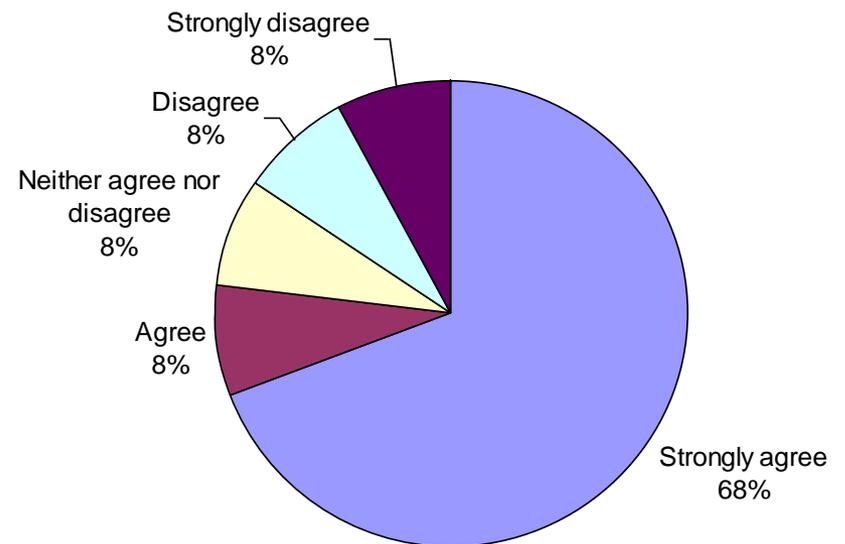"I have used Elluminate to attend _____ classes."

"I have accessed the Elluminate recordings of lectures _____ times."

Student Opinions on Elluminate vs. VTC

"How would you rate lectures delivered via Elluminate compared to lectures delivered via VTC?"

"I prefer weekly class lectures conducted in Elluminate compared to attending them via VTC."

My Opinions on the Medium (1)

- Done right, an effective way to teach
  - Sometimes seemed like teaching was *easier*
  - I.e., hard concepts to teach in class were sometimes easier to communicate with this mode

- With good software, lecture/class administration as simple as in classroom
  - Schedule a session, upload slides, start lecturing
  - Caveat: I routinely use PowerPoint slides
    - Would be much more work for someone used to lecturing at the board

My Opinions on the Medium (2)

- What makes the medium work is synchronous voice and interactive lecture materials (e.g., PowerPoint slides)

- Web cameras generally not necessary (at least for lecture types of courses)
  - "Talking head" usually provides little value
  - I use at the beginning and end of lecture to "put a face on" the class
  - Overuse results in excessive file size of Elluminate recorded lectures

- Flexibility (time and location) a big positive with students
  - But also requires greater student commitment and dedication
- As good or better than VTE (in my opinion)
  - e-Learning more flexible, immediate, and personal
  - Main "pros" in favor of VTE:
    - Infrastructure in place & technology "stable"
    - Better for seminar-type classes where voice and video of all participants important
  - Can achieve better screen resolution than VTE

DL Possibilities

- Synchronous lectures
  - Replace or supplement VTC/VTE
- Office hours and tutoring
- Student:
  - Study groups
  - Team projects
  - Other types of collaboration
- Other meetings
  - E.g., Geographically dispersed faculty interaction

Issues

- If you have a choice, I don't recommend simultaneous use of VTC and Elluminate
  - Can only use tools that work in both media
  - Limits you to the "worst of both worlds"
- Elluminate recordings somewhat inflexible
  - Hard for students to "jump around" in lectures
    - If you move slider backwards (even just a tiny bit), Elluminate starts all over re-downloading
  - Problem compounded with excessive use of video
    - Also, files become huge

Hints & Tips (1)

- Do some practice sessions before ever going into a live classroom
  - Get comfortable with button pushing sequences
  - Be prepared to talk students through set-up
- Get students in the habit of doing the Audio Set-up Wizard before the start of class
- Be sure to specify how you want students to use microphones
  - I allowed multiple talkers, but asked them to keep theirs turned off unless they were asking a question

- Don't forget to record lectures
  - I always hung a note to myself on the computer
  - Also asked the students to remind me
- Tablet PC or other type of "pen input device" useful for writing on PowerPoint slides
  - Makes the presentation a bit more interactive
- I liked having a separate computer so I could see the "student view"
  - As you get more experienced, not necessary, but very useful at first

Hints & Tips (3)

- Some students may not have microphones or may have problems during a particular session
  - Let them know they can always ask questions using the chat board
  - I encouraged use of chat board either to ask me questions or for intra-student dialog
- Hard to lecture and watch chat board
  - Let students know to call out if there's a question in the chat board I'm not answering
- Also, let students know you can see the "private" comments on the chat board

Hints & Tips (4)

- When setting up class session, pre-specify:
  - Permissions for entering students
  - Whether you want simultaneous talkers or not
- My default was:
  - Give most permissions
  - Allow simultaneous talkers
  - Signal me when someone joined
- My philosophy: trust students and give them ways to engage

My Summary Thoughts on Elluminate

- Pros
  - Students like the flexibility and Elluminate's performance
  - Dedicated VTC not required
    - Makes singleton student enrollment feasible
  - My opinion: Done right, an effective way to teach
- Cons:
  - Student's workplace/facilities may not be conducive to a "classroom atmosphere"
  - Likely still difficult/impossible for afloat students to effectively participate
  - Recorded lectures potentially problematic (size/inflexibility)
- Unknowns
  - Utility/effectiveness in seminar-style classes