A CASE STUDY IN ONLINE INSTRUCTION FOR A NON-LABORATORY-BASED COURSE IN HERBACEOUS PLANTS

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(ABSTRACT)
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This case study examined asynchronous online instruction to suggest practices of delivering a traditional lab-based course via the Internet and effective ways of teaching in such an environment. Numerous studies were outlined to compare traditional and distance education student outcomes, commonly referred to as the media comparison approach. This approach, as it pertains to the instructional design process, was outlined in-depth to provide an outline for future online courses in Herbaceous Plants.

The instructor’s enthusiasm and interests about delivering an online course led to the development and implementation of the first Herbaceous Plants course at The George Washington University. The course was offered in an attempt to address the growing needs and requests of the Landscape Design students for a course on herbaceous plants.

Institutions can use this study to gain insight into the technologies used in distance education and how traditional lab-based courses can be taught through asynchronous, online environments. A well developed distance education program can be a time saving, cost-effective solution in higher education. In order to implement similar courses, institutions should complete individualized instructional designs prior to the development of the course.

While technologies such as the Internet, email, and videostreaming have effectively facilitated dramatic increases in our abilities to disseminate information, distance education is not the solution to every educational challenge. In time, online instruction will take its place in contemporary education while continuing to expand educational opportunities to new and distant audiences whose quest for knowledge would otherwise be hampered by time or distance.
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