

Delphi Study on Competency Model of Online Instructor

Online instruction has greatly changed the learning environment and learning process in comparison with traditional instruction. It requires a new kind of roles and competencies in instructors (Oh, 1998; Berge, 1996; Kearsley et al., 1995; Kearsley, 2000; Reeve & Reeve, 1997). Nonetheless, many studies have been made on technology related to online education and its potential, whereas few studies have been conducted to identify what instructors actually do online (Salmon, 2000). Therefore, there is a need for a systematic and comprehensive study of online instructor's roles and competencies.

This study attempted to provide one indicator for training, selection and placement of future online instructors by identifying online instructor's roles and competencies in a more systematic and comprehensive way. To attain this goal, the following research questions were set:

First, what major roles and competences are required of online instructors?

Second, what role cluster by each role is required of online instructors?

Third, what is the descriptive competency model synthesizing online instructors' roles and competencies?

To fulfill these study questions, the current study conducted the questionnaire research three times with the use of the Delphi technique, especially the Modified Delphi technique which is a research method of finding out the consensus by extracting and synthesizing an expert group's opinions and judgement.

Based on the study results, the following conclusion was drawn:

First, the major role and competency required of online instructors were as follows: 6 major roles required of online instructors include 'interaction facilitator and manager', 'information manager and user', 'classroom evaluator', 'collaborator', 'subject matter expert', and 'planner'. The items rated as the core competency of online instructors totalled 15 items, of which 5 items were found to be 'subject matter expertise', 'interaction facilitation and management', 'instructional design', 'online communication', and 'learning activity evaluation'.

Second, 18 competencies were adopted as the competency cluster of the 'interaction facilitator/manager'. 21 competencies were adopted as the competency cluster of the 'information manager/user'. 14 competencies were

adopted as the competency cluster of 'classroom evaluator'. 19 competencies were adopted as the competency cluster of 'collaborator'. 16 competencies were adopted as the competency cluster of 'subject matter expert'. And 16 competencies were adopted as 'planner'.

Third, 5 finally identified core competencies included 'subject matter expert', 'interaction facilitation and management', 'instructional design', 'online communication', and 'learning activity evaluation'. Basic common competency is what becomes commonly fundamental in performing every role adopted in this research. It was found that 7 finally identified basic common competencies. And 'role-related competency' is the competency necessary in carrying out a particular role and refers to the competency partially applied according to 6 roles. It was found that the 'role-related competency' of the online instructor accounted for 14 competencies.