

E-learning is learning, too

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Abstract

Abstract: Grounded in constructivist/cognitive learning theory, this paper explores the assessment of student learning in one learning module in one Labor Studies class in one Midwestern university using *alternative assessment* which integrates teaching and learning activities with assessment through writing activities, the prominent means of communication in an online environment.

The purpose of this study, grounded in the most positive and powerful aspects of cognitive learning theory, social learning theory, and adult learning theory, is to assess student learning at the higher order thinking of the cognitive domain based on a pedagogy of learning-teaching-assessment (Speck, 2002). The study's population is 29 students in one online class L100, Survey of Unions and Collective Bargaining in one large Midwestern university and focuses on one learning module, Federal Labor Law and Agencies. Speck (2002) suggests *alternative assessment*, which measures student abilities to use higher level thinking skills such as synthesis, analysis, and evaluation and includes team activities, peer evaluation, self-evaluations, and portfolios, provides instructors a more accurate measure of student learning.

By providing students with alternative learning activities based on different learning styles and relating to subject content, the student shifts from passive to active engagement with the content, shifts from focusing on information to communication, and shifts from being an individual learner to a learner in a socially situated learning environment (Conole, 2010). The findings from this study suggest that students prefer a written lecture format or some combination of written, video, and interactive lecture format over a video or interactive format. These findings may reflect that students' time on task is shorter when engaging with the written format versus a video or interactive format.