

An On-line Course: Highlights and Grey Areas

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Introduction

A questionnaire-based study of the on-line Operating Systems (OS) course, which is a first year compulsory course in Bachelor of Computing Systems at UNITEC, Auckland, was conducted and the results summarised in this poster. Approx 150 students enrol in this course every semester. At present the course is taught in a traditional teaching method, that is teacher centred. The on-line version of the Operating Systems course is used as remote support teaching material.

It is very important to sort out a variety of issues, like adequate, up-to-date course material, interactivity, ease of use and other internet related issues before the course is available for 100% on-line delivery.

To assess the current status of the on-line OS course, a questionnaire was given to students to assess their experience with the on-line course material. In this poster, the authors will present the results compiled from the questionnaire.

The Questionnaire

The following aspects of the on-line course were asked:

- 1 Internet access at home
- 2 How frequently they have used the material
- 3 Comments on course material
- 4 Did the model answers help them in learning the subject
- 5 Did they find it useful? If so, quantify
- 6 What aspects of on-line learning they did not like
- 7 Any other qualitative suggestions or remarks.

Results

- 68 students responded to questionnaire
- 56 students have Internet access at home
- 6 used the on-line course material most frequently, 22 frequently, 22 occasionally, 7 least occasionally and 7 did not respond
- 47 students found the on-line course very useful, 6 said they did not like it and 8 did not respond
- 49 students liked the model answers, 10 did not like and 9 did not respond
- 44 students were comfortable in using it, 9 found it bit difficult, 15 did not respond
- 38 student said it is interactive, 20 did not see enough interactive component in it and 17 did not respond
- 49 said it has good course material, 6 said not enough and 13 did not respond
- 44 felt that it had enhanced their learning, 7 said it did not enhance their learning and 16 did not respond.

Suggestions for Improvement

Some aspects of the course the students felt needed improvement:

- Model answers were difficult to access
- Do not understand the use of the journal
- Add more practical component
- Make it more interactive
- Add more graphics
- Increase bandwidth, to reduce access time (Some access was very slow).

Conclusion

The questionnaire results are quite encouraging. The suggestions will be taken into account before the Operating Systems course is offered totally on-line, the authors feel that the course is now ready for this implementation. It is envisaged that some practical component will be available on campus if required, for giving support in difficult areas of the course. Since computer technology is changing at a rapid pace the Operating systems course will