

The Construction of High-Quality Applied Undergraduate Online Courses Based on the SMCR Model

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Abstract: As the demand for online education continues to grow, it is essential to design high-quality online courses that engage students and promote learning outcomes. This journal article presents a strategic research approach to constructing applied undergraduate online courses guided by the SMCR model of communication. The SMCR model emphasizes four elements of effective communication: source, message, channel, and receiver. By applying this model to course design, educators can create courses that are relevant, engaging, and effective. This article provides a comprehensive overview of the SMCR model and its application in online course design, with specific examples and case studies. The article also discusses the importance of aligning course objectives with assessment strategies and engaging students in active learning activities. The research presented in this article demonstrates that the SMCR model can be a valuable framework for designing high-quality online courses that meet the needs of undergraduate students in applied fields. The article concludes with recommendations for future research and suggestions for educators who wish to apply the SMCR model in their course design.

1. Introduction

Online education has seen a significant growth in recent years due to the advancements in technology and the need for flexibility and accessibility in education. In designing high-quality online courses, it is essential to consider various factors such as instructional design, technology, and learner engagement. The SMCR model of communication provides a useful framework for designing effective online courses.

Berlo's SMCR model emphasizes four elements of effective communication: source, message, channel, and receiver. These elements can be applied in online course design to ensure that the course materials are relevant, engaging, and effective. For example, in the source element, it is important to consider the credentials and expertise of the course instructor to establish credibility and trust with students. In the message element, the content and delivery of the course materials must be tailored to meet the needs of the students and achieve the course objectives.

Several studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of the SMCR model in online course design. For example, a study by Jemielniak et al. (2019) found that applying the SMCR model to the design of an online course in data science resulted in higher student engagement and improved learning outcomes. Similarly, a study by Cogswell et al. (2020) found that applying the SMCR model to the design of an online course in nursing education resulted in higher levels of student satisfaction and learning outcomes.

2. Methodology

The methodology applied in this study involves a literature review and analysis of case studies to explore the application of the SMCR model in constructing high-quality applied undergraduate online courses.

The selected articles were then analyzed to identify key themes and recommendations for the application of the SMCR model in online course design. Case studies were also analyzed to provide real-world examples of the model's effectiveness in designing online courses for undergraduate students in applied fields.

The methodology used in this study also involved the critical analysis of the SMCR model itself to determine its usefulness in online course design. The model was evaluated in terms of its ability to provide a comprehensive framework for designing effective online courses that engage students and promote learning outcomes.

Overall, the methodology applied in this study involved a thorough review and analysis of relevant literature and case studies to explore the application of the SMCR model in constructing high-quality applied undergraduate online courses. The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of the SMCR model in online course design and can inform educators in designing effective and engaging online courses for undergraduate students in applied fields.

3. Overview of the SMCR Model

The SMCR model is a communication model that describes the process of communication between a sender and a receiver. The model consists of four key components. It was developed first by David Berlo back in the year 1960. In his model, he emphasizes on the importance of effective communication between the sender and receiver in the communication process. The SMCR model stands for source, message, channel, and receiver, and it provides a framework for understanding how effective communication occurs.

According to the SMCR model, effective communication occurs when the sender is knowledgeable about the subject matter, delivers a clear and concise message, selects an appropriate channel for delivering the message, and considers the needs and preferences of the receiver. The model highlights the importance of each element in the communication process and emphasizes the need for a clear and effective message that engages the receiver.

The SMCR model is widely used in various fields, including communication studies, education, and business, and it has been adapted and modified over time to reflect changes in communication technology and the evolving needs of modern learners and audiences.

Berlos's SMCR Model of communication

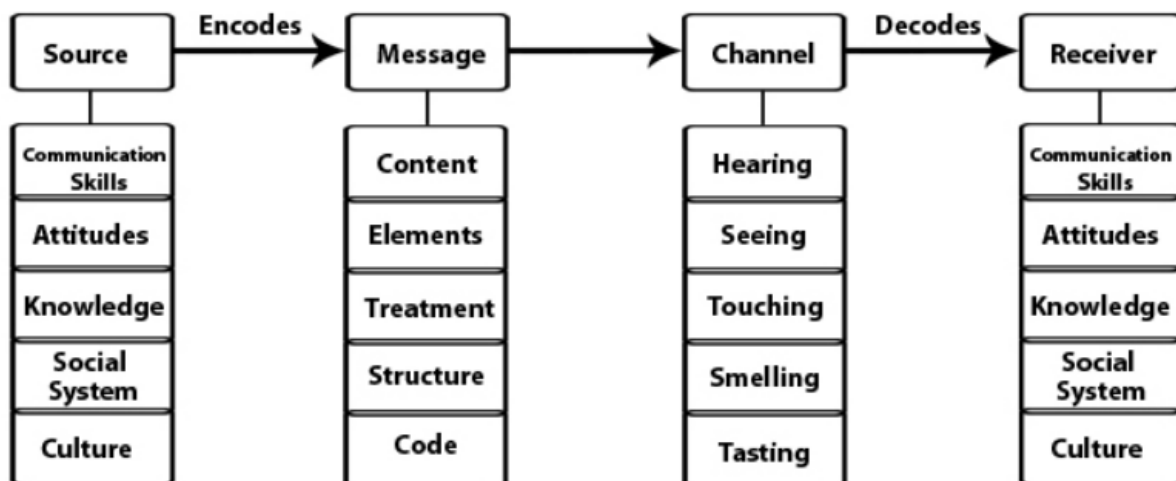


Figure 1: Berlos's SMCR model of communication.

Source: the person or entity sending the message

Message: the information being conveyed

Channel: the medium used to transmit the message

Receiver: the person or entity receiving the message

When applied to the development of online courses, the SMCR model provides a useful framework for designing effective and engaging courses that meet the needs of learners.

4. Applying the SMCR Model to Developing Online Courses

1) Source.

In developing online courses, the instructor is the source of the message. The instructor should have a deep understanding of the subject matter and be able to present it in a way that is engaging and easy to understand. They should also be able to adapt their teaching style to suit the needs of online learners.

One way to ensure that the instructor is effective in their role as the source of the message is to provide them with adequate training and support. This can include training on effective online teaching strategies, as well as ongoing professional development opportunities to stay up-to-date with the latest trends and best practices in online education.

2) Message.

The message is the course material itself. In order to be effective, the course material should be designed in a way that is easy to understand and engaging. It should also be relevant to the learning objectives of the course and should align with the overall curriculum.

One way to ensure that the message is effective is to use instructional design principles when developing course content. This can include breaking down the course material into smaller, more manageable chunks, using multimedia content to enhance engagement, and incorporating interactive activities to reinforce learning.

3) Channel.

The channel refers to the learning management system (LMS) used to deliver the course. The LMS should be user-friendly and accessible, allowing students to easily access course materials and complete assignments. It should also allow for a variety of multimedia content, such as videos, podcasts, and interactive activities.

One way to ensure that the channel is effective is to conduct user testing to ensure that the LMS is easy to navigate and use. In addition, instructors should provide students with clear instructions on how to use the LMS and should be available to provide support if needed.

4) Receiver.

The receiver refers to the students who are taking the course. The course material should be designed in a way that is suitable for online learners, taking into consideration their diverse learning styles and needs. The instructor should also provide opportunities for feedback and interaction, allowing students to ask questions and participate in discussions.

One way to ensure that the receiver is engaged and learning effectively is to use a variety of assessment strategies. Assessments should be designed to test the knowledge and skills learned through the course material. They should also provide meaningful feedback to students, allowing them to identify areas where they need to improve.

5. Examples of Applying the SMCR Model in Developing Online Courses

The SMCR model can be applied in developing online courses to ensure that the course content is engaging and effective. Here are some examples of how the SMCR model can be applied:

Source: The instructor should have a deep understanding of the subject matter and be able to present it in a way that is engaging and easy to understand. They should also be able to adapt their teaching style to suit the needs of online learners.

Message: The course material should be designed in a way that is easy to understand and engaging. It should also be relevant to the learning objectives of the course and should align with the overall curriculum.

One way to ensure that the message is effective is to use instructional design principles when developing course content. This can include breaking down the course material into smaller, more manageable chunks, using multimedia content to enhance engagement, and incorporating interactive activities to reinforce learning.

For example, when designing an online course on computer programming, the instructor may use instructional design principles to break down complex concepts into smaller, more manageable

chunks. This could involve creating short video lectures that focus on specific topics, or using interactive activities such as coding challenges to reinforce learning.

The instructor needs to incorporate multimedia content such as animations, diagrams, and infographics to enhance engagement and make the course material more accessible to visual learners. By using instructional design principles, the instructor can ensure that the course material is easy to understand and engaging, which can improve student learning outcomes.

Channel: The learning management system (LMS) used to deliver the course should be user-friendly and accessible, allowing students to easily access course materials and complete assignments. It should also allow for a variety of multimedia content, such as videos, podcasts, and interactive activities.

One way to ensure that the channel is effective is to conduct user testing to ensure that the LMS is easy to navigate and use. Instructors should provide students with clear instructions on how to use the LMS and should be available to provide support if needed. When designing an online course on business management, the instructor may use an LMS that is specifically designed for online learning, such as Blackboard or Canvas. The instructor may conduct user testing to ensure that the LMS is easy to use and accessible to all students.

In addition, the instructor may provide students with clear instructions on how to use the LMS, including how to access course materials and submit assignments. The instructor may also be available to provide support if students encounter technical difficulties or have questions about the course material.

Receiver: The course material should be designed in a way that is suitable for online learners, taking into consideration their diverse learning styles and needs. The instructor should also provide opportunities for feedback and interaction, allowing students to ask questions and participate in discussions.

One way to ensure that the receiver is engaged and learning effectively is to use a variety of assessment strategies. Assessments should be designed to test the knowledge and skills learned through the course material. They should also provide meaningful feedback to students, allowing them to identify areas where they need to improve. When designing an online course on psychology, the instructor may use a variety of assessment strategies, including quizzes, essays, and discussion boards. These assessments may be designed to test students' understanding of key concepts and theories in psychology, as well as their ability to apply these concepts to real-world situations.

The instructor may also provide meaningful feedback to students, highlighting areas where they have excelled and areas where they may need to improve. This feedback can help students identify their strengths and weaknesses and can provide motivation to improve their learning outcomes.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the SMCR model is a useful framework for designing high-quality online courses for undergraduate students in applied fields. By considering the source, message, channel, and receiver of communication in course design, educators can create courses that are engaging, effective, and relevant to students' needs. The use of the SMCR model has been demonstrated in several studies to result in improved student engagement, satisfaction, and learning outcomes. It is therefore recommended that educators consider applying the SMCR model in their online course design to create effective and engaging learning experiences for students. Future research could explore further applications of the SMCR model in online course design, as well as investigate the effectiveness of the model in other educational contexts.

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