

## Assignment 5 Discussion – Multimedia Resources

Although technology offers great potential in the eLearning environment, there are pitfalls to using some interactive activities in an online course. Discuss some of these pitfalls as they apply to using multimedia resources in the online classroom.

Waterhouse (2005) mentioned two common pitfalls or issues for using multimedia resources in an online course: (a) incompatible file formats and (b) long download times. However, I have experienced and handled the following additional pitfalls or issues of using multimedia resources in my practice during my four years facilitating online math courses: (a) lack of administrative rights to use a computer; (b) default computer settings or configuration to enable required plug-ins; and (c) students' affordability of proprietary software.

Students do not need to own a computer with Internet connection to complete their online coursework; instead, they must have access to a computer with Internet connection. Many students are using computers in their job settings, public libraries, or Internet cafés to complete coursework. These students often have the obstacle of lacking administrative rights or privileges to download and install required software into the computer to meet course requirements. Requesting permissions to download and install software are often time-consuming tasks that delay students' learning pace.

Computer owner students could experience issues loading multimedia resources in their computers, in particular web-based resources, because of default computer settings or configuration that disable the required plug-ins even after proper installation. These default settings are security measures against computer viruses that affect the performance of the machine. Changing the computer settings often takes a few simple steps for the average computer user when using the available help options. Unfortunately, too many students are not average computer users, so contacting the instructor or tech support for technical assistance becomes an annoyance in their learning experiences.

I found ironic Waterhouse (2005) remarks about Microsoft Office Suite are easily accessible and relatively inexpensive because this is not what I have been experiencing lately in my online math courses. I am experiencing more instances of students requesting alternatives ways to complete coursework that requires using Microsoft Office Suite because they cannot afford purchasing the software. There are many free alternatives these students could use to complete satisfactorily their coursework, such as Open Office or Google Docs. Unfortunately, students' requests often cannot be granted because it will be against the technology agreement or policy they signed when enrolling to the school.

### Reference

Waterhouse, S. (2005). *The power of eLearning: The essential guide for teaching in a digital age*. Boston, MA: Pearson Education, Inc.