Chapter VIII

Cybercoaching:
An Emerging Model of Personalized Online Assessment

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Abstract

This chapter introduces cybercoaching, an emerging model of online formative assessment. This model emphasizes the process of development rather than a procedure for evaluation. Personalized feedback is provided by the instructor through the Internet/cyberspace using accessible technologies of electronic mail and word processing. Unlike mechanical responses that are not individually tailored, the instructor offers the students detailed information for improvement. Included also in this chapter are practical suggestions, including a detailed discussion of rubrics and their uses.

Introduction

This chapter presents cybercoaching, an emerging model of paperless formative assessment. This tutorial approach rests on the coaching role of monitoring and adjusting instruction to match student learning needs, the coaching tools of the least sophisticated
and most accessible computer technology, and the coaching technique of personalized, objective-related feedback (see Table 1). The feedback is for the purpose of improving student performance and self-regulation. The theory and research behind the use of online technology (cyberspace), the instructor’s coaching role, and the feedback techniques discussed here may apply to any paperless assessment process, but cybercoaching is specifically intended for personalized feedback appropriate for higher levels of thinking, that is, analysis and synthesis (Anderson et al., 2000).

### The Cybercoaching Model

#### Cyberspace

The simple speed of online or electronic communication is of such great value that a new culture of immediate response has developed. According to the 2003 National Survey of Student Engagement, 80% reported assignments requiring interaction via Internet and various forms of computer technology (Zhao & Kuh, 2004). In addition, word processing programs are now almost universally readable, even by competing operating systems (i.e., Mac vs. PC). Instructors and students need to have compatible online technology and word processing tools, through which both parties can improve. Students can learn more and instructors can teach better. The technology serves the relationship between students and instructors for continuous improvement, identified here as a coaching relationship.

#### Coaching

Coaching is defined here to include a tutorial function of monitoring student progress to provide feedback for improvement. The term ‘coaching’ has been used outside of sports. For instance, Nelson, Apenhorst, Carter, Mahlum, and Schneider (2004) observed...
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