

Suzi,

Excellent post, it really helped me to think about the pluses and minuses of both Direct and Mastery learning. Since I teach in both face-to-face and online environments I am constantly evaluating direct and mastery learning, although not in the formal manner we are doing here. In my face-to-face classes, I take my students through their assignments step-by-step which has the benefit of allowing me to help the students who have the toughest time grasping the concepts, which are mainly HTML or Expression Web related. It does make me wonder if some of the students who are more challenged are that way because they didn't bother reading the textbook tutorial ahead of time knowing that I would help them through any problems in class, or if they did the reading but need additional help. The drawback in this situation is that the students who are getting it find themselves sitting around waiting quite a bit while I help the slower students. In the online environment, I find it is much tougher as a teacher to try and predict the stumbling blocks students might run into in order to provide just-in-time feedback to my online course content. From the student's point of view, and as you stated regarding the first Flash class, it can be very frustrating to work through problems on your own without timely feedback. I think that in order to meet the fiscal demands of modern education, better online courses which are extremely proficient at providing more than adequate feedback to learners in a mastery learning environment will be necessary. This makes me think that all of us who have gone through the MSIDT program will have an edge at producing better content, thereby making our product more valuable to our clients.

Bill Bennett