

# ONLINE TEACHING AND LEARNING in ECONOMICS AT I.U.P.U.I.

Preliminary Draft/Poster Presentation

Sandra Trejos, Ph.D.<sup>1</sup>

---

## Abstract

This poster presents how students' learning is enhanced when traditional teaching incorporates an online environment to extend classroom activities. For instance, how discussion forums, chat rooms and online answers to in-class questions allow students to express their thoughts, and apply their knowledge beyond the time and space limits imposed by the classroom.

---

## TAKE-AWAY

Participants should realize the relevance and usefulness of an online teaching and learning environment to deepen and strengthen students' success in learning Economics.

## WHAT?

Activities such as discussion forums, answers to index-card questions and regular e-mailing are presented as virtual means to complement the traditional classroom Economics. Some other activities may be posted to make the most of the online environment: cartoons that students bring relating to course contents, news reports from reliable sources such as The New York Times and The Economist, in-class group activities such as on tax incidence and elasticity, and in-class problems. See the Appendix.

## Why?

I have found the following to be crucial reasons to have an online teaching and learning environment:

- Classroom time is precious and limited; there is so much you can do. Students always have plenty of

---

<sup>1</sup> The University of South Dakota starting in Jan. 2004. E-mail: [strejos@iupui.edu](mailto:strejos@iupui.edu).  
Phone number: 605-624-4101. Address: 418 Lewis St., Vermillion, SD 57069

questions and gain very much from class discussions, but at the same time introductory classes are supposed to cover so many chapters, especially when common final examinations is a Departmental policy.

- Working students such as I.U.P.U.I.'s, run from the classroom to their job places and have little time to stay longer and talk to their Instructors.
- Some “shy” students that would otherwise participate little in the classroom, if at all, do participate in online setups, satisfying the need to express their thoughts, comments and ideas while enriching the overall class knowledge base.
- Spillover effects of student-student and faculty-student interaction. That is students get the opportunity to learn from peers comments and questions, while the instructor serves as facilitator. Also as the instructor answers, online, written questions that were brought to the classroom, economies of scale take place as all students benefit from this otherwise one-to-one student faculty interaction. See a sample of the ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS section from our online setup in the appendix.

## **How?**

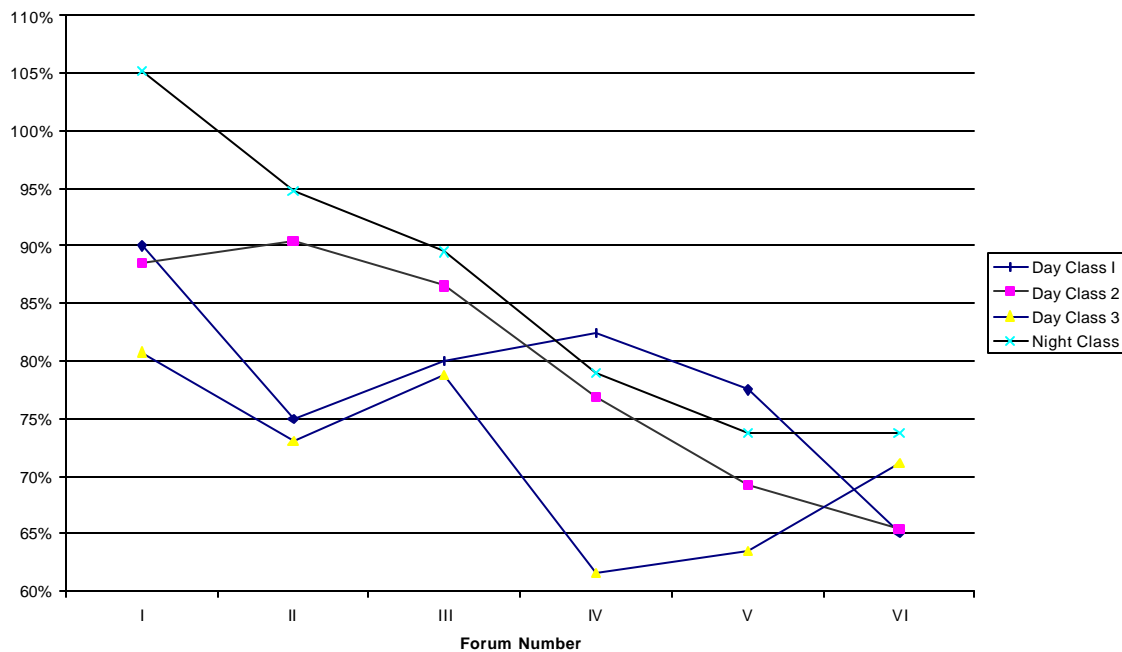
Using the Universities'/Colleges' online teaching and learning environments by creating online opportunities to complement what happens in the classroom, in the notebooks and at home. That is, complement the traditional classroom with a virtual one in which teaching/learning is an ongoing process. The idea is not to substitute classroom activities, but to complement them and enrich them, so that the students keep active outside the classroom by

participating in forums, by asking questions, and by knowing that the Instructor is always there to assist them.

## Participation in Online Forums

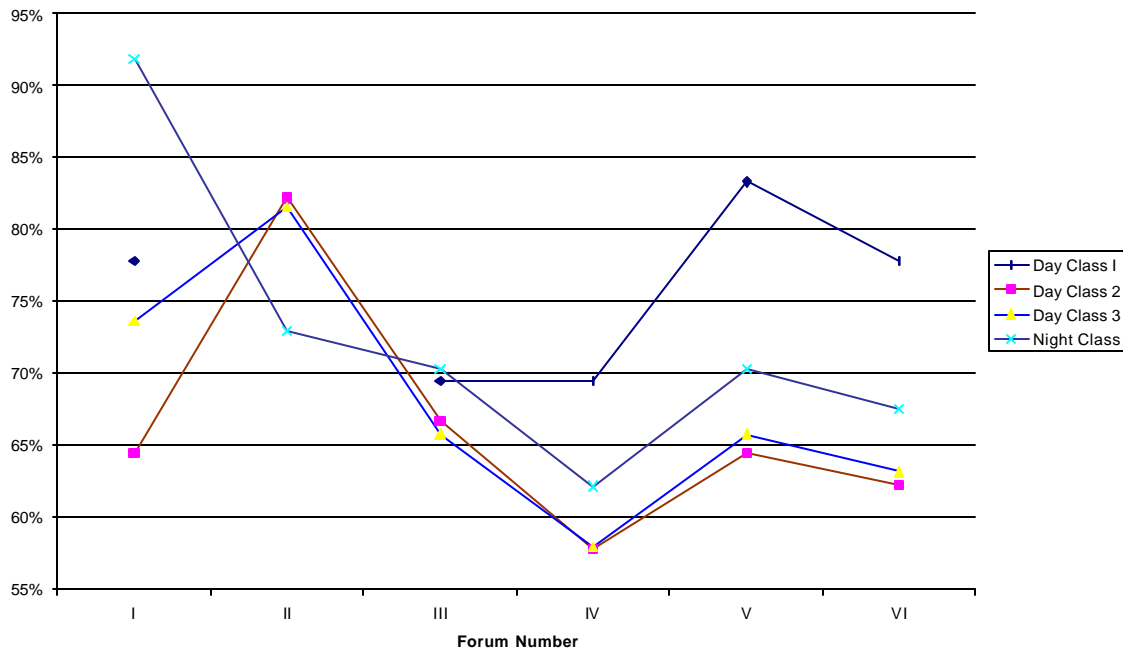
Participation rates in discussion forums decrease throughout the semester. It goes from a range of 73 to 100 percent at the beginning of the semester to 63 to 75 percent at the end of the semester. Participation rates in such forums are greater in night classes than in day classes. In general, participation in online forums from students who attend the night class that meets once a week is 15 percentage points greater at the beginning of the semester than that of students attending the day classes that meet twice a week.

Participation Rates in Online Discussion Forums  
Introduction to Microeconomics, I.U.P.U.I., Fall 2002



At the end of the semester that participation difference between night and day classes shrinks to 2 to 4 percentage points. This is explained by the fact that participation rates in online discussion forums decline faster, over the course of the semester, for night classes relative to day classes.

Participation Rates in Online Discussion Forums  
Introduction to Microeconomics, I.U.P.U.I., Spring 2002



## Online Teaching/Syllabus

- **I.U. Online teaching and learning (Oncourse):** Check Oncourse at:

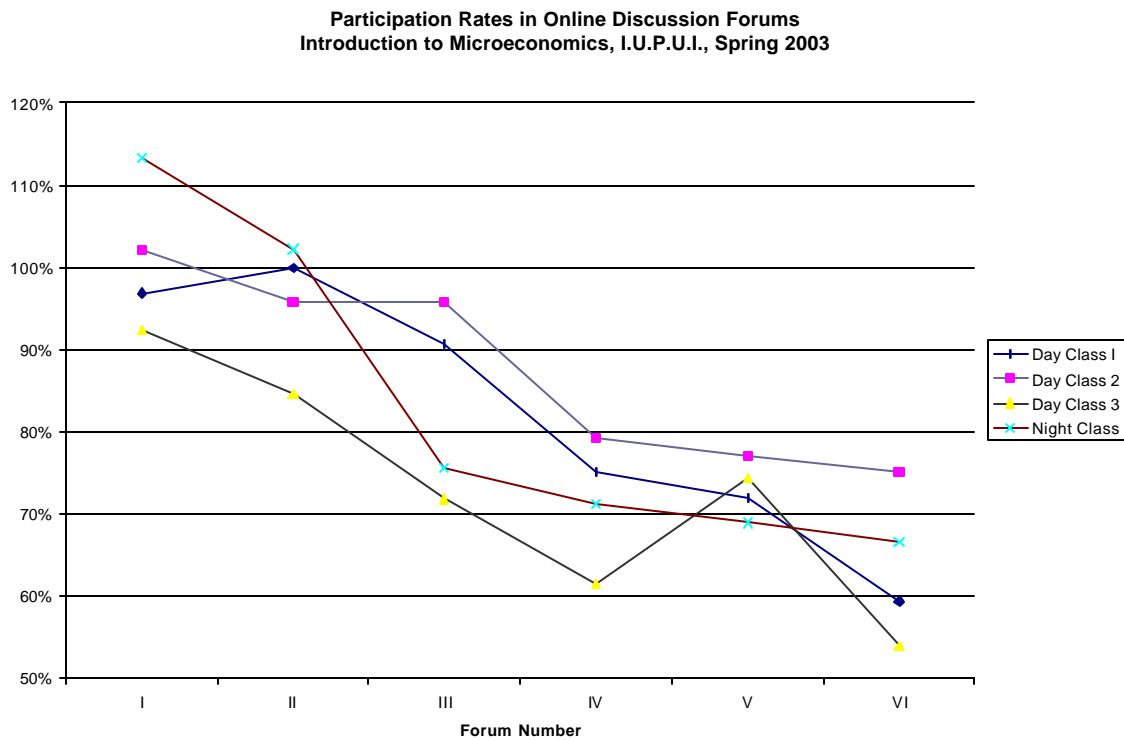
<http://oncourse.iu.edu/>

for critical course information in the web and to facilitate communication with your classmates and the instructor. We will have oncourse e-mail, discussion forums on posted articles and chat rooms, using Oncourse. The chat rooms will take place before each test as announced in class. Each time you participate in a discussion forum you get 2 points towards your attendance, for a maximum of 12 points. Your participation, however, has to *show* that you have read the course materials. Find step-by-step information on getting started with Oncourse at

<http://oncourse.iupui.edu/help/studentguide.html>

If you had a difficulty with the Oncourse application, you will find technical support at the following phone number: (317)274-4357 and at the following e-mail address: [support@iupui.edu](mailto:support@iupui.edu)

For workshops in Oncourse and/or other kinds of software that may be useful in your college career you ought to contact [ittraining@iupui.edu](mailto:ittraining@iupui.edu)



## **Appendix**

### **Discussion Forums- Spring 2002**

- System Failure?
- Organic Chickens? Demand and Supply
- Freer Trade
- Weight and Taxes
- Brain Drain
- Wealth and Health

### **Fall 2002**

- The Poor and the Economy
- Coal?
- U.S. Economy and War
- Consumers Keep Spending!
- Oily Mess
- Black Friday and Beyond

### **Spring 2003**

- Treating the Disease?!
- Rent Controls
- On Bush's Tax Plan
- The War and the Economy
- American Airlines
- Pollution in California

## **Articles- Spring 2002**

Articles from various sources that relate to course contents and that can be used for assignments or class discussion.

Amazon's Strategy

Government's Role (*Germs into Weapons*)

Poverty and Terrorism

Technology (*Amazon*)

Understanding Enron

Freer Trade

Dum Robots (*Toys Market*)

Empowering the Poor?!

Rivers and the Economy (*On externalities*)

Monopoly Regulation

Oil Prices and Political Turmoil

Weight and Taxes

## **Cartoons- Spring 2002**

[All is well?! \(Carrie Claussen\)](#)

[Beer \(Ken Hutchinson\)](#) I.S. 3-9-02

[Caffé](#) Journal Review, Jan. 2002.

[Cans of Soda \(Dean Fleming\)](#)

[Cereal \(Ken Hutchinson\)](#) I.S. 2-13-02

[Chokewell Pretzels?!](#) Journal Review, Jan. 15, 2002

[Dating \(Lisa Starnes\)](#)

[Deathbed \(Charles Beaver\)](#) I.S. 2-13-02

[Economics Paper \(Deana Litel\)](#) Indianapolis Star, Jan. 31, 2002.

[Enn & Ronn \(Mike Wann\)](#) Indianapolis Star, Jan. 29, 2002.

[Enron \(Deana Litel\)](#) I.S. 1-31-02

[Know Nothing \(Mike Wann\)](#) I.S. 2-9-02

[New Math \(Travis Watkins\)](#) I.S. 2-26-02

[Pirate \(Dustin Whitehead\)](#) I.S. 3-10-02

[Principle \(Mike Wann\)](#) I.S. 18-2-02

[Recession](#) IBJ 2-11-02

[Recovery \(Deana Litel\)](#) I.S. 2-11-02

[Robbery \(Tonya Vincent\)](#) gibbleguts.com

[Supplies Room \(Sholanda Owens\)](#)

[Supply and Demand](#) Journal Review, Sept. 2001

[Tax Filing \(Michelle Jackson\)](#) Columbus Dispatch 1-97

[Tax Refund!](#) Journal Review, Jan. 2002.

[Therapist \(Kristi Rice\)](#) I.S. 2-25-02

[Unemployment](#) Journal Review, Jan. 2002

[Wizard \(Rachael Giambone\)](#) I.S. 2-24-02

[World and Enron \(Travis Watkins\)](#) 2-7-02

## **ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS SECTION**

- 1. Do the goods regarding cross-price elasticity have to be both substitutes or complements of each other, can they be the same good? Answer: By definition, cross price elasticity is about 2 related goods, not the same.**
- 2. What is a real world example of perfectly elastic and perfectly inelastic? Answer: Demand for insuline may be perfectly inelastic; demand for tomatoes may be perfectly elastic. Supply for beachfronts is perfectly inelastic; supply for pencils might be perfectly elastic. It is about responsiveness and flexibility of quantity demanded/supplied to price changes.**