

Faculty Showcase '06

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Using A Hybrid Course Format to Increase Student Engagement



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Goals

- Increased student-to-student interaction in the course
- Meaningful student engagement with content
- Increased connection of clinical faculty with classroom content

Project Overview

Nursing 337, “Nursing Care of Individuals, Families, and Communities,” was faced with several challenges. Increasing class size and expanding content requirements threatened to compromise the quality of learning and student-teacher interaction. We wondered if a hybrid approach, in which portions of the course take place over the web, would provide us with a solution to both these problems.

The nursing faculty met with instructional designers from Academic Technology over a period of 6 months to redesign the class. We analyzed course content to identify the most appropriate delivery format for each session (online or face-to-face). For summer 2005 we converted three of the course’s sessions into an online format, piloted them, and

solicited feedback from students and faculty. The final version of the revised course, taught fall 2005, includes 5 online sessions and 7 face-to-face sessions. The class is structured to alternate every week between face-to-face and online classes.

“I learned a lot about the students from their postings, I would never get that otherwise”

– faculty member

Small discussion groups that allow for meaningful discussion are a major feature of the online component for this course. One of the keys to success has been the inclusion of clinical nursing faculty as discussion facilitators. Each person oversees 6-7 students in a community clinical setting and participates in the online component to facilitate students’ discussion. This has an added benefit of

connecting clinical faculty to the didactic component of the course, enhancing the students’ engagement and participation.

Reflecting on what we’ve learned, we believe the following factors contribute to course success:

- Attention to visuals text and graphic layout, use of photographs for eye appeal;
- Small discussion groups with clinical faculty moderators;
- Comprehensive orientation to the hybrid course design for students; and
- Training sessions for faculty facilitators and ongoing faculty support.

Applications Beyond

Consider converting your course into a hybrid format if it:

- Includes a lab and/or clinical components;
- Is large in class size and can utilize TA’s for moderators (1:7 to 1:15 moderator/student ratio); or
- Is a leadership classes that can use student moderators as discussion group facilitators.

“The discussions revealed whole new areas of interest for me”

“Good for someone like myself who does not speak up in class yet has a lot to say”

– Simmons students

