

Web-enhanced Course

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to review the findings from a web enhanced course, SPE 304-800 Educational Planning for All Students, offered at SUNY Oswego in the fall 2003 semester. It discusses the rationale for developing a web enhanced class. It analyses the success of the web-enhanced class from both the student and instructor prospective.

Keywords: web-enhanced, online, active learning, discussions, technology

Introduction

Most higher education institutions have created faculty development centers to provide individual instruction and mentoring to the strange new world of student learning (Bakutes, 1998). The State University of New York understands the need for the development of new learning environments to supplement the traditional learning model. The State University of New York has created the SUNY Learning Network (SLN). SUNY SLN is a gateway for SUNY faculty developing or interested in developing online courses. SUNY Course Management System (CMS) is being made available to SUNY faculty for hybrid and web-enhanced courses. By developing the SUNY CourseSpace program, SUNY faculty will be able to combine the advantages of synchronous learning (an on-campus classroom course) with asynchronous learning (web-enhanced or hybrid course). Thus:

- Faculty are being encouraged to integrate technology into their instruction
- SLN faculty, who have already been trained can quickly transfer their skills to the hybrid/blended system
- Faculty, who are being trained to develop hybrid or web-enhanced courses will be able to move to 100% asynchronous online course development without extensive retraining.
- Students will benefit because they will utilize a common interface for both SLN and on-campus hybrid and web-enhanced courses.

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The paper reviews a web enhanced course, SPE 304-800 - Educational Planning for All Students, offered at SUNY Oswego in the fall 2003 semester.

Background and Rationale of Study

There has been a recent shift in the nature of teaching from teaching to learning (Brown, 2001; Buckley, 2001; Lewis, 2002). With this shift, there is less focus on discipline coverage and more emphasis on active student learning (Chickering & Ehrmann, 1996; Grasha & Yangarber-Hicks, 2001; Lewis, 2002). As the shift occurs, faculty across higher education campuses are being encouraged to integrate technology into their instruction. Many faculty are turning to web-enhanced courses or online courses. Web enhanced courses allow faculty to combine the advantages of synchronous learning with asynchronous learning. These courses enrich the educational experience for both students and faculty.

The World Wide Web is fast becoming a pervasive force in education. Cogwell, Mahin, Santropietro, Shehey, Unnever, and Woodard (1997) suggest that students expect to find course materials on the web. This ready access to course materials evokes an image of being technologically literate and therefore capable of providing a relevant education.

Information technology empowers students to use tools that facilitate the process of scholarship. Web-enhanced courses move students away from being the passive recipient of knowledge to becoming more actively engaged in the construction of knowledge. Berge (1997) noted that CMC systems offer an environment where learner and instructor are able to communicate through group discussions in an asynchronous manner, independent of time and location. This results in active engagement of the learners in the learning environment and learning takes place through the active involvement of the learner (Lewis, 2002). Bloom (1981) stated, "It is what he does that he learns" (p.188). Bonwell and Eison, (1991) suggest that active learning is defined as any teaching method that involves students in doing and thinking about things they are doing.

Faculty across higher education campuses are being encouraged to integrate technology into their instruction (Huitt, 1999). The State University of New York understands the need for the development of new learning environments to supplement the traditional learning model. The SUNY Learning Network (SLN) Course Management System (CMS) is being made available to SUNY faculty for hybrid and web-enhanced courses. By developing the SUNY CourseSpace program, SUNY faculty will be able to accommodate courses which integrate online activities into an on-campus classroom course. A hybrid or web enhanced approach to course design provides the best of both worlds to students: the immediacy of a face-to-face course combined with the convenience of "anytime, anywhere" learning (Michaels, 2003).

A hybrid course is a semi-independent study. In a hybrid class structure, online learning replaces some in-class seat time. Students meet in a typical classroom setting for a designated number of hours, but a certain percentage of the class is conducted online, rather than face to face. The course objectives and learning outcomes for a course do not necessarily change. The manner in which the instructional hours are delivered will be adjusted as the class utilizes web based instructional components and resources to direct the efforts of the students outside of class. The students work on structured assignments, team projects or independent projects under the direction of the faculty member.

A web enhanced class uses the same technology as hybrid courses but does not replace in-class seat time. The web enhanced class is conventionally delivered but augmented with online content and enhanced components which are used to provide guidance and additional communication mechanisms between professors and students and among students. Learning activities are designed to bridge the gap between class sessions.

Huitt (1999) noted that one of the major advantages of developing Web-based course material is the ease with which it can be modified. It is appropriate structure and organization that are keys to

designing web enhanced or hybrid courses for the Internet. If the students are not able to easily navigate through the course materials and activities, they will become frustrated with the learning process (Lewis, 2003). Henke (2003) noted that usability and organization is key in designing courses. He noted that:

- Course design needs to replicate the best of the classroom environment and distance education but improve on those environments by taking advantage of web capabilities (Welsh, 1997; Henke 2003; Lewis, 2003),
- Course design needs to focus on learners and their tasks, not just the content to be taught (Dillon and Zhu, 1997; Henke 2003; Lewis, 2003);
- Course design should make use of web characteristics that are unlike traditional software applications, such as access to interfaces which cannot be controlled by the application (Henke 2003; Pernici & Casati, 1997), and the incorporation of screen and interface design at the same time the course is being designed and developed (Henke 2003; Jones & Okey, 1997; Lewis, 2003).

Just putting the syllabus, lecture and presentation online for the students is not focusing on the student centered framework. Torrissi-Steele (2002) noted that a student centered framework focuses not on content alone but rather on how students will interact with the content in the learning environment. The key to designing online courses is the appropriateness of the technology as part of a strategy designed to meet the needs of learners within the specific learning context (Lewis, 2003; Torrissi-Steele, 2002). SUNY CourseSpace provides faculty a toolset and great leeway in how those tools can be used. The CourseSpace Template is designed to allow quick and easy creation and management of courses. The template contains a number of documents, forms, and views to expedite the creation of courses. These allow faculty to:

- Create a Course Information section.
- Manage online discussions.
- Exchange private documents, e.g., a written assignment or test.
- Create multiple choice and short answer quizzes and tests with automatic grading.
- Create and organize lecture notes.
- Create a bibliography of resources, including hot-links to web sites.
- Create hypertext within the course materials, as well as to other Internet sites.
- Evaluate, track, and grade students' work.
- Respond to student comments (documents) and questions.
- Automatically generate a duplicate of a student assignment for evaluation purposes and mark up the student work in a different colors.
- Copy documents from old course databases into new ones.
- Provide authenticated access to the course database.
- Automatically create various levels of access in the template to easily give or restrict access to a course to faculty, students, and guests
- Automatically create a course group
- Create a single unique guest account for each course for read-only access so that faculty can quickly give access to the course to any one.
- Create the course shell easily with a number of simple screens and choices through the Course Creator Wizard (a series of macros programmed into a single button). It creates customized modules for a course with a boiler plate module structure, including docu-

ments and their related functionality. It also allows for the optional creation of the online office hours module, and the culminating activity modules.

- Open and close module access to students, to create a message that displays on closed modules, to create newflash messages that display on the web course map for your students, and to turn on and off the functionality of the private folders/online office hours and the shared references feature
- Have more than one document open at one time up to a total of eight open documents to toggle between open documents.
- Make links to URLs or between documents quickly and easily. (Michaels, 2003)

Garavalia, Hummel, Wiley and Huitt (1999) detailed how a web-based presentation can be an improvement in the development of a syllabus. They stated that faculty and students preferred a more comprehensive syllabus. Their Web version included links to many of the features that student desire: detailed course objectives, basic format of examinations, detailed descriptions of out-of-class activities, and samples of required papers and projects.

The use of an interactive discussion medium can, according to Romig (1998) be used to encourage active, meaningful and authentic learning (Lewis, 2002). Discussion is a form of interaction among instructor-learner, learner-instructor, and learner-learner. The discussion consists of examining different views of the topic in question. As learners relate to each other and the instructor, they begin to form new knowledge, better understanding and a new appreciation of the material presented (Dillon, 1994). Funaro and Montell (1999) in a recent study reported significant advantages to using the discussions to accomplish their educational goals; the discussions complement the educational activities of the lecture. They also noted that learners remain active are more attuned with the material of the texts while participating in discussions (Lewis, 2002).

Kearsley and Shneiderman (1998) derived the Engagement Theory for the context of online learning. It suggests that learners must be actively engaged in meaningful tasks for effective learning to take place. Engagement theory is based on many different philosophies including the constructivist, where students can create their own learning environment, and situated learning which emphasizes the importance of a community of practice. According to Kearsley (2000) "Engagement learning ought to have three major characteristics: collaboration, problem-based, and authenticity" (p.68). Collaboration, according to Kearsley, means interaction among students and instructors via discussion forums. Problem-based means that all student activities involve completing assignments or projects rather than taking quizzes or exams. Authenticity means that all course materials and activities are realistic and directly tied to the student's interests." (p.68)

Methods

SPE 304-800-Educational Planning for All Students was conducted as a web-enhanced course through SUNY Oswego in the fall semester 2003. There were 13 students enrolled who met two days a week-Tuesday and Thursday from 9:35-11:05. There was with no reduction in-class seat time. The web-enhanced portion of the class was designed and developed in the SUNY CMS system. The syllabus (Appendix A), lecture notes, assignments and discussions questions were placed on line. Students signed on to the web enhanced portion of the class and completed a welcome questionnaire. This helped both the instructor and the other students to become better acquainted. Once they enrolled online, a private folder was automatically developed for them. They could ask questions of the instructor and the instructor could answer them there. The instructor could also send notes to the students' private folders.

Students in SPE 304 – 800 were required to develop discussions online. The students were responsible for reflecting on presentations by guest speakers. They discussed the new information and tied what they were learning to their own experiences. Thus, the students were learning from

each other. They discussed and compared experiences in their practicums (teacher candidates attend a real school setting and have the opportunity to enter a classroom and view it from the perspective of a teacher instead of a student).

All written assignments were placed on line. They could only be viewed by the instructor. CourseSpace allowed the instructor to grade the paper online and return it to the student. If corrections were necessary, the student could edit the paper online and return it to the instructor.

The students chose a disability to research. They had to develop a power point presentation to present to the class. They also had to develop a brochure which contained many pertinent facts about the disability in an attractive and easy to read form.

Results

Thirteen students completed the end of the course feedback. The students were asked to rank the overall effectiveness of the course in the CourseSpace on a Likert Scale from 1 to 5, 1 = ineffective and 5 = very effective. All of the students felt that the overall course was an effective way to learn (Table 1).

Overall Effectiveness		
	Frequency	Percent
1	0	0.00
2	2	0.15
3	3	0.23
4	3	0.23
5	5	0.38

Familiar Format		
	Frequency	Percent
1	1	0.08
2	1	0.08
3	4	0.31
4	2	0.15
5	3	0.23

The majority of the students were familiar with CourseSpace before they enter the course. Only 2 out of the thirteen students were not completely familiar with the CourseSpace (Table 2).

When asked about the effectiveness of the discussions online, only 69% stated that the discussions were effective. However, this is surprising when 92% stated that they were comfortable sharing online.

Discussions		
	Frequency	Percent
1	1	0.08
2	0	0.00
3	4	0.31
4	2	0.15
5	3	0.23

Sharing Online		
	Frequency	Percent
1	3	0.23
2	2	0.15
3	3	0.23
4	1	0.08
5	8	0.62

Web-enhanced Course

Overall, the students were very satisfied with the idea of a web-enhanced class. On individual aspects of the course, students' responses were:

1. 69% stated that they were familiar with the CourseSpace.
2. 85% stated that there was sufficient navigation and guidance in the CourseSpace.
3. 85% stated that the due dates clear in the CourseSpace.
4. 92% stated that the lectures compared with the online notes and the online notes were helpful.
5. 85% stated that it was convenient to turn in assignments online.
6. 100% stated that the instructor gave quick feedback.
7. 85% stated that they would take another course using CourseSpace.

Students reported in a final evaluation that what they liked best was:

- It was more convenient to respond at your own leisure
- Handing papers in online
- Being able to work at somewhat of my own pace
- How the due dates were posted
- Seeing other people's responses
- Sharing in on-line discussions was much more comfortable for me.
- The quick feedback and ability to do assignments whenever
- Convenience
- Quick responses to assignments

Students reported in a final evaluation that what they liked least was:

- It was confusing finding information about assignments
- The technology – I loathe technology
- Due dates were not clear
- Having to tie up my phone line at home
- Having to do assignments on-line

Discussion

Kearsley (2000) suggests that learners must be actively engaged in meaningful tasks for effective learning to take place. SPE 304-800-Educational Planning for All Students as a web enhanced course gave the students a way to become more actively engaged in the construction of knowledge. The students were able to, view and post assignments online, review and react to other students' presentations and actively engage in discussions outside the classroom with other students and the instructor. Kearsley (2000) also suggests that learning activities should involve completing assignments or projects rather than taking quizzes or exams. There were no quizzes in SPE 304-800. Rather there were projects which added to authentic learning because the projects and activities were realistic and were tied to student interest.

The web enhanced course was designed to make use of the CourseSpace technology as part of a strategy designed to meet the needs of students. The ease of designing a web enhanced course in CourseSpace was made easy with SUNY toolset and guides. The uploading of the materials and assignments was not difficult to do. The creation and management of discussions and messages to the class as part or as a whole were rapidly transmitted through CourseSpace. There was no waiting for the next class meeting to create, manage or respond to students' discussions and messages as there is in a traditional classroom. The use of a web enhanced course built the instructor – student contact outside the traditional classroom.

As Palloff and Pratt (1999) suggested, online instruction is especially valuable in motivating learners who are less likely to participate in discussions in class. In fact, an introvert is more likely to be successful online than an extrovert because the perceived pressures in face-to-face situations are eliminated. This is true for SPE 304-800 course. One student in particular noted that “sharing in on-line discussions was much more comfortable for me.” This particular student participated more in the discussions online than in the actual traditional class.

Enhancing a traditional course with a web component not only is motivating for the students but also for the instructor. So often in class a discussion needed to be curtailed due to time constraints. The discussions on line occurred over a two week period. Thus, all students had time to reflect before they replied to the discussions. The discussions had more depth to them and as the instructor read them, she could see where the students were strong and where they needed extra information. The instructor found that reading and correcting papers online was much more convenient. There was never the danger of lost papers and the turn-around time was minimal. If corrections were necessary, the student could edit the paper online and return it to the instructor.

Students could ask questions through their private folders at any time outside the classroom and the instructor was able to respond within twenty-four hours usually. The instructor also used the private folders to reach the students outside of class.

The students found it particularly helpful to have the schedule on line and to be able to review the lecture notes online. This was particularly helpful for students who missed class. They could read the notes before attempting to complete assignments. They also found it helpful to be able to view examples of both Power Point presentations and Brochures on line. They were able to visit those sites at their leisure and continuously refer back to them as they developed their own presentations and brochures.

Limitation of Study

The purpose of this paper was a review of a web enhanced course. The learner enrollment in the course was a voluntary decision on the part of the learner. Therefore, the authors did not have control over the number of students enrolled in the course. The low number of 13 students may be indicative of a pilot study. Another limitation is that the instructor had previously taught asynchronous classes, so her familiarity with the structure of an asynchronous class may have colored her view of the ease of developing and maintaining a web enhanced class, as well as how easily she was able to manage the web portion of the class.

Conclusion

Over the next several years, more and more universities will be shifting away from the traditional classrooms. Faculty across higher education campuses are being encouraged to integrate technology into their instruction. Many faculty are turning to web-enhanced courses or online courses. Web enhanced courses allow faculty to combine the advantages of synchronous learning with asynchronous learning. These courses enrich the educational experience for both students and

faculty. As this shift occurs, questions are being raised about the efficacy of web enhanced courses.

Further research needs to be done before any conclusions about the effectiveness of a web enhanced class can be determined.

1. More students who have taken a web enhanced class need to be interviewed.
2. Instructors without previous training in developing asynchronous courses need to be interviewed to ascertain their views on the ease of developing these classes.
3. Instructors with previous training in developing asynchronous courses need to be interviewed to ascertain their views on the efficacy of web enhanced classes
4. The following questions need to be answered.
 1. Would a web enhanced class work as well in a class of 50-100 students?
 2. Will web enhanced courses become hybrid courses where online learning replaces some in-class seat time?
 3. How will hybrid courses effect Carnegie class seat time requirements?

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Biographies

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Appendix A

Syllabus –SPE 304 (800)

Over the past several years, the trend toward educating students with special needs in inclusive settings has, if anything, accelerated. As a result, general education teachers need to understand the nature of special education and the characteristics of students with special needs. They need to develop strategies to work effectively with diverse student needs and techniques for forming partnerships with special educators. This course is designed to familiarize you with laws, procedures, and contemporary practices related to serving students with disabilities in public schools.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is designed to familiarize students with laws, procedures, and contemporary practices related to serving students with disabilities in public schools (KNOWLEDGE).

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION FRAMEWORK:

We believe that the role of schools is to promote AUTHENTIC LEARNING by all students. The role of educators in meeting that goal is to function as socially conscious catalysts for change, who create and sustain school environments where excellence is cherished and SOCIAL JUSTICE flourishes. Educators continually weave strands of REFLECTION, COLLABORATION & LEADERSHIP, PRACTICE, and KNOWLEDGE to create a supportive, flexible school fabric. AUTHENTIC LEARNING AND SOCIAL JUSTICE emerge as enduring patterns woven into the educational experiences of diverse students.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

If you have a disability which may require individual accommodations, please make an appointment with the instructor prior to the second class meeting. We will discuss how to meet your individual needs to ensure your full participation and fair assessment procedures. If you have a disabling condition that may interfere with your ability to successfully complete this course, please contact the Disabled Student Services Office (210 Swetman Hall, 312-3358).

Subject: Course Objectives

The student will be able to:

- Describe the importance of and practical strategies for creating a climate that draws on student strengths and shows respect for human differences (KNOWLEDGE, SOCIAL JUSTICE).
- Analyze the distinct and shared roles and responsibilities of general and special educators serving students with disabilities (KNOWLEDGE).
- Describe structural; features of service delivery models that support general-special education collaboration (KNOWLEDGE, PRACTICE).
- Describe skills, competencies, and practical strategies for collaborating with professional, paraprofessional partners, and parents (KNOWLEDGE, PRACTICE).
- State the major provisions of pl 94-142.
- List and define the steps of New York State's special education referral process and the roles of the professionals, with an emphasis on the role of the general education teacher (KNOWLEDGE, PRACTICE).
- Identify issues related to special education practices for students with diverse backgrounds (KNOWLEDGE, REFLECTION, SOCIAL JUSTICE).

- Develop curriculum and instructional plans which address the individual needs of diverse groups of learners (i.e., shared multi-level instruction for students with and without disabilities (PRACTICE, AUTHENTIC LEARNING, SOCIAL JUSTICE, REFLECTION)).
- Demonstrate examples of technology application for teachers and students to enhance the success of students in general education classes (e.g., Internet resources for teachers, assistive technology (AUTHENTIC LEARNING, KNOWLEDGE, PRACTICE, TECHNOLOGY)).
- Discuss major trends and contemporary models for general and special education (KNOWLEDGE).
- Describe inclusive programs and services in which collaboration is important, including problem-solving, co-teaching, and consulting ((KNOWLEDGE, SOCIAL JUSTICE, PRACTICE)
- Use professional literature to explore a contemporary education issue (AUTHENTIC LEARNING, EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY).
- Outline the characteristics and specialized instructional needs of students with special needs (KNOWLEDGE, SOCIAL JUSTICE, PRACTICE).

REQUIRED TEXT - Friend, M. & Bursuck, W. (2002) Including students with special needs: A practical guide for classroom teachers, 3rd ed. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon

METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

- LECTURE/DISCUSSION - A portion of each class will be lecture. Student discussion is encouraged (AUTHENTIC LEARNING, REFLECTION).
- VIDEOS - Several videos relative to the areas of exceptionality will be viewed. Follow-up discussions will be held (KNOWLEDGE, REFLECTION).
- GUEST SPEAKERS - Guest speakers will give us their views of exceptionalities (AUTHENTIC LEARNING, REFLECTION).
- ORAL ARTICLE ABSTRACTS - Each week one student will report on an article he/she read. A short outline should be prepared. Small group discussion will follow. Group comments should be written on the outline and handed in to the instructor. A copy of the article should be made for each member of the group (AUTHENTIC LEARNING~ EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY, PRACTICE, REFLECTION).
- CHILDREN'S BOOKS regarding disabilities will be reviewed within the groups (AUTHENTIC LEARNING, REFLECTION, TECHNOLOGY).

- **CASE STUDIES** - Students will work in base groups of 3-4 students for approximately 15-20 minutes to discuss case studies. (AUTHENTIC LEARNING, COLLABORATION & LEADERSHIP, PRACTICE, REFLECTION).

Subject: How You Will Be Evaluated

SPE 304

Readings

Complete required reading prior to the class for which they are assigned

Assignments

Written assignments are to be typed error-free (this includes: grammar, spelling & punctuation) and are to be turned in on the date due. Papers with more than 5 non-repeated errors will be returned for revision. Ten percent of the points available will be deducted for late papers unless arrangements have been made prior to the due date. Assignments will not be accepted more than 2 weeks after due date.

Attendance, Collaboration, and Participation - 25 points

Participation both online and in class is extremely important. We want to develop a good discussion. Participation online will consist of developing a response and then responding to at least 4 people and then replying to 3 people who responded to you and then responding again.

Internet Assignment – 15 points

Students will investigate 3 different websites and complete an evaluation of each site.

Oral Abstract – 5 points

Each week during group time, one student will report on an article that he/she read. A short outline should be prepared. Small group discussion will follow. Group comments should be written on the outline and handed in to the instructor. A copy of the article should be made for each member of the group and for the instructor.

Review of children’s book - 10 points

Read a book for children that includes one or more characters who have disabilities and develop a power point project that will include a short review of the book and lesson plans for using this with a particular grade level class. You will choose a grade level and will work with others in that group.

Personal/Family/Media/ Perspective - 20 points

1. Read an adult book about a person with a disability and develop a book review (letter, poem, song, art work, etc.) **10 points**

2. Select one of the following options: **10 points**

- o Interview a parent of a student who has a disability and write a summary of his/her experiences with professionals and schools

- o Develop a personal profile of a person who has a disability. Interview the individual and his/her family; share time in typical contexts. You may include a narrative, photos, etc. to portray this person.

- o View a popular movie/television series that includes a significant character who has a disability. Analyze how this character is portrayed and how the media reinforces or challenges stereotypes of people who have disabilities

Practicum Reports (15 points)

Three practicum reports will be expected. The first will talk about the class environment and is due October 16. The others will be collaborative assignments with other professors modeling integrated curriculum and collaborative teaching. The due dates will be announced later.

Presentation, Research Paper or Power Point Presentation - 25 POINTS

A choice of:

A Research paper - a 7-10 page paper (typed and double spaced) relative to a specific disability. A short presentation (10 minutes) will be made to the class. The presentation should include a brochure concerning the disability which will be handed out to the students in the class. The topic should be approved by the instructor. (AUTHENTIC LEARNING, REFLECTION, KNOWLEDGE) Here is an example of a research paper.



Here is an example of a Research Paper. Autism_and_the_Classroom.doc

Power Point presentation (20-30 minutes) dealing with an area of exceptionality. The topic should be approved by the instructor. The presentation should include a brochure concerning the disability which will be handed out to the students in the class. Two or three people may collaborate on this project.. (AUTHENTIC LEARNING, REFLECTION, EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY, KNOWLEDGE).

Here are examples of Power Point Presentations. Please click on the PowerPoint and then click on Launch to start the PowerPoint.



Rodono_dyslexia.ppt



Marias_Holy_Angels.pp



Here is an example of brochure-Non-verbal Learning Disabilities.†

GRADING SCALE (based on 115 total points)

Your final class grade will be determined by your choice. Factors which might lower your grade include poorly written abstracts, late assignments, lack of preparation and/or inadequate participation in class activities and small group work.

A	100-115
A-	104-108
B+	100-103
B	97-99
B-	94-96
C+	91-93
C	88-90
C-	85-87
E	BELOW 85