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Overview and Rationale

Hybrid learning, combining the predominantly appealing facets of online and face to face education, is emerging as a preferred teaching model of the future (Means, Toyama, Murphy, Bakia and Jones, 2010; Dziuban, Hartman and Moskal, 2004; Rahmani and Daugherty, 2007).

In order to comply with SACS standards for distance education and to meet the increasing demand for academics beyond the traditional classroom, it is critical that FSU train and support its faculty in developing and teaching high quality hybrid courses.

This training and support will enable faculty members to effectively integrate and implement new technologies into their courses to enhance their online course management and teaching skills. It will also support FSU’s priorities of increasing student enrollment, retention and satisfaction. Finally, high quality hybrid courses support the goals of UNC Tomorrow, and FSU’s mission by providing innovative access to education and flexible learning opportunities to students.

The purpose of this document is to provide an overview of Hybrid learning and to outline procedures for training, developing and teaching Hybrid courses at Fayetteville State University.

Basic Definitions and Legal Requirements

A Hybrid course is a course that combines “face-to-face classroom instruction with online learning and reduced classroom contact hours or reduced seat time” (Educause Center for Applied Research, March 2004).

At FSU, a Hybrid course is a course where no more than 50% of the weekly contact hours are delivered via the Internet and remaining weekly contact hours are delivered face to face.

Accessibility: Federal law requires that online and hybrid courses provide accessible materials to individuals with disabilities via college supported assistive technologies.

Privacy: Federal law requires that if personally identifiable student information is posted or communicated via an online or hybrid course, college-approved software applications must be used to protect the privacy rights of students.

General Assumptions

- FSU is committed to providing all students with a quality and obstacle free education regardless of delivery format.

- Regardless of the delivery method (see definitions), all classes shall abide by the same academic policies and laws.

- FSU considers all delivery methods (see definitions below) to be valid.

- Designated administrative units will provide appropriate levels of resources and support for online teaching and learning.
Benefits of Hybrid Learning

Enhanced opportunities for teaching:

- It is possible to achieve course goals and objectives more effectively when faculty have the opportunity to implement a variety of strategies both online and in the classroom.
- The hybrid model allows faculty to respond immediately to the entire class population with solutions to course problems or anomalies.
- Faculty can introduce innovative interactive and independent learning activities that are not possible in traditional courses.
- Automating some basic activities such as quizzes, grading, and surveys increases instructor efficiency.
- Incorporating hybrid courses in the course offerings improves the efficiency of classroom use and can reduce campus traffic (Graham, 2005; Martyn, 2003; Vignare, Dziuban, Moskal, Luby, Roldan and Wood, 2005).

Student engagement:

- Hybrid courses can expand the interaction of instructor-to-student and student-to-student relationships to a greater extent than either the completely traditional or totally online course.
- Hybrid courses provide the advantage of personal interaction with faculty and scheduling flexibility.
- A self-conscious or less confident student who hesitates to participate in the traditional classroom discussions is likely to be more comfortable in an online format.
- Non-traditional students experience more flexibility with employment schedules and child care issues, which in turn allows increased flexibility for course work.
- Economic impact is beneficial – reducing transportation and/or childcare expenses (Dziuban et al., 2004; Vignare et al. 2005; Martyn, 2003).

Challenges of Hybrid Learning

Faculty Perspective

Teaching a hybrid course can be challenging:

- acquiring different teaching skills
• redesigning a course to take into account new teaching and learning opportunities
  o instructors must adapt a student-centered learning model
  o integrate online learning with traditional classroom meetings

• managing the course content both online and in-class, and

• preparing students to work in a hybrid format
  o assist students in keeping their work on time and on track
  o offer strategies for trouble-shooting new course technologies

• instructors must be cognizant of not overloading and overwhelming students in a hybrid
  (Dziuban et al., 2004; Vignare et al. 2005; Martyn, 2003).

Students’ Perspective

• Student learning styles vary. Like online courses, a hybrid course requires self-discipline, focus,
  and independent thinking. A student overwhelmed with personal issues or distracted by job
  demands may find a hybrid course too challenging.

• To be successful in a hybrid course, students must stay actively engaged. This requires some
  students to “relearn how to learn” since the familiarity of traditional approaches is altered
  (Graham, 2005; Martyn, 2003; Vignare, Dziuban, Moskal, Luby, Roldan and Wood, 2005).

Examples of Hybrid Models

One of the strengths of the hybrid model is that it provides a broad framework for which instructors
may develop and teach their courses using this model. At FSU, no more than 50% of the contact
hours should occur online because anything over 50% is considered an online course. The following
examples are meant to be illustrative, not exhaustive.

1) Lecture, note taking and discussion occur in class and writing assignments are completed
   online. The students' online work emphasizes the analysis of a selected case study according to
   the theories examined in the face-to-face component of the course. Students are also required
   to bring their own experiences to bear during online discussions. The students' task is to
   integrate the face-to-face and online components by demonstrating their ability to apply
   theories to real-world cultures, and by comparing the practices and ideas described in the case
   study to the broader range of examples around the world. Approximately two-thirds of the
   course takes place face-to-face, while the remaining third of the course is online.
2) Discussion, collaboration, and reflection occur both during online discussion forums and during face-to-face class meetings. During a given week, some students post their reflections online while others respond to them. Conversations begun online are brought back into the classroom for further exploration and analysis. Public peer review is posted online to supplement the instructor's assessment of student work.

3) Online work includes routine quizzes to ensure that students have completed and understood the readings. Because group work is critical, groups move through the stages of their main project through online postings that present their work to date to the rest of the class. Peer evaluation, as well as instructor assessment of work, is a significant portion of a student's grade. Approximately a quarter of the class is conducted online.

4) Three sections of a medium-enrollment course can be combined into a single section with one third of the students attending Monday, Wednesday or Friday face-to-face class and all students participating online. The possibility also exists to combine Tuesday/Thursday classes; other scheduling alternatives may be considered (Graham, 2005; Martyn, 2003; Vignare, Dziuban, Moskal, Luby, Roldan and Wood, 2005).
Hybrid Instructor Certification

Instructors who wish to teach up to 50% of the weekly contact hours of their face to face courses in the online environment are asked to complete the requirements of Hybrid Certification Training prior to teaching hybrid courses.

The purpose of Hybrid Certification Training is threefold:

a. to introduce instructors to the common functions of FSU’s learning management system (currently Blackboard 9.1);

b. to provide instructors exposure to an abbreviated online course from the students’ perspective;

c. to prepare instructors to teach in the hybrid environments using evidence based practices for quality, effectiveness and efficiency.

The Hybrid Certification Training includes the following Blackboard Course Modules:

1. **Blackboard 101 (BB 101)**: focuses on learning the common functions of Blackboard from the instructor’s perspective;

2. **Hybrid Pedagogy (HYB 102)**: focuses on evidence based, best practices for developing and teaching high quality hybrid courses. You will gain exposure to the students’ perspective in this course by completing assignments, tasks and assessments.

To become certified, instructors must:

- complete all assignments, tasks and assessments in BB 101 and HYB 102 and

- pass the competency exams for BB 101 and HYB 102 with scores of 80% or higher, or

- opt/test out of the coursework and successfully pass a competency exam with a score of 80% or higher (see the opting out section below for more information) and

- develop a hybrid course and complete the review process.

Format and structure of the training:

- it is self paced;
- instructors have four weeks from the time they enroll to complete it;
- all assignments, tasks and assessments are completed in Blackboard;
- instructors are given two attempts to pass the competency exams in BB 101, and HYB 102;
- once instructors complete the training, they will begin the hybrid course development process.

Opting out of the Hybrid Certification Training
Instructors may become certified without completing the coursework in BB 101 an HYB 102 by passing a competency exam with a score of 80% or higher and completing the course development and review process.

1. Instructors should contact the Online Coordinator in the Office of Faculty Development and complete the registration process for the Hybrid Certification Exam.

2. Instructors will be enrolled in a Blackboard site that has only the exam in it. There will be no resources to refer to.

3. Instructors will have two weeks from the time they register for the exam to complete it.

4. Instructors will have two attempts at passing the exam. If an instructor does not pass after two attempts, he/she should enroll in the full course and complete all requirements prior to teaching a hybrid course.

5. Once the instructor successfully passes the exam, the course development should begin.

**Hybrid Instructor Recertification**

Technology is rapidly changing. Therefore, to ensure that hybrid instructors stay abreast of the latest and best design and teaching technology, they are encouraged to complete the **Hybrid Re-Certification Training** (Blackboard 103) every three years.

1. This course is an abbreviated, self-paced course that covers new technologies for online teaching and learning, followed by a competency exam at the end.
Hybrid Course Development Procedures

Once an instructor completes the Hybrid Instructor Certification process described above, he/she should begin the course development.

Once this course development process is successfully completed, certified instructors will not have to repeat it for future courses. Our intention is to certify instructors, rather than individual courses.

1. The instructor should complete the New Online/Hybrid Course Development Application Form and acquire the required signatures from the department chair and dean.

2. The instructor should then contact the Blackboard Administrator in ITTS to request a developmental shell.

Pre-Conference

1. The instructor should contact the Online Coordinator in the Office of Faculty Development and collaboratively construct a plan for the development and implementation of the course.

2. During the course development, the instructor should thoroughly review and implement the standards from the Quality Matters rubric.

Post-Conference

1. Once the hybrid course is developed, the instructor should contact the Online Coordinator and request a review of the course before the full review with departmental colleagues.

2. The Online Coordinator will review the course, make suggestions for modification if necessary, and schedule the full review with the Director of Faculty Development.

3. The instructor should invite his/her Department Chair, and two colleagues to serve as subject matter experts at the review.

Online Course Review and Decision

The instructor should have the course completely developed prior to the review. The syllabus, all modules, assignments, discussion boards and assessments should be available by the time of the review to receive final approval. The course should be so complete that it could go live immediately following the review.

1. The reviewers will utilize the Quality Matters rubric to evaluate the quality of the course.

2. If the instructor does not receive unanimous approval during the online course review, the instructor should satisfy all of the recommendations within 7 calendar days. If the recommendations are not implemented within that time frame, the course should not be listed in Banner as hybrid.

3. Once the review process is successfully completed, instructors seeking certification will receive certificates of certification for their records.

Quality Assurance Procedures
1. The Office of Faculty Development utilizes an Online and Hybrid Course Evaluation Rubric based on industry standards of best practices for existing online and hybrid courses.

2. OFD staff will conduct Quality Assurance Evaluations of hybrid courses at the request of deans, department chairs or individual faculty and share findings with them.

**References**


