Building a Learning Community and Authentic Assessment into a Hybrid Course

Dennis B. Propst
Department of Forestry, Michigan State University
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Acknowledgments

- Office of Faculty Development: Faculty Learning Community, “Online Teaching and Learning
- Virtual University staff, particularly Jessica Knott
Cognition/Learning

Blended Learning
Distance/online teaching & learning, Higher Education, Technology

Learning Communities
Business, Higher Education
Hybrid course (blended learning)

- Integrate online with face-to-face activities
- Some classroom time is replaced by online activity (Laster et al., 2005; Vignare, 2007)
- Blended “can be as successful as either online or face-to-face instruction (Vignare, 2007)
- In my case, some classroom time is also replaced with outdoor time (expanded definition)
PRR 448, Foundations of Natural Resource-based Recreation Management

- 12 to 24 students
- Juniors/seniors
- Natural Resource, Zoology, Environmental Design, Psychology Majors
- What is a “hybrid” course?; why am I moving in that direction?
- Tips for effective communications
- Angel orientation module
ANGEL elements to help you succeed

- Folders of background information (data, maps, photos, etc.)
- Team drop boxes
- Training modules (Camtasia software)
  - How to format your plans (headings, etc.)
  - How to make maps using ArcGIS
- Powerpoint presentations with audio (Camtasia or Adobe Presenter)
  - Don’t come to class these days
  - View the video, answer the questions, post answers/comments in discussion for a, fill out the survey
Learning Community

- Both online (Paloff and Pratt, 2005) and face-to-face (in my case)
Model: PRR 448, Foundations of Natural Resource-based Recreation Management

Concepts, theory

Application, practice

• exams, etc.

• management plan

• help the manager

Learning community:

Students

Instructors

Managers
Help Ranger Tom at Yosemite

Tom Medema grew up in Muskegon, MI and received a B.A. from Calvin College (Grand Rapids) in Environmental Education in 1987. He taught residential environmental education for two years at YMCA Storer Camps near Jackson, MI before attending MSU to pursue a M.S. in Parks and Resources.

Tom's emphasis was Interpretation and during the summer after his first year at MSU he worked as an interpretive intern at Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado. Upon completing the Master program Tom began working as a seasonal park ranger at Rocky Mountain National Park. After just two seasons, Tom was selected for a permanent park ranger position at Fort Vancouver National Historic Site near Portland, OR. Here, Tom began supervising interpretive operations and after three years he relocated to become a district supervisor at Mount Rainier National Park in Washington.

The next move was a promotion at Cuyahoga Valley National Park near Cleveland, OH where Tom spent six years as an interpretive supervisor. For the past six years Tom has worked as the Branch Chief for Interpretive Field Operations at Yosemite National Park, California. Tom is currently acting as the Chief of Interpretation & Education at Yosemite, supervising a staff of 60 and a budget of just over $2 million annually. The interpretive operation in Yosemite covers over 700 square miles, 300+ miles of trails, six visitor centers, and a complex array if interpretive programming including tram tours, campfire programs, 7-day guided hikes, six visitor centers, and much more.

The "Bear-ly Human" Problem and Background Information from Tom & Resource Managers at Yosemite

Yosemite Bear Discussion Forum
Recommendations Due March 18 by 12:40pm

Help Ranger Tom at Yosemite

4/2/2010
D. Propst, UENR Va Tech 2010
Authentic Assessment

- Smith, 2008
- Added twist: learning community develops assessment tools and evaluates student efforts
- Two ways
  - Online/Skype live evaluations by Chief of Interpretation at Yosemite NP, etc.
  - In class evaluations by managers
Student Survey Results

- N=72 students; 4 years (2007-10)
- Done online; extra credit offered
- 150 possible surveys; 102 completed = 68% response rate
- 95% reported “no problems” accessing online presentations
Location

- “home on my couch enjoying a glass of wine”
- “On my couch at home, located off campus, enjoying a cup of coffee.”
- 66% home/apt. near campus
- 14% dorm
- 12% on campus
- (total 92%)
- Other 8% (“at Days Inn in St. Ignace”)
Type of Internet Connection

- 42% DSL/Broadband (cable modem)
- 28% MSU campus network
- 27% Wireless (added in ‘09)
- 1% Dial-up
- Wireless is increasing
- 0% Mobile devices (only asked in 2010)
How many times during the semester would you prefer online presentations instead of in-person lectures?

- 4% Never
- 34% 1-3 times
- 50% 4-6 times
- 12% More than 7
What did you like or dislike about the online presentations? Feel free to offer suggestions on what you would do if you were in charge of the class.

Convenience/optimal time

“I like the online presentations because I can view them whenever I want to. This enables me to pick a time when I will be able to focus or concentrate on the materials. Sometimes I do not focus as well in class because I may be hungry, tired or thinking about other classes. The online presentations also free up more time during the day because there is no travel time to campus.”

“I liked that you could pause & rewind, to take notes easier”

“I like the idea of viewing the lecture during off class time, and utilizing class time to work with our groups and have the professor available in person to answer any questions we have.”
Guidance on Best Practices

“External links to the websites mentioned in the presentations would be nice.”

“...a little reminder about what will be expected for that day...”

“I liked the fact that the information was not put on the slide until it was being talked about.”

“I liked having them in 3 short segments so you didn’t have to listen to the whole thing at once.”

“I liked that the presentations were relatively short. It is more difficult to pay attention to an online presentation than an in-person lecture, so the short length helped to keep my attention.”

“The only part that I didn’t like was that I was unable to ask questions/get answers in person.”
Caveats

“"The opportunity to have flexible class rooms is growing popular especially with working adults, but I have take correspondence type classes and the learning experience will never surpass or equal personal contact.”

“I tend to pay more attention in the classroom setting.”

“I do not like online courses or presentations, if I am going to pay for the credits I want personal interaction.”