

Hybrid learning in sport management: Engaging the next generation

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Teaching

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Abstract 421

"I am a member of the Net Generation. And as my peers and I continue to flood the gates of the nation's colleges and universities, we remain a puzzle to many of the faculty and administrators who try to teach us. They either try too hard to transform education into the virtual language we understand or try too little to accommodate for the differences between the generations" (Windham, 2007, p. 44).

This reflection from a recent college graduate succinctly summarizes why the scholarship of teaching and learning is so vital in today's digital age. Hybrid learning models represent a pedagogy offering educators an opportunity to successfully navigate the perceived generational divide. "Hybrid courses are courses in which a significant portion of the learning activities have been moved online, and time traditionally spent in the classroom is reduced but not eliminated" (Garnham & Kaleta, 2002, para. 1). On the surface, this teaching strategy seems to be a veiled attempt to move closer towards online or distance education, yet a closer look at the pedagogy associated with hybrid learning reveals devotion to student-centered learning and a desire to reach the higher levels of Bloom's taxonomy (i.e., application, analysis, and synthesis). "The goal of a hybrid class is to blend the best features of face-to-face (f2f) instruction with technology enriched online experiences to create an educational atmosphere that promotes active participatory learning" (Michigan State University, 2005, para. 3). This teaching approach has particular appeal and relevance for sport management.

In an applied field such as sport management, student engagement is critical to developing leadership, management, and problem-solving skills. Yet, higher education faculty across multiple disciplines will profess to difficulties balancing the perceived need to convey course content with the desire to engage students in meaningful student-centered learning. Hybrid learning offers a pedagogical solution to this dilemma, as students are charged with taking command of their own learning by completing online learning modules designed to satisfy learning outcomes associated with the lower levels of Bloom's taxonomy. Face-to-face instruction can then be devoted to applying the content and theory to relevant sport management problems and issues. Further, hybrid learning allows for an increased emphasis on technological advancements and web-based activities such as podcasts, Wikis, and digital video to be integrated into the course. These technology-driven activities enhance the active and participatory aspects of hybrid learning and allow students to navigate through detailed course material at a pace that facilitates their ability to comprehend the curriculum and its concepts. As discussed by Drayer and Rascher (2007), in detailing the use of a baseball business simulator in sport finance courses, sport management faculty must continue to search for new and innovative ways to integrate technology into our courses.

Although the intent of hybrid and online course delivery models is to enhance student learning and both enrich and make course material more accessible, the design of many online learning modules can create barriers to full participation of some students and instructors with certain types of disabilities (Edmonds, 2004). Recently, states have adopted stricter accessibility standards aligned with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Section 508 mandated that federal departments and agencies provide accessible information technology for persons with disabilities (Waddell, 2007). Strategies for achieving compliance and making hybrid or online course material truly accessible will be discussed.

The authors will present case studies of sport management courses at varying degrees of development in the redesign process from a traditional to a hybrid course and a full online course. The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (2007) proposed ten questions to address when redesigning a course for hybrid learning. In presenting an upper-level Sport Law course taught for several years as a full online course and an Introduction to Sport Management course in the hybrid developmental phase, the authors will examine the issues and challenges confronted in navigating the answers to these ten questions and compare and contrast the benefits and challenges of traditional face-to-face, full online, and hybrid course structures. The technology being utilized for the respective course platforms (i.e., Blackboard, iTunes U), learning modules, and web-based activities will also be presented. The workshop presentation will be taped to allow for hands-on learning of the process for podcasting lectures.

References:

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