A publication of Project Eagle, St. Petersburg College

Number 45 **Clicking on the highlighted text will link to additional sources.** **July 1, 2005**

Hybrid Courses: Blending Online and Face-to-Face Instruction

"…for us, the future is in hybrid courses, where some of the fixed-seat time is replaced by technology-delivered content."

Ron Bleed, Maricopa Community Colleges,
Quoted in "Who We Really Are," by Mary Grush, *Campus Technology*, January 2005

This issue offers a close examination of the hybrid or blended course, an increasingly popular alternative in which face-to-face and online instruction are combined to a greater or lesser extent. Not simply adding some technical components to a traditional course, hybrids require complete course redesign to function successfully. Included here are links to both background information and examples of individual efforts.

Background and Theory

- **"Blended Learning and Sense of Community: A Comparative Analysis with Traditional and Fully Online Graduate Courses."** Article by Alfred P. Rovai and Hope M. Jordan, both of Regent University (VA), in *International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning,* August 2004. Suggests that blended courses produce a stronger sense of community among students than either traditional or fully online courses.
- **Blended Learning Design: Five Key Ingredients.** Article by Jared M. Carman on the *KnowledgeNet* Website, October 2002, which discusses the theories and pedagogic approaches that support blended learning. The five key ingredients are live events, self-paced learning, collaboration, assessment, and performance support materials.
- **Hybrid Course FAQs.** Website maintained by Sacramento City College (CA) that offers students a comprehensive look at the elements of a hybrid course.
- **"'Hybrid' Teaching Seeks to End the Divide Between Traditional and Online Instruction."** Article by Jeffrey R. Young in the *Chronicle of Higher Education,* 3/22/02, examining both the theory of the blended course concept and examples at several institutions around the country.
- **Program in Course Redesign (PCR).** 1999-2002 collaboration of 30 institutions, funded by the **Pew Foundation,** to demonstrate how to redesign their instructional approaches using technology to achieve cost savings and quality enhancements. Results led to increased interest in hybrid course creation, and the PCR was followed by a three-year, **FIPSE**-funded initiative, **The Roadmap to Redesign (R2R),** to spread the PCR's ideas and practices. More information about the work of these programs is at the **Center for Academic Transformation** Website.
- **Readings on Blended Learning.** Both the **University of Milwaukee (WI)** and the **University of North Texas** provide Websites with links to excellent sources of information, some older than those listed in this BEEP, on both background and examples of hybrid courses.
- **"Rethinking Space and Time: The Role of Internet Technology in a Large Lecture Course."** Article by Diane Harley, Jonathan Henke, and Michael W. Maher in *Innovate* (1:1), October/November 2004. Provides and interprets the results of a study at the University of California that compared traditional and technology-enhanced versions of an undergraduate chemistry course over a two-year span. Stresses the benefits of online technology for large lecture classes. (Requires free registration to read the complete article.)
- **"Teaching and Learning in a Hybrid World: An Interview with Carol Twigg."** Interview by Susan Walsh Veronikas and Michael F. Shaughnessy in *Educause Review* (39:4), July/August 2004, with Dr. Carol Twigg, Executive Director of the **Center for Academic Transformation,** about learning objects; online standards and the educational market; and more.
- **"Who We Really Are."** Recent interview by Mary Grush in *Campus Technology,* January 2005, with Ron Bleed, IT Vice Chancellor for Maricopa Community Colleges, in which he discusses the colleges' involvement in hybrid courses. Dr. Bleed is the author of a seminal piece, **"A Hybrid Campus for the New Millennium,"** printed in *Educause Review* (36:1), January/February, 2001.

Examples

- **Estrella Mountain Community College – Hybrid Learning Program.** A 2004 Innovation of the Year developed at one of Maricopa County's (AZ) community colleges "…wrapped around faculty development and collaboration, student learning and best practices pedagogy, and institutional strategic planning that combines the best of online learning and face-to-face instruction…"
- **Judson College - Biochemical Nutrition .** Detailed description and evaluation by instructor Ruth Kastenmayer of a blended course she taught in 2004. Very valuable for any hybrid planner.
- **"Lessons Learned from the Hybrid Course Project"** and **"Introduction to Hybrid Courses."** Articles contributed by Alan Aycock, Carla Garnham and Robert Kaleta to *Teaching with Technology Today* (8:6), 3/20/02, about the 1999-2001 Hybrid Course Project at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee. They offer a close look at project and its successful outcomes.
- **New Jersey Institute of Technology – Hybrid Courses.** Website that supports a pilot program in hybrid learning at NJIT. Includes **a valuable page with annotated links** to various efforts of colleges with well-known and/or large-scale hybrid course initiatives: University of Central Florida; University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee; Maricopa Community College District (AZ); Arizona State University; and Brigham Young University (UT).
- **Northeastern University (MA) - Hybrid Writing: From Pilot to Program.** Paper by Alicia Russell, Christiane Donahue and Cathy McCarron on the development of a required writing course and a faculty training program for faculty wishing to develop other hybrid courses.
- **Santa Monica College (CA) – Elementary Spanish.** Example of what a course description for a hybrid course might look like. Includes expectations, tech requirements and materials for both the face-to-face and online portions of the course.
- **University of Northern Texas – The Blended Learning Project.** Extensive Website on an effort to get information on the same courses taught in a variety of formats. Includes goals; courses and participants; background reading; case studies; examples; and tools.
- **Westminster College (UT) – Hybrid Course Development Training.** Summary of a 2004 conference held to introduce hybrid courses to Westminster faculty and instruct in creating them.

BEEP's Best Bets

Assessment and Evaluation

- **"Ten Top Digital Colleges for 2005."** Press release, 4/6/05, about the top institutions selected by the **Center for Digital Education** and **American Association of Community Colleges.** The large/urban category top honor was shared by St. Petersburg College (FL) and York Technical College (SC). The mid/suburban first-place school was Indian River Community College (FL), and Tompkins Cortland Community College (NY) won first place in the small/rural category.

Assistive Technologies

- **Innovative Tactile Solutions for the Blind.** First released by the VirTouch Corporation in December 2003, the mouse-like VTPlayer lets the visually impaired experience images of all kinds in a tactile way. The company continues to add educational software products compatible with the VTPlayer, which can be installed on almost all Windows-based computers.
- **"The Reading Pen Group Debuts Personal Reading Assistant to U. S. Education Market."** Press release, 5/2/05, about a pen that can scan any printed text - words or sentences - and provide pronunciation, definition and translation in seconds. Improves reading at all levels.

Innovative Technologies

- **"Computers Obeying Brain Signals."** Associated Press release by Malcolm Ritter, 4/4/05, announcing some dramatic new uses of electrical brain signals that allow paralyzed people to change TV channels, surf the net, write letters to friends, and steer a small robot along the floor.
- **Cell Phone with Built-in Projector.** Announcement, 3/24/05, of a new cell phone by the Siemens company that makes it possible to project a complete keypad or display onto a surface. With a special pen, users can write on the virtual keypad and also operate the phone's functions.
- **"MIT Team Creating $100 Laptops."** Synopsis of wire service reports in *eSchool News Online,* 3/14/05, about MIT's plan to design and mass-produce basic, durable, laptops costing $100 or less for use by children worldwide, including U. S. students.

www.spcollege.edu/eagle/research/BEEP/BEEP45.htm

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The contents of BEEP were developed under a grant from the U. S. Department of Education (DOE). However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the DOE, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.