The Hybrid Course Experience

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Approval

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Abstract

This phenomenology analyzes the experience of students and teachers in hybrid (blended) courses in a community college and a university located in central New York. The Constructivist Learning Theory is applied to the hybrid course characteristics and analyzed to determine the effectiveness of hybrid courses. A definition and description of hybrid courses is proposed.
Acknowledgements

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It is a sunny Monday morning, the 1\textsuperscript{st} of November, and for the first time in a week, Chris was no longer sick. For the last eight days Chris had been in bed rest with strep throat. Unfortunately for him, it was week 8 of 15 in his fall semester and he really couldn’t afford to miss school. Chris was enrolled in three classes; human resource management, marketing, and statistical research.

Chris’s Human Resource Management (HRM) course was a hybrid course, the marketing course was online and Statistics was a traditional classroom course. Monday nights Chris had his HRM course so he decided to sign in online to see what he had missed. Chris did not make it to the class the previous week, but was able to get notes from a fellow classmate. From these notes he did his work for the current week. When Chris signed online, the first place he went to is the “Syllabus” section. When he read through this for the current week he found out that chapter 13 was due along with some case study questions at the end of the chapter. “Well this stinks” Yelled Chris. He went back through the notes and did not see the assignment written.

Before Chris started his HRM homework, he went back to the course site and clicked on the “Handouts” section under the learning module column. He went to chapter 13 and started reading. The professor of the class had all his notes posted here for everyone to read. After Chris was done reading through the professor’s notes, he clicked back to the Handouts module and saw there was an article posted on management. This article talked about how Corporation QP fired a woman for not
complying with policy to wear skirts to work and she was suing the corporation for discrimination.

Intrigued by this article, Chris read through it twice before he went to do his homework. Irritated beyond belief because this work took him almost three and a half hours, Chris went back to the online section of the course and clicked on Individual Assignments listed under learning modules. The page that loaded is a list of all the homework submitted during the semester. Chris scrolled down until he got to the section for November 1st. Here he noticed that there were no assignments posted for the class. This was odd at first, but Chris assumed everyone was working on it last minute like he is and then posted his own assignment. Then Chris had a couple hours before he had to go to class, so he cooked himself some food and cleaned up.

At 4:02 in the afternoon Dr. Smith walked in, a couple of minutes late as she always did. About two minutes were spent getting her things organized before she spoke. To start the class, she asked the students for comments on the article she posted online about Corporation QP. This turned into a forty five minute discussion about the situation and was it discrimination or not. The students talked about other court cases that were similar, and some talked about their experiences as managers at their jobs. At 4:50 the professor cut the students off and told them they had to go online, but look for a new thread under the learning modules about the discussion and they could resume it there.

Next, Dr. Smith asked if there were any questions on the chapter and when there were none, she split the students into four groups and assigned each a task. Two of the groups were going to role play as unions, and two of the groups were to be managers. The opposing sides were given a list of demands and goal, from the professor, and they
were to debate issues like it was a real business situation and try to reach a compromise. Because Chris had missed the class the previous week, he was not as prepared as the rest of the class but since he had read chapter 13, he knew enough to jump in it. Two of the groups would role play and have a debate and the rest of the students would take notes and after each debate all of the students discussed which side was more successful and why.

After the role playing and discussions, the teacher concluded the class with an overview of the following week’s itinerary. When Dr. Smith released the students around 7pm (class was scheduled to go till 8 but Dr. Smith typically let the students out an hour or more early), Chris went to her and asked her about the homework assignment. Dr. Smith told him that last class she told everyone they have an extra week to complete it.

Seven weeks later, Chris attended his last hybrid HRM class for the semester, held in the classroom, and it was time to fill out the course surveys. As he thought back to the semester and all three of the courses he made note of why he liked HRM. His traditional classroom format statistics course involved a long lecture everyday, followed by one or two example questions and homework. His online marketing course required him to read the book and answer questions every week. The HRM course had more discussions online and in the classroom and role playing in the classroom. So he noted this on the survey.

When Chris made his schedule for the spring he registered for a hybrid e-commerce course and a hybrid business policy course because he liked the format. When school started in January, Chris attended his first e-commerce course. When he looked at
the syllabus he saw that they were only going to meet in the classroom five times. The first was the first week of classes, two times for presentations, and two times for tests.

The next day Chris attended his business policy course. Once again Chris was surprised because this course met in a classroom every week and used the online environment as a place to submit assignments. After the policy course, Chris bumped into a previous professor of his, Dr. Welker. When Chris was telling her about the situation with the hybrid courses, she said “if you have seen one hybrid course, you have seen one hybrid course.”

One issue that is prevalent is difficulty defining hybrid courses. This lack of a definition led to hybrid course structures which are very different. This can be seen in Chris’s business policy and HRM courses. The business policy course was held in a classroom except for submission of assignments online and his HRM course utilized both classroom and online time for lectures, homework, and, discussions. There is a need for a definition of a hybrid course so when the term “hybrid course” is used, there will be a general understanding of what the course entails.
SECTION 2: Introduction

This phenomenology’s goal is to describe the experience of hybrid courses. To learn about the experience the author attended several of these courses for observational purposes in addition to conducting interviews with both students and teachers. Extensive analysis was done on the data that was gained through qualitative research.

Literature Review

One of the issues surrounding research of hybrid courses is the lack of literature currently available. Most of the literature that is available does not focus strongly on hybrid courses. The appearances of hybrid courses revolve around issues with online courses where classroom time is required. Several scholarly journal articles and one book were reviewed which focused on various formats for hybrid courses.

Summaries

“Can Web Courses Replace the Classroom in Principles of Microeconomics?” written by Byron W. Brown and Carl E. Liedholm was a study done at Michigan State University to see if the online students for its Microeconomics class were achieving the same quality of education as those in the classroom. Also, compared with the online and classroom sections of the course was a hybrid section. The solution was that although the online section of the course contained students who had higher ACT scores and
equivalent GPAs as the other sections, their exam scores were significantly lower than the other sections. This article shows support for the deficiencies of online courses versus classroom courses. Many teachers have investigated the potential for hybrid courses because of their benefits over online courses.

Kevin J. Delaney authored the article, “Technology (A Special Report); Teaching tools: How do you communicate with students who have grown up with technology? Schools are looking to technology for the answer.” The title of this article summarized the general theme of the work but it did have other useful information. It mentioned some benefits of using technology for school work, which many teachers have found beneficial in junior high and high schools. Although this study focused on high school education, the principles mentioned in this article can be directly applied to college education. Many of these technologies implemented involve use of the Internet and in a hybrid formatted college course, would be aspects of consideration for the online portion of the class.

The article “Not one or the other but both; Hybrid course delivery using WebCT” by Holly G. Willett was about “students’ reactions to the first use of WebCT in Program in School and Public Librarianship at Rowan University.” The article talked about the issues this university was having and why WebCT (online course delivery package) helped solve some of them. It discussed why some of the faculty members used WebCT in a hybrid format and still had the students attend some classes. The article also talked about some of the different components of the courses offered and where these components were conducted; online or in the classroom. This article showed a format for a hybrid course and the benefits that were perceived leading to its design.
In *Campus Technology*, “Who We Really Are”, a Campus Technology reporter interviewed Ron Bleed; a vice chancellor for Information Technologies for Maricopa, a community college in the Phoenix area. The article talked about how technology was integrated into their college and what impact it had based on reactions from faculty and students. One of the technologies the college adapted were hybrid courses. This school saw the hybrid format as replacing some of the classroom time with online. “…You try to affect seat time positively so that when students do come on campus, the time is spent more interactively in discussion, and more socially.” (Bleed, 2005, Response 5) These courses received positive feedback from the students because it was easier to work the courses around job changes, family commitments, and illnesses. Their research showed that the largest barrier to the success of their students was making it through all sixteen weeks of a “fixed-seat-time course. They are the courses with the lowest retention rates, specifically because life interruptions take their toll.” (Bleed, 2005, Response 6)

“Are We There Yet?” also from *Campus Technology* is about the changes occurring in education. This article focused on a change towards more active learning and the adaptation of course management systems (technology to manage courses). Boettcher (2004) concluded that a majority of courses will be hybrid courses in five to seven years. This article supported the idea that with the changing times, online education holds potential for improving education, but should not totally replace classroom learning. Boettcher made the statement “Emerging brain science research emphasizes the need for student engagement in learning…” (2004, ¶ 4) This statement will be strong support for the active learning that occurs in hybrid courses.
Gordon E. McCray authored research he conducted on hybrid courses. The article is titled, “The Hybrid course: Merging on-line instruction and the traditional classroom.” It talked about how the main purpose for online courses was not an educational one as much as a political and financial decision for most schools. Although online courses did have benefits it also eliminated portions of the quality learning that was present in classrooms. They described a hybrid course format that exists using audio/video streaming, along with the text of the lecture. The article concluded with a quantitative analysis of the data found. Some of the results included freeing up classroom time for active learning exercises which improved “ability of students [generally] to grapple complex realistic scenarios…” (McCray, 2000, p. 323) This also showed an “attainment of higher level of learning”. (McCray, 2000, p. 323)

“Hybrid Writing: From Pilot to Program” by Alicia Russell, Christiane Donahue and Cathy McCarron was about the adaptation of hybrid courses for the Mid Year Writing Requirements course taught at Northeastern University. The article talked about why they adapted the hybrid model, students opinions of it, teachers resistance to it, and their plans to instruct the teachers how to convert their courses to hybrid. It also included a chart on the success rate of the students from the hybrid model courses versus the traditional courses. It found that students in the hybrid courses had a higher retention rate and lower failing rates than those in the traditional courses.
The chart indicates a higher success rate of students in hybrid courses. They had a higher retention rate and lower fail rate than those in traditional courses.

Because of the increase in student success with the hybrid courses as shown in the chart, hybrid courses have the potential to be a superior format for teaching. This article also showed useful student opinions and a plan to help teachers integrate their courses online. This article was a paper that was presented at a Syllabus conference which was held in Newton, MA in November 2002.

A Classroom of One, written by Gene Maeroff, was a book about the development of online courses and their impact on education in all levels of academia. Maeroff had an unbiased opinion about online courses throughout the book. At the beginning he stated, “I knew from the outset I didn’t want to trash online courses,” and he held this attitude throughout the book. Maeroff asserted that classroom courses were not going to be phased out by online, yet online courses will find their place in education. The conclusion of this will be a vast usage of hybrid courses. This book provided a history of distance learning and its development into the online format. It also talks about the way hybrid courses will develop.
“These courses will become more and more depended on the infusion of technology for such activities as turning in papers, visiting websites that elaborate on topics, exchanging e-messages with each other and with instructors, going to chartrooms related to the courses, and participating in threaded discussions that expand interaction beyond the fleeting contact of the typical classroom.”  
(Maeroff, 2003, p. 251)

At the end of 2001 a study of the major online environment providers showed that 80 percent of the courses on these environments were hybrid format; only 20 percent were entirely online.

“Teaching with the Constructivist Learning Theory” was an online article published by the NDT Resource Center. This article covered the principles of the Constructivist Learning theory which were very prevalent in the data collected on hybrid courses. This theory will provide the background to the successfulness of hybrid courses.

Eric Wignall authored the article “Definitional (Declarative) Knowledge” published on the Purdue University website defining declarative knowledge. This article, along with the NDT Resource Center article on Constructivist Learning, holds the theories that will help determine the effectiveness of hybrid learning.

**Definition of Hybrid Learning**

There was no formal definition for a hybrid course (sometimes referred to as a blended learning course) in the literature reviewed. All of the authors had differences in their hybrid course perceptions but there was one statement that was constant among them. “Hybrid course delivery combines conventional face-to-face instruction with distance education in the same course” (Willett, 2002, p. 413). This is a somewhat broad
statement about hybrid course yet it is the only one which related to all the other forms of hybrid courses in the literature.

Willett uses WebCT, a third party software package that was designed to be used for organizing and conducting online courses. He used WebCT to turn in homework rather than having the students turn it in on paper. Some of his homework assignments required students to look to at websites for additional reference material. When students did this they could then post their assignments online and the “URLs also appear as hyperlinks in the bulletin board so that students can visit the recommended sites” (Willett, 2002, p. 416). In Willett’s course, the class met in person around five times a semester. The rest of the course was held online.

McCray believed that hybrid learning can be used in a course to free up time in a classroom for “more interactive learning activities…” Much of the one way communication types of teaching, such as lecturing, could be typed up online and read just as effectively as if they were spoken in the classroom. The hybrid course in McCray’s study consisted of “CyberShows”. These CyberShows were made up of presentations along with an audio recording of the professor. These presentations can be viewed on campus or off campus by accessing them from the course website on the internet. The audio and slideshow portions of the presentation would be available for downloading separately, but the audio could be downloaded in a script form.

Ron Bleed viewed hybrid courses as a means for reducing in-class time. Where the other authors talked about online sections as being a supplement for the classroom, Bleed saw them as a way to reduce the amount of time spend in the classroom. As with
McCray, Bleed felt that the online portion of the class could be used to deliver content, whereas the classroom time should be spent more interactively.

Categories in Literature

There is a theme of community that was supported in two of the journal articles. Delaney states, “The fact that they’re writing for an audience larger than just their teacher makes a difference…” (2005, p. R.4) He was referring to the discussions students have online. Since much of what everyone posts online contributed to the entire class, not just the teacher, the students shared personal experiences easier than they would be able to in a compressed class time. Also according to Delaney, in-class time should be used for interactive role playing and case study type exercises. This enabled students to work together in a face-to-face setting. Both of these situations are not possible with a classroom or online course. Delaney also quoted a technology-integration specialist at Hopkins University who pointed out that some students are shy about speaking out in class and they would feel more comfortable if they have time to build a thought out response online. Willet’s article also supported community by pointing out introvert personalities and online postings in a very similar manner as Delaney does.

Active Learning is another category that was present in the literature. “Emerging brain science research emphasizes the need for student engagement in learning…” (Boettcher, 2004, ¶ 4) She talked about how courses that use a course management system online encouraged the students to engage in a more expansive role in the teaching/learning process in education. “Students won’t just be savvy consumers of
educational services, they’ll be savvy participants in those services.”

(Boettcher, 2004, ¶ 5)

In the course setting that was presented in McCray’s article, students were required to watch the CyberShows before they went to class so lecturing during class time could be kept to a minimum. This class time would then be used for “scenario-based analytical exercises.” (McCray, 2000, p. 312) These are the types of exercises that encouraged the students to become more engaged in active learning and less of the passive learning that was common in many classrooms. For example, the author along with information systems professionals looked at events that were current at the time and made case studies based on the decisions different organizations were faced with at the time.

**Problem Questions**

**Main Research Question**

- What is a hybrid course?

**Issue Subquestions**

- What is typically done in the different sections of a hybrid course?
- What impact will hybrid courses have on college education, if any?
- What are teachers and students experiences with hybrid courses?
- How does college administration classify hybrid courses and what is the impact of this classification?
The Phenomenology

An instructor at the University where my study takes place presented the idea of a hybrid course because suggestions of this type of course were brought to his attention recently. He was intrigued with the idea and believed it had potential yet he was uncertain how to go about teaching one because he was unable to find adequate information on this type of course. Thus the idea was an appealing one for this study.

To find out how hybrid courses are conducted, a simple questionnaire might have been sufficient, but for this study there was a desire to find out teachers’ and students’ experiences with hybrid courses in order to obtain information that could be used to find the potential benefits of a hybrid course and how to maximize them.

This study was phenomenological. According to Creswell, “a phenomenological study describes the meaning of the lived experiences for several individuals about a concept or the phenomenon.” (1998, p. 51) This study looked at the experiences of individuals in “hybrid courses”; the phenomenon.

This phenomenology was bounded by geographical constraints. The two schools where the hybrid courses were observed were located in a close proximity in New York State. Both of the schools were state schools with one being a community college and the other a state university. Most of the research took place at the university, because of a lack of availability of courses and individuals at the community college. The study was conducted from February through May 2005.
**Data Collection**

The two main techniques used in gathering information for this study were observations and interviews, but focus groups and a primary document were also used. Data was collected from teachers and students who were involved with hybrid courses at the time of the study and before it took place. The following data matrix shows how many students and teachers were involved in the data collection.

There were four types of data collection in this study: interviews, focus groups, observations and primary documents. This chart shows how many teachers and students contributed to each of the types of data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Source</th>
<th>Interviews</th>
<th>Focus Groups</th>
<th>Observations</th>
<th>Documents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were eight courses that were experienced by the ten people interviewed. Some of these courses were observed to obtain a better understanding and a first hand experience of the course. These observations were done by attending the classroom
sessions and through access to the online sections of the course. A focus group was conducted to obtain more information and validation on what the author had already found. Figure 3 shows details of how many students, teachers, and online and classroom observations contributed to each of the courses.

**Figure 3 – Details of Data Collection**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type Source</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>In-class Observations</th>
<th>Online Observations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course A</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15 (p)</td>
<td>50 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course B</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course C</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course D</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course E</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course F</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15 (p)</td>
<td>40 (p) **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course G</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(p) Classes the author was enrolled in before the study took place

(*) An approximation of about 2-3 times a week for around 10 weeks

(**) An approximation of 2-3 times a week for the entire semester

(***) This course was one the author was enrolled in, but also had online access to the same course the following semester. This number was an approximation of 2-3 times a week for one whole semester and 5 weeks of the following semester

This chart shows the type of data collection that contributed information for each of the courses. Information from the students was obtained through interviews and informal conversations before and after their actual class time.

The informants who were interviewed were chosen from the courses the author attended as a student and the courses he observed during this study. The classes where the
The author attended an in-class session for observation resulted in teachers being interviewed in order to gain a fuller experience of the hybrid course from their perspective. Additional teachers were chosen based on reference and availability. The first students who were selected were in a hybrid course with the author. Some of the students contributed in an informal way. Some of the information from students was obtained from more casual conversation which took place for a few minutes before class, after class, and during breaks. From the interviews there was always the concluding question of, “Is there anyone else who you feel will have a lot to contribute to this project?” From this question a network of people was created who contributed to the study.

The students involved varied in age, gender, and educational background. Those at the community college were more traditional age students, 18-22 years old. The students were all male because the students in the two technology engineering courses observed were all male. At the university a more diverse range of students were involved in the study. Some were male, some female, and in their twenties to mid-forties. These students had a variety of educational degrees in design, business, marketing, and technology.

The schools that were chosen to be included in this study were chosen based on their location, in central New York. Also the schools chosen had hybrid courses being conducted at the time, and teachers who were able to work with the author of this study.

The purpose of observing classes, online and in the classroom, was to obtain a first hand experience of the hybrid course. How was it formatted? What types of teaching techniques were used in the classroom and online? Being physically present to observe the classes, the author found it easier to obtain cooperation from students.
Before each interview, the informant was asked to sign an ethics protocol (see Appendix C) that explained the rights the informant had in participating in the study. These rights included all responses being voluntary and the informant’s ability to drop out of participating at any time. The goal of the interviews was to find out about the students experiences in hybrid courses. The interviews were tape recorded for accuracy and for ease of observing non-verbal interaction. A copy of the questions used in the interview protocol is in Appendix D. Any follow up questions were asked informally such as via email or office visits. A focus group was held with some of the informants to discuss findings and their validity. While only two students and one teacher attended this focus group, it was successful in validating findings and presenting new thoughts.

The first set of interview questions was to obtain demographic data (name, position, schooling status, number of hybrid courses, and age). Age was recorded to see if there was a difference between the younger, more “technically advanced” generation, and the older generation and their experiences with hybrid courses. The first question asked to the student informants was “For what reasons did you attend college and what did you hope to gain from the experience?” This first question was asked to the students in order to gain information about an idea that was later discarded. Although the idea was thrown out, the question was not because it was a good ice breaker question. This question was then replaced with a question about administration views of hybrid courses, when asked to teachers. Most of the students seemed very nervous about doing the interviews and the first question stimulated conversation and got the interview rolling.

The second question was “Describe your experience with hybrid courses.” McCracken emphasizes that, “the use of the questionnaire does not preempt the “open-
ended” nature of the qualitative interview. Within each of the questions, the opportunity for exploratory, unstructured responses remains.” (1988, p.25) This principle was the reason the author left the second question open ended. Key follow up questions included:

- What parts of the course were online?
- What parts of the course were in the classroom?
- What did you find difficult regarding the hybrid course?
- What did you find beneficial regarding the hybrid course?

If the informants responses did not include the answers to these questions, then additional questions were asked more directly to get this information.

The third question asked was “Describe your experience with computers/technology throughout your life”. This question was searching for relationships between their computer experience and their ease of hybrid courses. Since the hybrid courses studied contained online format for the distance education sections, this question was appropriate for investigating a relationship.

The next question, “Is there anything else you would like to say about hybrid courses or anything at all?” was redundant. This question obtained any other information or experience about hybrids not mentioned earlier. By placing an extra question in the middle, it resulted in some feedback to the second question which led to another extensive discussion about hybrid courses. The final question, “Is there anyone that you feel would have a lot to contribute to this project?” was to build a network of informants for the study. It contributed to about 75% of the informant pool.
A Similar Study – Janice Welker

Part way through this study, I encountered a professor at the university doing a similar study, Jan Welker. Dr. Welker was working with a colleague, Lisa Berardino, both whom are assistant professors in the School of Management at the State University of New York Institute of Technology at Utica/Rome. Their study was titled, “Blended Learning: Understanding the Middle Ground between Traditional Classroom and Fully Online Instruction.” Dr. Welker was the author’s contact for this study so much of the findings refer to Dr. Welker’s findings although both professors were involved in the study. “Blended Learning” is another term used for hybrid courses. Their research was based on surveys passed out to teachers and students that ask questions about the benefits and hardships with hybrid (blended) courses along with their perceived impacts.

This research contained many findings and conclusions that were useful for the author’s research. Dr. Welker’s research was used validate the findings in the author’s research.

Why do this study?

The author’s decision to study hybrid courses was not a random one. Approximately six months before the study began the author participated in two hybrid courses, not by choice. Approaching his next to last semester of graduate school, he enrolled in two business electives. One of the electives was an online course and the other was listed as a traditional classroom type course.

The online course was difficult for the author. He had never taken an online course before and was unsure what to expect. Much to his disappointment, the course was
very difficult to follow and he was completely lost within two weeks. At this point the
author went to the registrar’s office looking for an alternative course to take. There was
the same course, taught by the same teacher, at a time when he could take it, and it was
held in a classroom. When the author went to the alternative course, he found out that it
was a hybrid and still had to use the online learning environment, SLN. This was a first
experience for the author was found to be quite interesting.

The second business course the author registered for turned out to also be a hybrid
course. The teacher of this course integrated online learning into the course much more
extensively than the teacher of the other business course. Learning to adapt to the online
learning was a challenging task.

The two courses the author was enrolled in were both hybrids but were quite
different (details will be provided in a later section). When contemplating a topic for this
study, the author while working with one of his advisors, began discussing hybrid
courses. The advisor also was not yet very familiar with them other than hearing about
them in a meeting. The author felt there was potential for a new method of teaching here
thus leading to the start of this research.

**Analysis of Data**

The primary interviews were based on one general question and from this
question, details about the person’s experiences with hybrid courses were extracted. The
respondents ranged in age from typical college student in their 20’s to much older
students. There were subjects of both genders and from a wide range of programs of
study. These programs include technical engineering, business, anthropology, and design.
All of those interviewed and observed were proficient with computers and internet usage thus the related interview question drew no conclusions. To best look at the data collected, it will be broken down by course. Figure 4 will show the basics of each course in a grid. Figure 5 will show a spectrum of all the courses and where they fall in relation to each other. All of these courses studied were different in aspects that are held online and in the classroom.
# Figure 4 - Course Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Lectures</th>
<th>Exam Submission</th>
<th>Group Work</th>
<th>Case study / Role play</th>
<th>Journal / Article Reviews</th>
<th>Discussions</th>
<th>Assignment Submission</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O / C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>C / O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>O / C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>O / C</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>O / C</td>
<td>O / C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O / C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>C / O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O / C</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Legend:**
  - O – Occurs Online
  - C – Occurs in the classroom
  - O / C – Occurs mostly online but occasionally in class also
  - C / O – Occurs mostly in the classroom but occasionally online also
  - B – Occurs both online and in the classroom at a fairly even rate.
  - – – Unknown / or not applicable

This matrix shows teaching methods which are common in many courses and whether the teacher method was used online, in the classroom, or some combination of the two.
This spectrum graphically shows the relations of the courses with each other in terms of the integration of classroom and online usage. The data is based on information in Figure 4 along with other information such as the amount of time that was typically spent on each section. The 50/50 Hybrid position is a theoretical position where exactly half of the course was online and half was in a classroom. This position’s purpose is to show a halfway point on the spectrum.

Courses Descriptions

Course A: Course A was a business-based course at the university and it was the professor’s third term teaching it. This course was held in a classroom for almost the full time it was scheduled to be held, and there were sections online using SLN.

The online portion of the course was used for submitting most assignments, tests, and journal article summaries. When assignments were submitted online, they were visible for the entire class to see and frequently there were discussions about these assignments in the classroom. The tests were also available for the entire class to see online. The professor found that this is “something the students liked because it strengthens their writing.” The journal article summaries consisted of half the class reviewing a Wall Street Journal article every week online. The other half of the class was to post comments and responses to these summaries and an online discussion emerged.
Many of the discussions included the student’s experiences with business and/or technology, and they were very opinionated. Sometimes the discussions diverted from an educational discussion and became more of an online debate which did not pertain to the course. Discussions were sometimes brought into the classroom when the professor felt they were more appropriate. Also the teacher posted many resources online including the syllabus and many writing tools.

The classroom portion of the course usually contained an hour of semi-lecture format. This format occurs when the teacher does much more talking, but there is considerably more discussion between teacher/students and student/student than with the typical lecture setting. Frequently there would be group work on a case study where each group presented their findings to the class. This course followed Bleed’s statement of using classroom time “more interactively in discussion.” (2005, Response 5)

This course featured group work that included four major presentations. Occasionally the professor would end class an hour or half an hour early so the groups could meet in the classroom in order to work together and ask him questions. There were also places on SLN for the groups to meet and they could have discussions that were visible to themselves and the professor.

The professor believed that by having this course in a hybrid format made it more difficult for both him and his students, yet educationally better. The students had to acquaint themselves with the organization which is most likely different from other courses they have taken. He also believed that if it is the students first semester using SLN, just getting used to SLN would make the course more difficult. From his perspective, he had much more work to do in building a strong hybrid format. It was very
difficult to figure out which aspects of the course to have online and which aspects to have in the classroom. He had many ideas on how he may be able to improve it, but felt that only implementing a few changes each semester was the safest way to proceed. This made his convergence to the “ideal hybrid course” a lengthy process.

On the upside, the professor said that the online part of the class helps to strengthen the community. He used this to post work so students could obtain ideas from each other and the journal article summaries enabled students to share their personal life experiences with much detail they would not be able to share in the classroom. At the same time the students still had in-class group work, presentations, and discussions where they were face-to-face with one another.

**Course B:** This course was a business course at the university. This course contained lectures and group activities in the classroom. A lot of these group activities were role playing and case studies which represented techniques and examples used in industry. The professor of this course felt that these activities were vital because they would appear simple and straightforward in lectures but they are different when you go to implement them. These exercises were ones which can not be held online.

Tests and homework assignments were posted online for this course. Class was held on a Thursday, and the homework had to be posted by Saturday night. Then during the week, the students were required to read through other student’s homework and make comments. Frequently there were also discussions online about important topics or questions presented in the homework, lecture, or in the real work. The professor would
have these discussions online because she frequently did not have time to do so in the classroom.

The professor of Course B believed that hybrids are good for introverts. She stated “a lot of people are shy, they won’t talk in class where as online they have to.” She also stated “they have to” online because if the student does not post anything online, then she would not know they are in the course. Course B was scheduled to meet once a week for three hours. On average the classroom sessions would only run two hours because the professor knew that the students also had to go online to do work all throughout the week.

Course C: This course was a thesis course in the School of Arts and Sciences at the university. This course was unique because it did not have some of the vital features of many other classes. There were no exams, group work, or case studies. The course met in person eleven times during the fifteen weeks. The other four weeks of courses were completely held online.

About 1/5th of the in-class time of this course were lectures. The remainder of the classroom sessions were filled with exercises to help the students develop different sections of their thesis and discussions about issues that students had in keeping up with their work. Homework was submitted in-class at times and other times online. When the class met online, there would be a reading assignment, and a journal posting relating the reading to the student’s thesis. Then the students were required to respond to each other’s postings with ideas.
The author was enrolled in this class which allowed him first hand experience with it. One of the common statements from the students of this course was that the format for the first online class was very difficult and confusing because it contained such a vast amount of threads which were unorganized. Appendix A is a capture of the week’s discussions. Although it was confusing, it does show an educational benefit which will be discussed later in the paper. The second online class incorporated the same general idea with the students writing a journal and assisting others. The difference being one student would post, then the next one to sign online would assist the one before and write their issues and a chain was started. This proved to be much easier for the students to follow. Also the professor said it was easier for him to follow what the students were writing.

Many of the students said this hybrid course was very difficult because they were constantly getting confused with what was going on. This was associated with two major factors. First, the thesis class was more work in general than the students were accustomed to which created some frustration among them. Because these students were overloaded with work, they were partially blaming it on the hybrid course. Secondly, this was the instructor’s first attempt at doing a hybrid course. He was uncertain of how to go about conducting the course, but had one major concept in his mind and that was to stay out of online discussions as much as possible. He wanted the students to use the online sections to have discussions amongst themselves.

**Course D:** This was a technology engineering course held at the community college studied. The author was able to observe this course both in the classroom and online. The main informant for this course was the instructor. Only one of the students was able to
free some time for an interview. The traditional classroom version of this course met three hours a week and once for a two hour lab. When the course went hybrid, the course was held entirely online with the exception of the lab; which was still held in a classroom.

The online section of the course was held on Blackboard, a private company that makes and supports online educational environments. The online portion contained lecture notes, discussion boards for both the reading and homework, and the course syllabus. The classroom portion of the course contained roughly an hour of lecture related to the readings and assignments there were assigned online for the week, followed by the hands-on lab. From observing this class the author learned that there is nothing spectacular about this course. Most of the students seemed to have a very easy time with the reading assignments and the lab. A few of the students admitted that they took the hybrid portion of the class because they already knew the information quite well. One student who was interviewed already knew the programming well, but was happy to have the hands on experience.

The observations showed that most of the students knew the professor fairly well. There was a bit of informality within this class. Also during the interview, the professor stated that there was a great deal of communication with students outside the classroom and the online environment. This was because he knew most of the students from other courses and currently has them in other classes. This may have helped make this hybrid course as successful and easy flowing as it was.

Why was this course formatted this way? According to the professor, the community college was having issues with students not being able to get their scheduling
done because of conflicting times. They then began giving teachers benefits for developing online courses. The issue was that some of these courses had labs that could not be conducted online. This was where Course D came into play. The community college defined hybrid courses as meeting entirely online except for the lab. Because of this all of the hybrid courses at this school were formatted the same way, even Course E which will be discussed briefly next.

**Course E:** This course was also held at the community college. From what the author could obtain, it was formatted just like Course D with one exception. The lab had no lecture. The students came in, did their lab, then they left. Most of these students left within 45 minutes. This was troublesome because they basically ran in and ran out. No one was willing to do an interview. They did not even seem willing to attempt to make some free time. This bothered the author because he was also unable to get access to the online portion of the course. From the interview with the professor, the author learned that many of the students were taking time out of their work schedules to attend this lab. Many of them were eager to leave the lab immediately when they were done because they were going back to work.

**Course F:** This is a graduate level business class held at the university. This class was a three credit course that typically met in person for three hours a week. During this time, there was supplemental course time held online. This was one of the courses the author was a student in, but there was also an informant who was in the class.
Classroom time almost always begun with a lecture. This lecture would typically last about one hour and covered the basics concepts of the reading, class agenda, and then changed to the syllabus. The ending portion of the class time was usually case studies. Here the teacher would have the students break up into groups of four or five, and they would be given a business case. The groups would either have to find a solution for the case or act it out (when the case was centered on interviewing and union negotiations). These cases would be presented to the class and led to discussions.

The online environment for this course was similar to Course A. Every other week, the students had to post an article review from the Wall Street Journal or another professional business magazine. The rest of the class was then required to respond to these postings. Frequently these posting would include student’s life experiences which were beneficial to see what everyone had contributed. The tests, which were essay based, were submitted online and were posted openly for the entire class to read.

Unfortunately an interview was unobtainable from this professor, but from the author’s experience, the one major downside was that the usage of the hybrid format was a bit of extra work. This class was not as confusing for many of the students which was due to the course not having an extensive integration of the online environment. This course was still pretty strongly a classroom based course.

**Course G:** Not much information was given about this course. The informant who attended this course did not remember much about it, and was not very helpful. The course was held at the university, and typically a junior or senior level course. The course was held completely in the classroom with one exception. Homework was
submitted online using the SLN environment. This professor was unable to free up some time for an interview, thus making the information on this course very slim. This course was not referred to as a hybrid by either the student or teacher, it just barely fit in the minimal requirements to be considered in this study.

**Description of Categories**

In Section 2, Analysis of Data, information from the various types of data collection was merged into three categories: educational benefits, overhead and scheduling, and inconveniences.

There are four sections to the educational benefits. The first is “community”. Traditionally, when people think of a community they think of themselves and their neighbors. The term “community” is used in reference to people with similar geographic location, interests, or goals. In a hybrid course, the students are brought together with the common goal of learning about the desired topic. Hybrid courses promote a stronger sense of community among its students than a traditional classroom course does because of easier communication outside of class and easier communication between students who are in different geographic locations.

A traditional method of teaching is through lecture, an instructor speaking to a group of people about a topic with the hopes that the listeners will learn from what the instructor is saying. Sometimes those listening may ask a question or two but for the most part the communication is one way. This one way learning is also commonly associated with instructors telling the students what they should be doing when in terms of work outside the class. Active learning is different from this in that, students have more control over their learning of the information. They may set their own pace and
schedules for doing work and they also contribute to the learning of others. Hybrid courses promote active learning, the second educational benefit.

The third educational benefit is additional time and opportunity. In addition to the classroom, the online section of the course gives the students additional time and opportunity to contribute to discussions when there is not enough time in the classroom. The fourth education benefit is quality of writing. Because of the increased online discussions and communication, there is a requirement for student’s ability to communicate effectively through writing.

Overhead and scheduling are the non-educational benefits of hybrid courses. These benefits are based on the concept that hybrid courses have reduced classroom time. This reduced time can solve scheduling issues and lower the physical overhead costs such as lighting and heating.

The third category is inconveniences. The negatives found in hybrid courses were not just educationally based. They reflected on the extra work required by students and teachers, the need to have experience with distance learning, and understanding how to balance the two sections of the course. All of these categories will be detailed in Section 5 of this paper.
SECTION 3: Description of the Phenomenon

The phenomenon of the hybrid course was a difficult one to look at. First off, the university studied did not classify any of its courses as hybrids. It listed courses as normal (classroom based) or online. Occasionally some of the classroom courses would have a note saying they were “Web-Enhanced”. Not all hybrid courses had this label though. When students registered for an online course they know that they will not have to go to class. When they register for a classroom course, they expect a traditional learning environment. When the author registered for one his courses, it was treated as a traditional format course. Much to his surprise, once the course started, he found out it was a hybrid. This labeling issue could be confusing and may cause problems for some.

Next there was the question of “What is a hybrid course?” There were many definitions of a hybrid course. The hybrid course in the article by Brown and Liedholm used online learning as a replacement for some of the classroom time. Willet defined hybrid courses as a course that “combines conventional face-to-face instruction with distance education in the same course.” Willet’s definition can mean a variety of things, from submitting assignments online to having the entire class online except for labs (see Figure 4).

On a side note, teachers of Courses A, C, and B said they were unsure of how to go about having a hybrid course. Most have heard of them and probably researched them. But just like the literature review, there was limited information on different formats of hybrids and their effectiveness. Attempting to change their course to a hybrid format was a big step and to leap right into it can be very risky according to the professor
of Course A. He stated that has been taking him a long time to fully develop his hybrid course because he only makes a few changes each semester.

How do you go about studying something when you do not know what it is? To go about this study, a preliminary definition of a hybrid course was created. This definition included any course that met in a classroom and using distance learning in any possible way. The distance learning portion was limited to an online educational package such as Blackboard, SLN, and WebCT (WebCT was mentioned in the literature review) mainly because online was the most common form of distance learning at the time. This eliminated some of the courses where the professor would put their notes and presentations on a website for the students to use.
SECTION 4: Description of the Theory

There are two theories that are the backbone of this study: Constructivist Learning theory and Declarative Knowledge, and each will be discussed separately.

One of the prevalent theories in education is “Constructivist Learning”. This theory is based on the premise that learning occurs mostly when an individual “creates a meaning from different experiences” (NDT Resource Center, ¶ 3). The author of this article described learning as an “active process”; creating your own meaning. The most common transfer that occurred between teacher and students is one of data. After the data is transferred, the student then had to build meaning. This “building” happens best when the student is engaged in a more active learning practice. (NDT Resource Center).

Seven methods of learning are organized by their highest retention rates.

1. Lecture = 5%
2. Reading = 10%
3. Audiovisual = 20%
4. Demonstration = 30%
5. Discussion group = 50%
6. Practice by doing = 75%
7. Teach others / immediate use of learning = 90%

(NDT Resource Center, Teaching with the Constructivist Learning theory, ¶ 5)

“The field of Nondestructive Testing (NDT) is a very broad, interdisciplinary field that plays a critical role in assuring that structural components and systems perform their function in a reliable and cost effective fashion. NDT technicians and engineers define and implement tests that locate and characterize material conditions and flaws that might
otherwise cause planes to crash, reactors to fail, trains to derail, pipelines to burst, and a variety of less visible, but equally troubling events.”

(NDT Resource Center, “About Us”)

When looking at hybrid as a format for teaching higher education, these seven factors need to be taken into consideration. The chart displayed how the teaching methods with a higher retention rate were those where the students are more actively involved. Education benefits, in Section 5: Details About the Categories, has two sections that will relate heavily to this theory; active learning and community.

Declarative knowledge is “the most common and identifiable type of knowledge.” (Wignall, 2005, ¶ 1) This idea was based on the way people identify with certain things. If someone looks at a quarter they “declare” it is a quarter. This identification with everything is how people develop a vocabulary. Although everyone will have the same or similar definition of something, it will have different meaning to different people. This is because people build their own meaning of things (Wignall, 2005), as pointed out in the Constructivist Learning Theory. These two theories are key when looking at learning and education and the abundance of active learning, as shown in the next section, and will develop the effectiveness of hybrid courses.
SECTION 5: Details about the Categories

The information obtained from the data collection was divided into three categories. The first, educational benefits, has four components; active learning, community, additional time and opportunity, and quality of writing.

Educational Benefits

“Emerging brain science research emphasizes the need for student engagement in learning.” (Boettcher, 2004, ¶ 4) There are numerous ways in which a student can be engaged in learning during their education.

At the community college studied hybrid courses were defined as totally online except for the lab time. This is because what the students were learning in the labs could not be done online (See Figure 6). Both of the courses were engineering courses that involved wiring of circuit boards in different ways.

Figure 6 - Wiring Circuit Boards

This image represents the hands-on activities that occurred during the labs Courses D and E. This type of hands-on work could not be replicated online, thus forcing the course to have its lab time in a classroom

Imagine doing this online. It is not possible. By choosing a hybrid format the college was able to get the schedule advantages from an online course they were looking for, without sacrificing one of the key elements for the engineering courses; the lab.

Five out of the seven courses studied had reports of students giving presentations. Course F was a business class based in human resources. This teacher has the students role play on numerous occasions. One week they were doing mock interviews for jobs and shortly afterwards they were doing union negations. These active learning practices were not successfully feasible for an online setting, yet the online portion of hybrids had active learning as well. In courses A, B, C, and F, the students were required to do reviews of articles from professional journals or textbooks. These reviews, along with other discussions, required critical thinking and many times outside sources were necessary. By requiring the students to site specifics from what they read and / or outside sources, they were forced to become more engaged in the learning and will develop a better understanding then if they just had to review it. To hold these discussions physically in a classroom would take several hours and it would be very difficult for the students to bring in outside sources. Also by having the online portion of the course for lecture notes and other teaching methods used in a traditional classroom, the professors were able to dedicate more class time to such active learning techniques.

Active learning supports Constructivist Learning theory because it gets the students involved in creating their own knowledge. When you look back at the percentages listed in Section 4, you can see why hybrid courses can be an effective teaching method. Two of the three techniques with the highest retention rates, teaching others and discussion groups are difficult to have just in a classroom. To have quality
discussion groups requires a lot of time and should be supported with outside resources thus making it difficult to hold in a classroom. Teaching others in a class is frequently done by discussion groups thus there are time issues when holding these in a classroom. In discussion groups, students typically use what they learned from the class, outside research, and life experiences to teach their fellow classmates. In courses such as the community college courses, where students were wiring circuit boards, they would frequently help each other out when needed. The sixth ranked percentage, “Practice by doing” is something that can not be done online, as shown by the community college and their engineering classes. Hybrid courses enable the usage of all the methods listed, especially the ones with higher retention rates. Numbers five and six are (discussion groups and practice by doing) frequently used for the students to prepare for number seven which can be done either online or in a classroom.

It should be known that the courses studied were not humanities courses. The amount of active learning in such courses could be very different but for the courses studied, the teachers were able to get the students involved in numerous forms of active learning. With the support active learning receives from the Constructivist Learning theory, hybrid courses may be an effective format for teaching higher level education.

According to Dictionary.com, the second definition of a community is “A group of people having common interests.” In education, everyone has a common interest; to learn and pass their courses. Many times students worked together to solve problems or issues they were having with a course. These did not have to be homework or test problems. There were numerous other problems that arise where students will seek help
from each other and their professor. There is a large amount of evidence that shows hybrid courses promote a stronger community among its students and teachers.

Many people, especially those who did not grow up with computers, have issues establishing a relationship with someone they never see. For these people, instant messenger, chatrooms, and online courses have a unique meaning. These people may talk to others in chatrooms or online courses and have extensive conversations with each other but still feel separate because they never meet.

Time is a valuable resource for classroom based courses. Frequently teachers needed to end discussions to make sure they had adequate time to cover the necessary materials in the class. In a hybrid situation, the discussion can be continued from the classroom online, as required by the teacher, or just to build on a discussion. This was seen consistently in courses A and F. It also occurred a few times in courses C and D. The same works in the other direction. Many discussions that start online and become very extensive were brought into a classroom because the teacher felt they are important and should be discussed farther. This was one practice of Teacher A. Some of his students would be working on Wall Street Journal reviews all semester long and other students would comment on the reviews. By mid semester there were always at least one discussion with extensive and in-depth materials and the teacher would bring it into the classroom discussion.

The professor of Course B saw more interaction in her hybrid courses as well. “Yea, a lot of people are shy, they won’t talk in class where as online they have to.” This was her response to a question about student interaction. It is known that students tend to shy away from asking questions in class. They are much more likely to ask their peers or
ask the professor in private. Also introverts tend to be more open to contributing to discussions online when they are not surrounded by people and have time to read through what they say.

Figure 7 - Course C: One week of discussions

One week's worth of online discussions from Course C. Each line is a link to what a student or teacher had say on a particular topic. No classroom session was held this week. See Appendix A for the actual listing of threads.

Figure 7 is a screen capture taken from SLN for Course C. This figure shows 90% of the threads which were posted during one week of this course (See Appendix A for the entire listing). During this week there was no classroom session held because the professor was out of town. There was an intense amount of discussion present this week. Discussions like these occurred every week, but more commonly on the four weeks when there was no classroom session. If this course was strictly classroom based, which it was
in the past, these students would most likely not communicate with one another for the week the professor was out of town. The online section enabled the students to stay in touch with each other when there was no class. Figure 7 also shows that there is a vast amount of communication between students online. Although weeks where there was a classroom session had fewer threads, they were still present. These online discussions help strengthen the community of the course.

Hybrid courses combine the large amount of time available for discussions online with the personal face to face interaction in a classroom. This setting creates a community that will most likely be stronger than if the course was an online courses or a traditional classroom course. In a classroom course, typically students interact during the course time, and not as much outside of the course. With an online course, the students are in constant online discussions with each other, but many people feel separated because they never get to put a face with those whom they are communicating with. The hybrid format enables the vast amount of online discussion while still keeping some of the personal face-to-face interaction.

One common occurrence within college courses, especially at the university courses, is students frequently becoming involved in deep discussions among themselves and with the instructor. This is beneficial because the students are engaged in more active learning through discussions which help students build knowledge (based on Constructivist Learning theory). The problem with these discussions is they frequently consume valuable classroom time that the professor needs for other activities. Many of the university teachers would cut these discussions short, but bring them forth in the online environment which enabled them to have the classroom time to accomplish what
they had planned. This has received positive feedback from both students and professors because they usually do not want the discussions to just die out. This works in the reverse method as well. The professors of Courses A and F would have the students start the discussions online and would frequently bring them into class time when they fit the topic at hand. Either way, the online portion of the course provides for additional opportunity for everyone to contribute input, develop what they say, do extra research, and provide sources.

Figure 8 is one posting from the list of threads in Figure 7 and Appendix A. If only a quarter of the threads from that week were of this length, attempting to have those discussions in a classroom would most likely take the entire 3-4 hours or more of class time than was scheduled for that week. This would mean that not everyone could say what they needed to, and the professor would be unable to do any other work necessary for that class that week. Hence, this is why the online section of the course creates additional time and opportunity.
Before I begin with my issue, let me first say that I’m actually feeling a little bit better after reading all of the comments that have been posted so far. I’ve had a difficult week in terms of this thesis, really questioning my ability to do this and wondering if I should have gone in a different direction with my topic, and most certainly wondering if I will be done with this by the end of the year, let alone b the end of the semester. As I sat with my nose in Creswell the other night, my husband jokingly asked me when I was planning to re-join our family. So, as the saying goes, misery loves company, and I’m feeling better that I’m not along with me of these issues!!! So, here it goes….

1. Another Bias…..

A part of my research involves haven’t prospective students critique the current SUNYIT website. I want to know what characteristics they think are successful and unsuccessful. I want their feedback on it’s visual appeal. I am also asking them to look at a compelling college’s website to tell me how that compares to ours. As a professional at the college, I have been involved to a certain extent in the development of the website over the years. I have been able to provide my feedback as a member of the college’s marketing committee and I have actually written certain sections of the website that pertain to transfer students. So, as Creswell discusses on page 76, I must approach my study with the “role of values,” or the axiological assumption clear in my mind. To overcome this, I must acknowledge that this bias exists and that because of my involvement in the website, I must set aside my personal feelings about the website and really listen to what my subjects have to say. In the end, if I can do this, it will ultimately lead to a more successful website, assuming that those above me will take this study seriously and apply my findings.

2. Problems with data collection…..

I have encountered a series of problems. The first was the interview protocol itself. My comments on this appear as a response to Jim’s concerns with questions. I am not following Creswell’s suggestion that less will lead to more and will focus on a smaller number of open ended questions.

However, at this point, my biggest problem is scheduling interviews!!! I had an appointment for today (Saturday) and my subject called and cancelled at the last minute. This is really stressing me out! However, I know that I will eventually get through them, as I have some “gatekeepers” working with me allowing me access to the appropriate subjects. My bigger concern right now is meeting the assignment deadlines. With working and juggling two children, the scheduling has really posed some major issues. So, as Creswell outlines on page 125, “observing in a setting is a special skill that requires management of issues…” Now that we’re into the data collection, these issues really mean more. The fact that spring break and the Easter holiday are now upon us is creating some issues that I should have anticipated right from the beginning. I’m just hoping that my “gatekeepers” will be able to get all this flowing soon and in enough time for me to meet the deadlines that are looking. I’m not sure what suggestions any of you might have on this, but certainly if any of you know of high school seniors or students attending a community college who are interested in participating in my study, please let me know!

Based on Figure 7 or Appendix A, if only 25% of those postings were this size, the time it would take to carry out all those discussions would likely be far more than the allocated classroom time for one week.

The vast amount of writing that occurred online during the hybrid courses at the university was seen as a chance to encourage students to learn effective communication skills through writing. The professor of Course A saw the online discussion in his courses lacked quality writing. He stated, “The finesse of writing is much more important online because you rely on it for communicating. So I think hybrid enhances that you have to write well in order to perform well in the class…” This provided opportunity for students to develop writing skills. The professor of Course A provided the students with an online section that included various aids and references they could use to help their writing.
These aids were focused around writing introductions, conclusions, organization of papers, citations, and general grammar tips. During the focus group, the professor of Course C supported this. He also felt communicating through writing is something all students should be able to do successfully, and online discussions are a good place to develop this skill.

Another action by the professor of Course A was to post all of the students tests online after they were due. All of these tests were essay form and typically ran from five to ten pages in length. The professor of this course received positive feedback from his students regarding the ability to review other students works and see where they rank with rest of their peers. One of the attendees of the focus group made a positive comment about this. She said “Once I read the other student’s tests, I knew I had to kick mine up a couple notches the next time around.” This gave her more incentive to improve their written work.
Figure 9 - Quality of Writing – Posting from Course C student

- “As a professional at the college, I have been involved to a certain extent in the development of the website over the years. I have been able to provide my feedback as a member of the college's marketing committee and I have actually written certain sections of the website that pertain to transfer students. So, as Creswell discusses on page 76, I must approach my study with the "role of values," or the axiological assumption clear in my mind. To overcome this, I must acknowledge that this bias exists and that because of my involvement in the website, I must set aside my personal feelings about the website and really listen to what my subjects have to say. In the end, if I can do this, it will ultimately lead to a more successful website, assuming that those above me with take this study seriously and will apply my findings.”

  • Student from Course C

This was a posting from a student in course C. Postings like this one were used for communications among students and teachers. Effective writing was important for the student to communicate her message.

Figure 9 was a posting from Course C which was posted online for the entire class to read and comment on. There were many of these postings which needed to be written clearly to communicate effectively so everyone who reads them can understands them. These are good writing skills that every student should be developing because they will be needed throughout their life. The online section of the hybrid courses was a good place for professors to enforce writing requirements.

Additional time and opportunity, and quality of writing are two benefits created solely because of the online section of the course. The benefit of community is also highly supported by the online section of the course. Keeping this in mind, it is important to combine them with the benefits of active learning. Active learning practices are those that show higher levels of retention and most of these practices are exercised in a classroom. All of these aspects combined make up the benefits of a hybrid course.


**Scheduling and Overhead**

This category focuses on the non-educational benefits of hybrid courses. The community college started using hybrid courses to solve scheduling issues. This school was having severe problems with conflicting courses preventing students from getting the courses they needed when they needed them. To eliminate these issues, administration offered incentives to teachers who moved their courses to an online format. This was successful for many of the courses but there were some courses that could not do this; for example sciences and electrical engineering courses. These courses had their regular three hours of classroom time each week, but also had a lab for the hands on activities. These labs could not be moved to an online format. Hybrid format was the solution for these courses. The classes were held entirely online and the lab portion of the course was still in a classroom. This meant there was no more than 40% of the classroom time that was present before and made scheduling easier. In Course E these benefits were seen on another level. Except for one of the students in this class, all of them had full time jobs. These students would take one hour out of their Friday work day for lab activities. If this course was not a hybrid format, these students may not have been excused from job time to attend all of the classes.

The reduced classroom time has one benefit that appeals to everyone; reduced overhead costs. Since some or all of the classroom sessions are not continually needed, there will be less physical overhead costs such as heating and lighting. These benefits appeal to many colleges. By having less time spent in classrooms, schools can utilize their existing structures to hold more courses than they would be able to if everything was traditional classroom courses.
\textit{Inconveniences}

The third category focuses on the negatives found in this research. These negatives are additional time, balancing the two sections, lack of experience and technology concerns.

\textbf{Extra work.} Extra time and work was required of both students and teachers. In Courses A, B, C, and F the students found they had to sign on SLN numerous times during the week in order to keep up with the work. For some of the informants who had full time jobs and families, this was difficult to integrate in their lives. In addition to this, they had to attend classes most of the weeks and this caused them to feel “cheated” as one respondent stated. “I feel like I am doing the work of a five or six credit course.” This caused frustration with the students. The teachers also found that hybrid courses required more time both to set up and facilitate. The professors of Courses A and C stated that there was a considerable amount of preparation time for these courses. The professor of Course C also stated the amount of time to go through the online discussions was extreme. Appendix A illustrates the quantity of possible postings.

\textbf{Balancing two sections.} Issues also arose regarding the balance of the online and classroom sections of the hybrid courses. There was a large amount of information in the two sections and some of it was duplicated on both sections. There were frequent cases where a teacher would announce a change, addition, or deletion of an assignment in class and not post it online. From this students would look to the online section of the course to verify what they are required to do and not receive the proper information. Since information for the class was shared in the classroom and online teachers found it difficult in keeping both sections up to date. Many of the students had a similar issue with
balancing the information from the two sections. In courses A, C, D, E, and F, assignments were submitted both in the classroom and online. With the exception of D and R, the community college courses, this also caused confusion. It was typical for the students to be unsure where they were to submit assignments when they were due. It is common practice for students to submit the assignments online and bring it into the classroom to cover all bases. Keep in mind this does not point fingers at either the students or the professors; everyone found that organization was vital to keep confusion to a minimum.

**Lack of experience.** The third inconvenience could be the reason for the other two; lack of experience with online learning. Of the courses observed at the university, the professors of course A and F were the only two who had enough experience with SLN that they felt comfortable integrating it into their courses. At the same time these teachers did not have extensive experience with hybrid courses. Dr. Welker’s findings support this. Her research states, “Slowed course development time due to the technology learning curve” as one of her findings. Also students felt burdened when starting these courses because they had to adapt to using SLN and to the hybrid course format. The author’s interviewed informants were not experienced with the online class format. A few of the informants took one or two online courses, but none of them were veterans at it. Students who have more extensive experience with online courses may have different opinions.

**Technology concerns.** The fourth inconvenience was centered on the SLN technology. Students in Course C complained of slow access speeds in SLN, especially during evening hours. Appendix A was a website that the author saved for this research
and it was over 100KB in size. Since this is the main page with the links to the threads, students would need to load this page, click a link, and then click back to it. Another problem with SLN was the occasional crashing of the site and servers, thus keeping students and teachers from accessing it. The professor of Course B reported an instance with one of her classes where a bunch of the postings were lost. These postings were previously online and had been seen by many of her students, but some of the postings were newer and had not been viewed by the class yet.
SECTION 6: Assertions

What is a hybrid course?

“What is a hybrid course” was the main question for this research and after all the interviews, observations, research and analysis a comprehensive definition is elusive. So many factors play a role that looking at courses just using online learning as the form of distance learning is not enough. Since the growth of the internet, online courses are the vast majority of distance learning formats. From the information gathered from the study the following definition can be drawn:

A hybrid course is one which utilizes both a classroom and an online environment for educational, learning experiences. (The literature sometimes refer to components using other forms of distance learning such as video.)

With this definition, a few points should be made clear about the range of courses. Courses such as Course G which only used online for submission of assignments would not fall under the classifications of a hybrid course. Other courses exist where the professors would teach in a classroom with lectures and post their notes and presentations from these lectures online for the students to use. Perhaps these all are not technically hybrid course. A hybrid course was well shown in Courses A – F where the students were engaged in learning activities in both sections.

Also it should be noted that the types of the courses were limited. The two community college courses were electrical engineering courses with just hands on lab in
a classroom. Of the remaining courses, only one of them was of an undergraduate level; the rest were graduate courses. Also Courses A, B, and F were business courses and Course C was the thesis course. This definition is skewed by these types of courses and since there are numerous other degrees to consider, the stated definition has limitations based on the study, as do all definitions.

**Hybrid as an educational format**

The hybrid courses studied had a great deal of active learning occurring in them such as hands-on engineering work, discussion groups, and students learning then teaching other students. According to the constructivist learning theory, teaching techniques where the students are more actively engage have higher retention rates. The benefits of community, quality of writing and additional time and opportunity also give hybrid courses a stronger educational value according to the constructivist learning theory. The negatives that were found from the research were mostly not educationally based, they were inconveniences. Schools which have hybrid courses in their curriculums may want to consider guidelines for labeling their courses. The research revealed that unlike the community college, the university’s administration did not have courses listed as hybrid. Some of their courses were listed as Web-Enhanced or as CourseSpace (division of SLN). These courses used online learning in any range from a hybrid course to a course such as Course G where just assignments were submitted online. Many of the informants did not know how integrated the hybrid courses were when they registered. There also exists an opportunity for professors to announce how
often their courses will meet before the course starts. This could be beneficial for those students who have very busy lives and want a schedule which involves minimal traveling back and forth from campus.

**Further developments**

**Limitations**

The first limitation was geographic. The schools that were studied were state colleges located in central New York. Colleges from other locations and private schools need to be studied for similarities and differences. Another limitation is the small sample size of informants and courses. Only five students and five teachers were interviewed for this study regarding seven courses. Four of the courses studied at the university were business courses, three which were graduate level. The fifth course at the university was a graduate thesis course. The two courses at the community college were engineering technology courses. These courses represent a very small sample of different curriculums. Seven courses is a small sample size, so the findings may be different when extended to other areas.

A fourth limitation was the way the informants were obtained. They were all found through recommendations of people the author knew. This did not lead to skewed results because the author tested quotes against literature, observations, interviews, focus groups, and findings from Dr. Welker’s study. The informants were not from a wide range of degrees. Four of the courses were business courses, one was a design thesis course, and the two community college courses were electrical engineering courses.
Further Research

All of the teachers and students who participated in this study were “classroom oriented.” Whether teaching or attending, these peoples’ experience was with classroom course. Some of them had experience with online courses, but it was not their primary course format. Another study focused on people whose primary experience was with online courses could prove very valuable. The courses observed in this study were business courses, electrical engineering, and one thesis course and were held at two state colleges in central New York. Further research could look at the other areas of education, other geographic locations, and private colleges to see if hybrid courses will have the same benefits as they do in this study. The assertions found in this study can be brought to the other locations to see if they still hold true in those settings.

This study turned up many complaints and negativities toward the SUNY Learning Network. Because of time constrains and the fact this study was not focused on searching for these issues and resolutions, the author could make no real assessments on improving SLN. Some of the suggestions he received were:

- Capability of synchronous communication in both one on one settings and of a chat room format where multiple people can communicate. These sessions also should be recorded on the SLN site for future reference
- Better maintenance and more reliability of SLN infrastructure.
- Set organization of the site. If teachers are limited to how they lay out the parts online, there will be less of a learning curve for faculty and students. This is seen on Blackboard.
- A “Virtual Library” containing writing aids and other reference material (Course A Professor)
- Online grading book that the teacher and students can access to through SLN (Dr. Welker).
These are just a few suggestions that were made and each one was made by more than one person. They majority of SLN users may not find these beneficial. This is why an additional study should be dedicated to the improvement of SLN. If SLN became more developed to resolve issues and incorporate some features that professors prefer in other environments, such as Blackboard, it will help make the hybrid and online experiences richer.
June 1st had arrived and Chris was excited to start his summer internship. His internship was with a corporate headquarters located close to his school. About thirty of Chris’s fellow students were also doing internships there and most of them were in the same curriculum as Chris. On Chris’s second day of work he was talking casually with one of the supervisors, Kathy, and she asked him if he was in the course with Mr. Smith. When Chris said, “Yes, why do you ask?” she responded saying how impressive the abilities of the interns from Mr. Smith’s class were. “It is like they already have some experience!”

Chris started telling Kathy about Mr. Smith’s course which was his first hybrid course. Although there was more work than other courses, Chris felt the hybrid course prepared him more so than the other courses. The role playing, mock interviews, debates, and other activities that replicated real business scenarios gave him and the other students a feel of what the real world was like. Also Chris told Kathy how everyone shared each other’s personal experiences online and they learned a lot from each other. “On top of everything,” Chris said, “We conversed and helped each other so much, the class was like a small family.” Kathy was very impressed and wanted Mr. Smith’s email address to praise his course because his students are doing very well in their internships.

For Chris’s third week of his internship, he was working with a regular employee doing interviews to fill some data entry positions. Chris has a stack of resumes for the people who will be talking to, and he prepared a thorough list of questions to ask the candidates. During the interviews Chris was very confident and asked excellent...
questions. When Chris was praised by the employee working with him, Chris realized how the role playing in his hybrid HRM class paid off.
APPENDIX A: Intense Online Discussion Board

1 - Module Menu

Click the blue triangle to expand/collapse section.

- Discussion Area
- Module At a Glance
- Assignment on the Long Interview Due 3/6
- Written Assignment Area
- Instructions for Assignment
- Written Assignment - Submit Online by March 7
- Empty
- Discussion Area
- Instructions for Discussion
- Discussion 1 Start: 2/28 End:3/2
  - not supposed to be here (Xxxx Xxxxx 02/27/2005)
  - Disregard this posting till next week! (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/01/2005)
  - it IS in the wrong spot (Xxxx Xxxxx 02/28/2005)
  - moved (Xxxx Xxxxx 02/28/2005)
  - Issue 4: Investigator as Instrument (The Long Interview - Chapter 2, Page 18) (Xxxx Xxxxx)
    - Researcher's experiences (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/01/2005)
      - Creswell, ch. 5 (p. 76) (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/01/2005)
      - Possibly impossible (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/01/2005)
      - Researcher's Experiences (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/02/2005)
      - keeping an open mind (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/03/2005)
    - issue 4 (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/02/2005)
  - Issue 4 (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/02/2005)
    - One more thought... (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/02/2005)
  - Response to Issue 4 (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/02/2005)
  - separation (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/03/2005)
  - issue 4 response (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/06/2005)
  - Issue 5 (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/01/2005)
    - "the key is not "reacting" to anything they say (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/01/2005)
      - Realistically, how can we not? (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/02/2005)
  - issue 5 (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/02/2005)
Issue 5 (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/02/2005)
Response to Issue 5 (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/02/2005)
reply to 5 (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/02/2005)
You can edit after you submit (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/03/2005)
  that's why I'd rather use Word and cut/paste into here (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/03/2005)
LH - Active Listening (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/03/2005)
  I agree! Xxxx Xxxxx 03/03/2005)
response (Xxxx XxxxxXxxx Xxxxx 3/03/2005)
Interviewing Exp. (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/03/2005)
  I agree with E (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/06/2005)
key to interviewing (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/06/2005)
Issue 3 - Qualitative and Quantitative Differences (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/01/2005)
Good overview of Qual. vs Quant. (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/01/2005)
  I think that's OK (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/01/2005)
Select a sample? (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/01/2005)
  response (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/02/2005)
  That's my point (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/05/2005)
  select (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/03/2005)
  Some thoughts on Issue 3 (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/04/2005)
I took a quantitative methods course so I understand this (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/01/2005)
issue 3 (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/02/2005)
Quality versus Quantity (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/02/2005)
Issue 3 Response (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/02/2005)
qualitative vs. quantitative (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/03/2005)
issue 3 response (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/06/2005)
Issue 2 (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/01/2005)
HOW? (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/02/2005)
  That's the challenge! (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/02/2005)
  Quality & Quantity (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/02/2005)
issue 2 (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/02/2005)
Issue 2 response (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/02/2005)
Issue 2 Response (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/02/2005)
Focus of study (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/02/2005)
  triangulate (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/03/2005)
  response (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/03/2005)
  Use Both (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/06/2005)
Qualitative Research fairly new (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/06/2005)
response (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/06/2005)
Issue 1 (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/03/2005)
  issue one (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/03/2005)
  response to Issue #1 (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/03/2005)
  Response to Issue 1 (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/04/2005)
  Issue #1 Reply (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/05/2005)
  Response to Issue #1 (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/05/2005)
  Injury prevention experts and qualitative methods (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/06/2005)
    Qualitative Newness (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/06/2005)
  response (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/06/2005)
    Not just you (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/06/2005)
  Issue 1 (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/07/2005)

  Discussion 2 Start: March 3 End:March 3-6
  Issue #9 Multimethod Approaches (Xxxx Xxxxx 02/28/2005)
    Multimethod (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/03/2005)
      Response for Regina/ Observation Question (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/03/2005)
    Issue 9 (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/03/2005)
    Creswell's other book re: Multimethod (#9) (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/03/2005)
    Both types (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/05/2005)
      That fits my point of Ch. 4 #7 (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/05/2005)
        Any pointers? (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/05/2005)
    response 9 (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/03/2005)
  Response to Issue 9 (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/03/2005)
    2 edged sword (Xxxx Xxxxxi 03/05/2005)
    issue 9 (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/04/2005)
  Good point Gail (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/05/2005)
    Regina (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/05/2005)
  Multi methods response (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/05/2005)
  participant observations (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/06/2005)
  disregard again...wrong issues (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/01/2005)
  Issue 7 The Questionnaire (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/02/2005)
  You are not alone (questionnaire) (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/03/2005)
    exploratory questions (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/03/2005)
  Issue 7 (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/03/2005)
  No, you're not alone! (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/03/2005)
  road map response (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/03/2005)
  issue 7 (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/04/2005)
  Questionnaire as Roadmap (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/05/2005)
  Questionnaire (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/05/2005)
issue 7 (Xxxx Xxxxxi 03/06/2005)

Ch. 4 Items #6 & 7 (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/03/2005)

Response to Delia:chapter 4 (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/05/2005)

to Gail (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/05/2005)

delia (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/05/2005)

Response to Chapter 4 Issues 6 & 7 (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/05/2005)

6 & 7 (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/05/2005)

good article on "thin" vs. "thick" (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/05/2005)

I agree (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/05/2005)

to Maryrose (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/05/2005)

more comprehensive but not more complicated (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/05/2005)
symptoms of truth (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/06/2005)
Less is always more (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/06/2005)
more with less (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/07/2005)

A few general comments (Xxxx Xxxxx/SUNY 03/03/2005)

Issue 8: The Investigator/Respondent Relationship (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/04/2005)

issue 8 (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/04/2005)

Respondant and Interviewer (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/05/2005)

Response for Regina and process questions (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/06/2005)

Starting by email is a great idea for lots of us (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/06/2005)

Respondant/Interviewer (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/07/2005)

Response to Issue 8 (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/05/2005)

Tough one (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/05/2005)

Responder/Respondent--Formal/Informal etc. (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/05/2005)

My interviewing / questioning experience. (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/06/2005)

how much is too much? (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/06/2005)

Issue 8 (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/06/2005)

Issue 8 (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/07/2005)

Chapter 4: Items 4 & 5 (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/05/2005)

Response to Chapter 4 Items 4 & 5 (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/05/2005)

consistent with most principles (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/06/2005)

assertions Xxxx Xxxxx 03/06/2005)

4 & 5 response (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/05/2005)

chapter 4 (4-5) (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/06/2005)

little research on simultaneous research has been conducted (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/06/2005)

4-5 (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/07/2005)

response items 4&5 (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/07/2005)

Chapter 4 issues 1-3 pg 50 (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/06/2005)
Items 1 - 3 (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/06/2005)
This is where I'm having concerns (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/06/2005)

redundancy vs. elegance (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/06/2005)
the reader (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/06/2005)
response to issue #1 (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/07/2005)
1-3 (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/07/2005)
Response to Chapter 4 Issues 1-3 (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/07/2005)

Issue #6 (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/06/2005)
issue 6 (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/06/2005)
Seems very difficult (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/06/2005)
Distance (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/06/2005)

Distance through stimuli pg 24 (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/06/2005)
videotape meeting (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/06/2005)
slippery slope (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/06/2005)

Wouldn't that be covered by the Ethics Protocol? (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/07/2005)
If they refuse (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/07/2005)

Issue 6 (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/07/2005)
Response to Issue 6 (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/07/2005)
distance (Xxxx Xxxxx 03/07/2005)

Question Area (bottom of Module Menu)
Questions for this module (Xxxx Xxxxx 02/10/2005)
APPENDIX B: Glossary

**Assertions**  What was learned from the study.

**Blended course**  a course that blends classroom meetings with online learning. Another term used by some instead of hybrid.

**Class**  a single meeting of a group of students led by an instructor or instructors to achieve an educational goal. For this study a class could be one classroom meeting or the equivalent online interaction. Also see “Course”

**Classroom course**  a course that meets in a classroom to achieve its educational intentions. Sometimes referred to as the traditional format for education.

**Course**  an organized set of meetings for a period of time between student(s) and instructor(s) to achieve an educational goal. For this study a course is made of the 15 classes and / or online interactions that are held during one semester. Also see “Class”

**CourseSpace**  A section of SLN that is designated for hybrid or “Web-Enhanced” courses. During this study, some of the university courses used SLN and some of them used CourseSpace. Also see “SLN (SUNY Learning Network)”

**Hybrid course**  the basis of this study is to determine what is a hybrid course. Since there is no clear definition of a hybrid course, the term is used for many different course layouts. Also see “Preliminary definition of a hybrid course”

**Online course**  a course that is held entirely through meetings online to achieve its educational intentions. The schools included in this study use online as their only format of distance learning.

**Phenomenological study**  this type of study describes the meaning of experience of a phenomenon (hybrid courses) for several individuals. In this type of study, the researcher reduces the experiences to a central meaning (Creswell, 236).

**Preliminary definition of a hybrid course**  A course that meets in a classroom and uses distance learning in any possible combination; It may range from deep integration of the two formats to a very minute integration. The sole purpose of this term was to create a criterion for courses that would be included in the study. Also see “Hybrid course”

**Structural Description**  a description of how hybrid courses were experienced by individuals in the study (Creswell, 236).
**SLN (SUNY Learning Network)**  The structured online educational package that was created by SUNY for usage by the SUNY schools. The idea was to have one online package for all of the schools to use to keep consistency among the SUNY system. Also see “CourseSpace”

**SUNY (State University of New York)**  The name of the collection of state colleges in New York State

**Textual Description**  what was experienced by individuals in hybrid classes; a description of the meanings they experienced (Creswell, 236).
Ethics Protocol for Phenomenological Research

[Jonathan M. Thompson]

This authorization is being requested in part to fulfill requirements of the State University of NY Institute of Technology's Human Subjects Research Review Board as well as state and federal regulations regarding the use of human subjects in research. The project involves a phenomenology that may be used in my master's research at the SUNYIT Information Design and Technology Master's program. Excerpts or rewritten versions may also be submitted to professional journals for publication. The phenomenology involves studying hybrid courses with the intentions of determining what makes up a hybrid course. The work involves participant and non-participant observations, one-on-one and group interviews, and scheduled visits.

I can be reached 518.461.9063 which is my personal cell phone. I would be happy to answer any questions about the project.

I would like to reassure you that as a participant in this project you have several, rights.

• Your participation in these studies is entirely voluntary and confidential.
• You are free to decline to answer any question at any time,
• You are free to withdraw from the study at any time.

My notes from meetings, interviews, and observations will be kept strictly confidential. Excerpts from these notes may be made part of the final thesis. Copies of the final publications will be supplied whenever possible and as requested.

I would be grateful if you would sign this form to show that you have read its contents.

________________________________________ signed
________________________________________ printed
________________________________________ dated
APPENDIX D: Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol
Project: What is a hybrid Class?

Time of interview:
Date:
Place:
Interviewer: Jonathan Thompson
Interviewee:
Position of Interviewee:
   Schooling status:
   Major:
Number of hybrid courses:
Age:

(Briefly describe the project)
*This project is to determine what a hybrid course is, and how are they structured.*

Questions

For what reasons did you decide to attend college and what do you hope to gain from its experience?
(How does administration view hybrid courses?)

Describe your experience with hybrid courses.

Describe your experience with computers/technology throughout your life.

Is there anything else you would like to say about hybrid courses or anything at all?

Is there anyone else that you feel would have a lot to contribute to this project?
Resume

School

Fulton Montgomery Community College
Associate of Science in Computer Science (9/99 – 5/01)

State University of New York Institute of Technology in Utica/Rome
Bachelor of Science in Computer Information Systems (9/01 – 5/03) – GPA 3.2
Master of Science in Information Design and Technology (9/03 - ) Expected graduation (5/05)
Current GPA 3.5

Technical Skills

Microsoft: Windows 95, 98, NT, 2000, XP, Word, Excel, Access, PowerPoint
Database Management with Oracle 9i / SQL and MS Access / Visual Basic
Web Page Design: MS FrontPage, Flash MX, Dreamweaver
Hardware and Software maintenance
Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign
C++, Visual Basic, SQL programming
Software Documentation / User Directions
Macromedia Flash MX, Dreamweaver
Ghost / GhostCast Server

Additional Skills / Classes

Typography: Text organization and readability.
Spread layouts with text and images
Visual Communications
Basic Management
Human Resource Management

Minor Skills

Unix, MAC OS X, DOS, APL & Perl programming, HTML

Experience

New York State Department of Motor Vehicles (12/02 - present)
IT Support Services / Helpdesk Technician
Build, Rebuild PCs, Hardware & software maintenance, simple networking, Image machines, Ghost / GhostCast Server, Inventory management, User directions, printer maintenance, work tracking software, fixed computers at remote sites, Troubleshoot over the phone and using remote connection, managed multiple time sensitive projects simultaneously

Fulton Montgomery Community College (Summer 2002)
Summer IT Internship:
Rebuild Lab PCs, Software testing, Prepping rooms for online placement exams, inventory management, Simple networking
FMCC Learning Center - Tutoring Visual Basic (Summer 2002)
References


Willett, Holly G. (2002) Not one or the other but both: Hybrid course delivery using WebCT. *The Electronic Library*. 413(7). Retrieved March 9, 2005 from ProQuest database
Title: The Hybrid Course Experience
Keywords: hybrid, blended, courses, distance, education, learning, constructivist learning,