10-17-2014

How Much is Too Much? Avoiding the Course and Half Syndrome

Katie Sabourin
St. John Fisher College, ksabourin@sjfc.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/edtech_pub

Part of the Educational Methods Commons, and the Online and Distance Education Commons

How has open access to Fisher Digital Publications benefited you?

Publication Information
https://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/edtech_pub/1

Please note that the Publication Information provides general citation information and may not be appropriate for your discipline. To receive help in creating a citation based on your discipline, please visit http://libguides.sjfc.edu/citations.

This document is posted at https://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/edtech_pub/1 and is brought to you for free and open access by Fisher Digital Publications at St. John Fisher College. For more information, please contact fisherpub@sjfc.edu.
How Much is Too Much? Avoiding the Course and Half Syndrome

Abstract
Understanding how much content and how many activities to put into the design of an online or hybrid course can be difficult. How do faculty know if there is too much or too little and how it compares to what is going on in other courses in their department? At St. John Fisher College, we use a time on task analysis to lay out the overall design of the course from the perspective of how much time students will need to spend to complete all course activities. This presentation will provide the justification for this model of training, examples of how it is used and how it has been received by faculty.

Keywords
fsc2015

Disciplines
Educational Methods | Online and Distance Education

Comments
How Much is Too Much?
Avoiding the Course and Half Syndrome

Katie Sabourin, MS
Educational Technologist
St. John Fisher College
St. John Fisher College

• Located in Pittsford, NY
• ~4,000 total students

Our Online Presence

• Began our first fully online program in the Fall of 2012
  • RN/BS – Wegmans School of Nursing
• Summer Online at Fisher
  • Summer 2013 & Summer 2014
## Definition of Online Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Portion of Course Online</th>
<th>Type of Course</th>
<th>Typical Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td>Traditional Face-to-Face</td>
<td>Course with no online technologies used, including CMS (Blackboard)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 30%</td>
<td>Web-enhanced</td>
<td>Course that uses CMS or other online technologies to facilitate communication and post resources for students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 – 80%</td>
<td>Hybrid/Blended</td>
<td>Course that reduces some portion of the normal seat time and replace that time with online activities, including asynchronous discussions and other CMS features</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 80%</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>Course that is offered with most or all course objectives being completed in an online environment. The CMS is the fundamental tool used in the class, but a variety of other technologies may be incorporated.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Clinical experiences, fieldwork, etc.
MOOCs (Massive Open Online Course)

Correspondence, self-paced course

Instructor moderated discussion based course

Intermittent use of live scheduled events for full class discussion or presentations

Fully scheduled online class sessions on a weekly basis to replace face-to-face lectures

Asynchronous

Synchronous
Online Course Technologies

- Collaborate
- Voice
- Discussions
- Journal
- Wiki
- Blog
- Echo360
- Personal Capture
- ePortfolio
# Required Faculty Training Experience

**Example Schedule from Fall 2014**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Online Education Workshop</strong></th>
<th>October 2, 2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 hr face-to-face session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Fundamentals of Online Teaching</strong></th>
<th>October 6 – November 2, 2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 week online course experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Technology Training Sessions</strong></th>
<th>As needed, based on Educational Technology &amp; OIT training schedule</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Online Course Readiness Review</strong></th>
<th>Prior to online course offering</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-1 sessions with Katie</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome: course design and technology review and feedback based on Online Course Readiness Checklist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Department/School Specific Course Review and Sign-off</strong></th>
<th>Prior to online course offering</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Review of curriculum design within program</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Ideally completed the semester prior to first online course offering.*
Common Online Faculty Questions?

• “There is no class time anymore, so how do I know if my course has enough content? I have more links I can add?”

• “Students say my course takes a lot more time that other courses in the program. Should I take content out?”

• If I take all the materials for my campus course, put it online and add discussion questions, is that enough?”
“Course and a Half Syndrome”

- “When developing their first hybrid course, instructors tend to “add-on” to their traditional course instead of rethinking their course objectives with the hybrid model in mind. It is important to encourage instructors not to overload their first hybrid course. Instead they must rethink their course goals and learn to achieve those goals in new ways. Simply inserting all the work they have always wanted to accomplish in the traditional course as an additional online component in the hybrid course will not work!”

Determining Time on Task in Online Education

Time on task is the total learning time spent by a student in a college course, including instructional time as well as time spent studying and completing course assignments (e.g., reading, research, writing, individual and group projects.) Regardless of the delivery method or the particular learning activities employed, the amount of learning time in any college course should meet the requirements of Commissioner's Regulation Section 50.1 (o), a total of 45 hours for one semester credit (in conventional classroom education this breaks down into 15 hours of instruction plus 30 hours of student work/study out of class.)

"Instruction" is provided differently in online courses than in classroom-based courses. Despite the difference in methodology and activities, however, the total "learning time" online can usually be counted. Rather than try to distinguish between "in-class" and "outside-class" time for students, the faculty member developing and/or teaching the online course should calculate how much time a student doing satisfactory work would take to complete the work of the course, including:

- reading course presentations/ "lectures"
- reading other materials
- participation in online discussions
- doing research
- writing papers or other assignments
- completing all other assignments (e.g. projects)

The total time spent on these tasks should be roughly equal to that spent on comparable tasks in a classroom-based course. Time spent downloading or uploading documents, troubleshooting technical problems, or in chat rooms (unless on course assignments such as group projects) should not be counted.
Determining Time on Task in Online Education Continued

In determining the time on task for an online course, useful information include:

• the course objectives and expected learning outcomes
• the list of topics in the course outline or syllabus; the textbooks, additional readings, and related education materials (such as software) required
• statements in course materials informing students of the time and/or effort they are expected to devote to the course or individual parts of it
• a listing of the pedagogical tools to be used in the online course, how each will be used, and the expectations for participation (e.g., in an online discussion, how many substantive postings will be required of a student for each week or unit?)

Theoretically, one should be able to measure any course, regardless of delivery method, by the description of content covered. However, this is difficult for anyone other than the course developer or instructor to determine accurately, since the same statement of content (in a course outline or syllabus) can represent many different levels of breadth and depth in the treatment of that content, and require widely varying amounts of time.

http://www.highered.nysed.gov/ocue/ded/policies.html
Course Design Using Time on Task

✓ **Time on Task = total learning time spent by student**
  ✧ Includes instructional time and study/completing assignments

✓ **45 hours/credit**
  ✧ Face-to-face: 15 hrs. of instruction time + 30 hrs. of student work

✓ Online courses should focus on the total learning time instead of instruction time alone

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7 Week Term</th>
<th>14 Week Term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>45 hours * 3 credits = 135 / 7 weeks = 19.3 hours/week</td>
<td>45 hours * 3 credits = 135 / 14 weeks = 9.6 hours/week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>~20 hours of total learning time per week per course</td>
<td>~10 hours of total learning time per week per course</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

http://www.highered.nysed.gov/ocue/ded/policies.html
### Calculating Time on Task

**Example**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Component</th>
<th>Types of Activities</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instructional Time</strong></td>
<td>14 online modules – 3 hr each&lt;br&gt; 8 hr Echo Recording&lt;br&gt; 7 hr Videos and text content</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading/Media Review</strong></td>
<td>Textbook (18 chapters) – 18 hr&lt;br&gt; Articles – 14 hr&lt;br&gt; Websites – 7 hr</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Online Discussion</strong></td>
<td>1 question/week * 6 weeks includes:&lt;br&gt; 1 hr to research response&lt;br&gt; 1 hr to write response&lt;br&gt; 2 hr to read and reply to others</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Papers/Projects/Presentations</strong></td>
<td>10 pg Final paper – 15 hr&lt;br&gt; Student presentation – 10 hr&lt;br&gt; 6 hr each Mini-Papers&lt;br&gt; 6 hr E-Porfolio</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
<td>Online quiz – 1 hr&lt;br&gt; APA podcast &amp; assignment – 2 hr&lt;br&gt; 2 hr NLMN patient ed. &amp; eval&lt;br&gt; Self &amp; peer eval of presentation – 1.5 hr</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Learning Hours: 181.5
## Calculating Time on Task

### Example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Component</th>
<th>Types of Activities</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Time</td>
<td>Echo Recording – 7 hr</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Text content – 7 hr</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading/Media Review</td>
<td>Textbook &amp; Articles – 14 hr</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Videos – 3.5 hr</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Discussion</td>
<td>4 hr per week * 7 weeks</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papers/Projects/Presentations</td>
<td>7 Mini-Papers – 6 hr each</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7 peer review assignments – 3 hr each</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10 pg Final paper – 25 hr</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student presentation – 10 hr</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**157.5 Total Learning Hours**
Benefits of Time on Task Analysis

• Faculty must evaluate course from learner-centered point of view.
• Results in a skeleton outline of the whole course at a high level – great for planning course design next steps.
• Gets all the ideas on the table and shows faculty they must remove something before adding more.
• Allows faculty to have a conversation within a program on consistent amount of work across courses.
• Perfect for online courses, but also works well for hybrid or flipped where class time is used for non-traditional lecture delivery.
Downsides

• All of the hours are estimates. This is not scientific research, instead a tool for course design only.

• All of the hours are estimates from faculty (experts in the field)
  ➢ Try to estimate from a novice perspective based on your experience with past students and how long it takes them, not you to complete.
Faculty Perceptions of Training Experience

“I like learning all the different aspects of teaching an online course. The development of an online course is much more than taking a traditional course and putting it online and this gave me strong guidelines to follow.”

“I also found being a student again a great way to learn how to put together an online course. By being a student I was able to see the amount of work needed from the other side - rather than being an instructor.”
Questions?

Please feel free to reach out to me to discuss the topic further. I would love to hear from you!

Katie Sabourin
ksabourin@sjfc.edu