Teaching Online
Versus Teaching hybrid and in-class

Khamis M Bilbeisi, Ph.D.
Accounting Department
School of Business
Clayton State University
Morrow, Georgia 30260
khamisbilbeisi@clayton.edu

Barbara Minsky, Ph.D.
Management Department
Sorrell College of Business
Troy University
Dothan, Alabama 36304
bminsky@troy.edu

ABSTRACT

This paper deals with the question: How is hybrid teaching different from online and conventional teaching? In this paper we compare hybrid, face-to-face class-room and online teaching. We found that the numbers of students enrolled in online courses are significantly higher than the number of students enrolled in face-to-face courses. Furthermore, online degrees now offer the same exact course work as hybrid and traditional classroom courses. So the choice of mode of learning comes down to students' personal preferences. Some students often try out an online course only to find that they like hybrid or traditional classroom instruction better. We believe hybrid courses better meet the needs of most students: they provide a learning style that requires students participate in classroom instruction where they can visually and verbally interact with the instructor and their peers, but yet has the convenience of reducing the need for driving, which saves gas, and also serve to develop students' Internet, technology and virtual team skills by participating in online discussions, tests and other virtual learning activities.

Keywords: Distance Education, Hybrid course, Online Course Design, Distance Learning, Blackboard, Virtual learning, blended course

INTRODUCTION

In the current high tech world, online education is becoming a more prominent method of learning. Online degrees now offer the same exact course work as traditional classroom courses. The choice of mode of learning comes down to student's personal preference. Some students often try out an online course only to find that they like classroom instruction better. Some students realize that they don't have the discipline for online courses so they return to the classroom. Hybrid courses mix traditional classroom instructions with online learning. Students and faculty are increasingly turning to online education and the Internet to supplement, or even replace, some or all traditional approaches to classroom teaching (Alavi and Leidner, 2001; Altbach, Gumport, and Johnstone, 2001; Hanna, Glowacki-Dudka, and Conceicao-Runlee, 2000;
Palloff and Pratt, 2001). The evolution of online teaching in business education is due to the innovations and advancements in information technology, and it is set to become the new paradigm of future education. The Chronicle of Higher Education came up with a special issue on Digital and Online Learning in November of 2011. There are many revealing online learning trends based on the survey of college presidents across US. Almost 75% of universities in the US offer online courses or use the internet to support their traditional courses. The share of students who learn online have tripled in the last decade. There is huge growth expected in the next decade where 50% of students are expected to take hybrid and online courses as compared to the current

ratio of 22% of students who take hybrid and online courses. With the exponential growth in online and hybrid education and ever increasing demand, more and more educators are adapting to this new mode of education and more and more courses are offered hybrid and online.

This is not always viewed as a positive trend. Eric Kelderman (2011) stated that " the US Education Department has issued new regulations to keep distance education in check, and has pressured the groups that accredit colleges and universities to keep a tighter rein on those that offer hybrid and online courses". Members of Congress blame accreditors for lax oversight of online programs that have engaged in alleged fraud and deception. Accreditors counter that they are adapting to the fast-growing world of online and hybrid education by requiring colleges to prove that students learn outcome is the same whatever mode of delivery.

TRADITIONAL EDUCATION MODEL

Historically, the classroom environment in higher education has utilized the traditional style of learning whereby lecture is the primary educational technique. This classroom model provides an opportunity for the professor to ascertain the effectiveness of the lecture by interpreting the visual feedback from the student and their body language. It provides a forum for faculty to deliver lectures and facilitates vital and spontaneous interaction between faculty and students. As a result, the faculty has an opportunity to focus students' attention and elevate interest in the subject matter.

HYBRID EDUCATION MODEL

"Hybrid course" or Blended course" refer to courses where there is a carefully planned blend of both traditional classroom instruction and online learning activities. In other words, hybrid classes combine the best of both styles of instruction. Students are able to make a meaningful connection with their instructors, as well as other students, and yet they are no longer required to travel to campus on a regular basis in order to attend courses because the majority of the coursework can be completed on the Internet. The instructor of a hybrid course typically determines what instructional activities should be online or face-to-face depending on the learning goals, course objectives, content, and available resources. Similarly, the timetable for face-to-face versus online work can be organized in quite different ways that may reflect not only pedagogical criteria but also the particular circumstances of the instructor and students.
The purpose of a hybrid course is to take advantage of both worlds, face to face and online learning. A well designed hybrid course is one that integrates face-to-face and online activities so that they reinforce, complement, and elaborate one another.

ONLINE EDUCATIONAL MODEL

Despite the effectiveness, efficacy, and popularity of the traditional model, the demand for online courses is growing much faster than traditional face-to-face courses. A major reason students turn to online classes is because of the convenience factor. One can sit at home or go to a library to do coursework. This eliminates the need for driving, which saves gas, and in some cases, allows one to take classes from distant, more reputable schools. Online learners also get to develop their Internet, technology and virtual team skills by participating in online discussions, tests and other virtual learning activities.

Non-traditional students are not always able to make the traditional course commitments due to work

obligations, family involvement, or other scheduling conflicts. The ability to do coursework on your own schedule and to manage the pace of your learning experience is also a benefit to online students.
Traditional face-to-face technique utilizes lectures as the predominant tool for instruction. Though this delivery method has a long history, there are challenges and limitations. Faculties possess varying degrees of skill, creativity, and enthusiasm for preparing and delivering current, engaging and relevant lectures. Another limitation of the traditional method includes facility resources on campus, such as sufficient classroom space and parking. The recognition of these shortcomings, coupled with major advances in technology, prompted academic institutions to reexamine the traditional learning paradigm and search for new pedagogical techniques that would expand instructional opportunities and possibilities in higher education. The result was an innovative pedagogical structure, which utilizes internet capabilities to produce a virtual or semi-virtual classroom.

Literature Review

Researchers have compared online, face-to-face, and hybrid teaching methods to investigate the performance of students in these three teaching mediums. Moore (1993) suggests that there are three types of interaction necessary for successful distance education: 1) learner-content interaction, 2) learner-instructor interaction, and 3) learner-learner interaction. Distance learning instructors need to ensure that all three forms of interaction are maximized in their course structure. Peters (1993) criticizes distance education, saying that it reduces education to a kind of industrial production process, lacking the human dimension of group interaction, and even alienating learners from teachers. He compares distance education to a mass-production assembly line process where a division of labor (educators and communications specialists) replaces the more craft-oriented approach of traditional face-to-face education. However, Peters' article predates the current Web-based boom in distance education. His notions sound slightly like industrial age paranoia toward computers. The personal computer and the Internet have probably been a greater force towards individualization than mass production.
Coates, Humphreys, Kane and Vachris (2004) found that students in face-to-face classes perform better in terms of their test scores than students in online classes. Farinella (2007) found that students enrolled in an online introductory finance course earn on average 21 points less in the final exam relative to students in a traditional course. Gratton-Lavoie and Stanley (2009) found that students in face-to-face courses perform better than online classes. Trawick, Lile and Howsen (2010) found that students in online course perform worse than students in the face-to-face class after controlling for self-selection bias. All these studies have compared student performance in the online vs. face-to-face teaching platforms by using student surveys and/or the grades students receive in their courses.

Online education is increasingly being acknowledged by educators as encouraging students to take greater responsibility for their own learning and as "…offering more self-paced learning alternatives and providing a richer interactive learning environment than learning from the
Text" (Newton, Hase, & Ellis, 2002, p. 162). Wang and Reeves (2007) noted "College and university students in the USA increasingly view online components of their courses as commonplace as textbooks and other traditional resources" (p. 2).According to Sun, Tsai, Finger, Chen and Yeh (2008) there is 36.5% growth rate of e-learning, worldwide. The evolution of the online teaching in business education is due to the innovations and advancements in information technology and it is set to become the new paradigm of future education. Wu, Tsai, Chen and Wu (2006) assert that MIT's attempt of offering most of its courses online stresses the strategic importance of e-learning. With the exponential growth in online education and ever increasing demand, more and more educators are adapting to this new platform of education. Sun et al. (2008) pointed out that in e-learning there are several factors that account for user's satisfaction. They summarized the work of Aronen and

Dieressen (2001), Ahmed and Ives (2001), Stokes (2001) and Thurmond, Wambach and Connors (2002) Arbaugh (2002), Arbaugh and Duray (2002), Hong (2002), Lewis (2002), Piccoli, Chen and Bagakas (2003) and categorized the success factors into six dimensions: students, teacher, course, technology, system design and environment.

Sun et al. (2008) point out that the above studies are mostly descriptive or analytic with certain dimensions. They conducted a survey and included all probable factors to investigate the critical factors affecting learner's satisfaction in online courses. In this paper we extended previous research in investigating the factors for effective online, hybrid and face-to-face courses; however, our approach is different from the studies done thus far. Instead of perceived students' satisfaction with online verses traditional learning, we examined this comparison with a hybrid, or blended, model.

Methodology

The primary method of gathering data for this study was a survey. There were 14 survey questions and 350 copies were mailed to students and instructors who are involved with online, hybrid, and traditional face-to-face classes. Participants were reminded 3 times of the survey, and 251 responses were received and analyzed.

Participants

These students attended the Colleges of Business Administration in the South. The majority of the students in this study were exposed to online, hybrid, and traditional courses.
Online students were required to access the course material online, to engage in online discussion board with classmates and professors in the discussion forum, to upload their assignments, to obtain their grades and professors' feedback online, to take their tests and exams online, with a required one proctored exam, and to communicate their feedback regarding every aspect of the course. Hybrid students were required to meet at least 51% of the term time in class, with the rest handled online. Blackboard was used for both hybrid and online courses.

Research Results and Interpretations

Of the three hundred fifty students, 251 responded for a response rate of 70%. The responses were very positive for hybrid and online course elements and experiences.

We asked how their institutions defined hybrid classes. Thirty-eight percent of the respondents reported that a hybrid course is a traditional classroom based classes with internet enhancements, 25% of respondents indicated a specific hourly mix of traditional classroom based and internet classes

How does your institution define Hybrid classes:	
Traditional classroom based classes with internet enhancement	95 (37.85%)
Specific hourly mix of traditional classroom based classes and internet classes	63 (25.10%)
Specific hourly mix of traditional classroom based classes and asynchronous internet classes	43 (17.13%)
Specific hourly mix of traditional classroom based classes and synchronous internet classes	16 (6.37%)
Other: please explain	34 (13.55%)

The next series of questions revolved around perceptions of quality: 36% of respondents considered Internet classes to be as good as traditional classroom classes, and 64% of respondents did not consider Internet classes to be as good as traditional classroom classes. On the other hands, 57% of respondents believe that hybrid courses incorporate the best of internet and traditional classroom.

Do you personally consider Internet based courses, in general, to be as good as the traditional classroom based courses	
Yes	93 (36.33%)
No	163 (63.67%)
Do you consider hybrid courses, in general, to be as good as the traditional classroom based courses	
Yes	169 (66.27%)
No	86 (33.73%)
Do you consider hybrid courses, in general, to be as good as internet based courses	
Yes	217 (85.43%)
No	37 (14.57%)

I believe hybrid courses, in general, incorporate the best of all delivery modalities	
Yes	143 (57.20%)
No	107 (42.80%)
I believe hybrid courses, in general, incorporate the worst of all delivery modalities	
Yes	21 (8.33%)
No	231 (91.67%)

Do you teach any hybrid courses?	
Yes	114 (45.06%)
No	139 (54.94%)

Then we turned our questions to instructors, and found that 48% of instructors considered traditional classroom based courses to be the best for their students, 43% of respondents considered hybrid courses the best, with only 9% who considered online courses to be the best for their students. This goes in-line with their results for students learning outcomes, with 49% consider traditional courses achieves student learning objectives, 41% consider hybrid courses achieves student learning outcome and only 9% of online courses achieve their student learning objectives.

Which delivery modality to you consider to be the best for your students	
Traditional classroom based courses	121 (47.64%)
Internet based courses	24 (9.45%)
Hybrid courses	109 (42.91%)
Which format achieves student learning objectives better?	
Traditional classroom based	125 (49.41%)
Internet based	24 (9.49%)
Hybrid	104 (41.11%)

In addition, 52% of respondents indicated that traditional classroom provide quicker and/or more effective student/instructor and instructor/student feedback compared with 32% for hybrid and 15% for online courses. 43% of students prefer traditional classroom compared with 34% for hybrid and 23% for online, compared with 60% of instructors prefer traditional courses and 26% of instructors prefer hybrid and only 14% of instructors like the on-line courses.

Which format provides quicker and/or more effective student/instructor and instructor/student feedback?	
Traditional classroom based	132 (52.17%)
Internet based	39 (15.42%)
Hybrid	82 (32.41%)
Considering what you have heard from students, in general, which do they prefer?	
Traditional classroom based	103 (42.92%)
Internet based	56 (23.33%)
Hybrid	81 (33.75%)
Considering what you have heard from other faculty, in general, which do they prefer?	
Traditional classroom based	142 (59.66%)
Internet based	33 (13.87%)
Hybrid	63 (26.47%)

Over 94% of the online respondents were most satisfied with convenience (94%) and least satisfied with the amount and quality of interaction with students (69%). On the other hand, 93% of the hybrid respondents were satisfied with convenience and 85% with the amount and quality of interaction.

Other results indicated that students in hybrid classes seemed more satisfied than those in on-line classes in terms of learning (9% more); interaction with faculty (15% more); and interaction with other students (16% more). Overall student satisfaction was equivalent to traditional classes. Student retention was better than on-line classes and equivalent to traditional classes. Students in hybrid classes had higher course satisfaction, course grades, and learning gains than in traditional classes. It is important to note that there were no differences in student background or learning styles.

CONCLUSIONS

Ultimately, the quality of the instruction and the program itself, no matter what the means of delivery, will have the greatest effect on a student's performance and overall retention, according to Jay Caulfield, associate dean of Marquette University's College of Professional Studies. Other educators agree: "A well-designed online course offers opportunities in a rich learning environment," said Timothy S. Ely, assistant vice president for online education and instructional design at Pennsylvania's Harcum College. "The effectiveness, much like in a face-to-face classroom, depends, ultimately, on the engagement and commitment of the instructor."

Online education isn't the easy route to a college degree by any means. Gist cautioned, "Many students want to quickly earn their degree with an online accelerated program, but they don't understand or respect the amount of time required for studying. Successful students understand this and are willing to work at a pace that takes into account all that they have to do and those are the students who most often complete their educational goals."

It does seem to take a certain kind of student to excel in an online learning environment: self-motivated, highly organized and focused on their goals.

Students can learn more about the way they learn best. They can often try out all 3 delivery methods: classroom instruction, online learning, blended. Schools often offer an orientation or demo of an online course to give students an idea of what to expect. Students should explore all options.

REFERENCES

Alavi, M., and Leidner, D. E. (2001), "Research Commentary: Technology-Mediated Learning--A Call for Greater Depth and Breadth of Research.", Vol. 37(4), pp. 379-398. Information Systems Research

Allen, E. and Seaman, J. (2010). Class Differences, Online Education in the United States, 2010. *2010 Sloan Survey of Online Learning, Babson Survey Research Group.*

Allen, E. and Seaman, J. (2010). Learning on Demand, Online Education in the United States, 2009. *2009 Sloan Survey of Online Learning, Babson Survey Research Group.*

Allen, I. E., and Seaman, J. (2003), Sizing the Opportunity: The Quality and Extent of Online Education in the United States. Needham, MA: The Sloan Consortium. , Vol. 12(1), pp. 1-10.

Altbach, P. G., Gumport, P. J., and Johnstone, D. B. (2001), In Defense of American Higher Education. Baltimore:
Johns Hopkins University Press.

Arbaugh, J. B. (2000), "How Classroom Environment and Student Engagement Affect Learning in Internet-based
MBA Courses." Business Communication Quarterly, Vol. 63(4), pp. 9-26.*Journal of Information Systems Education, Vol. 19(2)* 163

Arbaugh, J.B. (2001), "How Instructor Immediacy Behaviors Affect Student Satisfaction and Learning in Web-Based
Courses." Business Communication Quarterly

Communications of the ACM Chawner, B., and Lewis, P. (2006), "WikiWikiWikiWebs: New Ways to Communicate in a Web Environment." Vol. 45(4), pp. 60-63. Information Technology and Libraries

*Dona Susan R. (2013), "*THE EMERGENCE OF THE HYBRID DELIVERY APPROACH: UTILIZATION OF A Six STEP INSTRUCTIONAL MODEL FOR BUSINESS LAW CURRICULUM" *Journal of Legal Studies in Business Vol. 18 PP. 159-190,*

Davis, Donna E. Best of Both Worlds: Do Hybrid Courses Have Better Outcomes Than Distance Only Courses In The North Carolina Community College System? (2007) (unpublished Ed.D.. dissertation. North Carolina State University). Retrieved December 16, 2010, from Dissertations & Theses: Full Text. (Publication No. AAT 3279320).

Friedman, Linda Weiser (2013);" CREATING A CULTURE OF HYBRID AND ONLINE TEACHING" Northeast Decision Sciences Institute Annual Meeting Proceedings. April 2013 PP 806-811

Hanna, D. E., Glowacki-Dudka, M., and Conceicao-Runlee, S. (2000), 147 Practical Tips for Teaching Online Groups: Essentials of Web-based Education. Madison, WI: Atwood Publishing. , Vol. 79(4), pp. 237-244.

Hirschheim, R. (2005), "The Internet-Based Education Bandwagon: Look Before You Leap." , Vol. 45(4), pp. 56-59. Communications of the ACM

Hollenbeck, C. R., Zinkhan, G., and French, W. (2005), "Distance Learning Trends and Benchmarks: Lessons from an Online MBA Program." , Vol. 48(7), pp. 97-101. Marketing Education Review

Lytle, R. (2012, July 6). College professors fearful of online education growth. US News. Retrieved from http://www.usnews.com /education/online-education/articles/2012/07/06/collegeprofessors-fearful-of-online-education-growth

Mindel, J., and Verma, S. (2006), "Wikis for Teaching and Learning." , Vol. 21(4), pp. 427-434. Communications of the AIS

Shea, P. (2006). A study of students' sense of learning community in online environments. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks, 10(S),* 35-44.

H. (2013) " From Course Assessment to redesign: A hybrid-vehicle course as a case illustration" European Journal of Engineering Education. Dec2013, Vol. 38 Issue 6, p687-699

Wong, A. F., Choon-Lang, Q., Divaharan, S., Woon-Chia, L., Peer, J., and Williams, M. D. (2006), "Singapore Students' and Teachers' Perceptions of Computer- Supported Project Work Classroom Learning Environments." Journal of Research on Technology in Education