Using Technology to Build Community in the Diverse Classroom Environment

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Per Maui Announcements

• Merissa Brown will discuss information from her doctoral dissertation, *Student Perceptions of Online and Traditional English Courses at University of Guam: A Quantitative Descriptive Study* alongside information she gathered at the 2015 *Hawaii International Conference on Education*. Those attending the presentation can expect an overview of research in underserved Pacific college student populations, a discussion of community, and an activity to allow participants to critically consider new ways to build community in their traditional, hybrid, or online classrooms.
Hawaii International Conference On Education

• January 5-8, 2015
• 13\textsuperscript{th} Annual
• Hilton Hawaiian Village
Dissertation

- Student Perceptions of Online and Traditional English Courses at University of Guam: A Quantitative Descriptive Study
Dissertation Background

• Education for all groups is not created equal (Spring, 2012).

• Membership in various groups may affect student achievement (Olivares, 2007).

• Aspirations (gleaned from group membership) correlate strongly with achievement (Olivares, 2007).
University of Guam students are unlike typical American college students and do not always respond as research might predict to teaching styles proven effective on other American college campuses (S. Santos-Bamba, personal communication, January 15, 2015).
Problem Statement

• Poor decisions may be made by under-informed individuals (Buchanan & O’Connell, 2006).

• The general problem addressed by the study is little if any research addresses how American minority student populations in the Western Pacific, specifically the Chamorro and Micronesian student populations, perceive contemporary higher learning options available to those populations.
The purpose of the quantitative research study was to examine student perceptions of rigor, validity, and quality of online and traditional English courses at University of Guam.
Research Question #1

- At University of Guam, what is the correlation, if any, of student perceptions of rigor, validity, and quality of online English courses and traditional English courses?
After controlling for student demographic characteristics at University of Guam, what is the correlation, if any, of student perceptions of rigor, validity, and quality of online English courses and traditional English courses?
Rigor

• 40% of the students thought that online courses were either “rigorous” or “very rigorous”

• 40.6% felt the same way about traditional courses

• When their two answers were compared (online versus traditional), 34.2% believed that online courses were more rigorous while 31.6% felt traditional courses were more rigorous
Validity

- 41% of the students thought that online courses were either “valid” or “very valid”
- 64.6% felt the same way about traditional courses
- When their two answers were compared (online versus traditional), 7.9% believed that online courses were more valid while 43.3% felt traditional courses were more valid
Quality

- 55% believed that traditional courses were of higher quality.
- 36.1% believed that the two delivery methods were of similar quality.
- Only 8.6% believed that online courses had higher quality.
Additional Findings

• Students who believed that traditional courses were more rigorous were
  a. less likely to have passed English 110
     \( r_s = -0.22, p < 0.001 \)
  b. less likely to have passed an online English course
     \( r_s = -0.13, p < 0.05 \)
Additional Findings

• Students who believed that traditional courses were more valid were
  a. less likely to have passed any English course
     \( r_s = -0.14, p < 0.05 \)
  b. less likely to have passed English 110
     \( r_s = -0.23, p < 0.001 \)
  c. less likely to have passed an online English course
     \( r_s = -0.17, p < 0.01 \)
  d. younger \( r_s = -0.13, p < 0.05 \)
Additional Findings

• Students who believed that traditional courses were of higher quality were:
  a. less likely to have passed English 110
     \( (r_s = -.18, p < .005) \)
  b. less likely to have passed an online English course
     \( (r_s = -.16, p < .01) \)
  c. younger \( (r_s = -.14, p < .05) \)
  d. less likely to have attended private high school
     \( (r_s = -.12, p < .05) \)
Findings Opposing Literature

Kim and Bonk (2006) expected online courses to be equal to courses offered in a traditional classroom by 2006. Additionally, Kim and Bonk (2006) reported participants in their research indicated, “online courses would be superior to (47 percent) or the same as (39 percent) that of traditional instruction by 2013” (p. 26).

In Contrast:

In 2014, students at University of Guam indicated only 8.6 percent believed online courses had higher quality than traditional courses and traditional courses were more valid than online courses.
Findings Opposing Literature

- Ke and Kwak (2013) explained how age may affect students’ online learning capacity. Younger, digital native, students typically embrace online learning more than older students.

However:
The current research demonstrated younger students perceive online English courses at University of Guam as less valid and of lower quality than the same traditional courses.
Findings Opposing Literature

• Additionally, Ke and Kwak (2013) highlighted cultural and ethnic backgrounds as a possible influence for online learning capacity. Reilly, Gallagher-Lepack, and Killion (2012) explored the importance of considering demographics, such as gender and ethnicity, when addressing student learning.

Yet:

Neither ethnicity nor gender played a significant role as independent variables in the current research.
So what does this have to do with Community Building?
Understanding of Culture

• At University of Guam, online faculty who teach from off-island and are otherwise unfamiliar with the culture of Guam, specifically the cultural expectations for family illness and death, are not as successful at retaining and promoting students through English 100, 110, and 111 (S. Santos-Bamba, personal communication, January 15, 2015).
University of Guam Culture

• High Context
• Clan
• Community oriented
• Belonging to a Community increases Self-Efficacy!
HICE Theme for Me

• Community Building in Classrooms
Ways to Build Community

• Understand the culture you’re working within
• Build community around that culture
• Remember that the human mind is a “pattern seeking device” with plasticity.
  – Always seeking to acquire information (Dr. Gillani Bijin).
Dr. Bernie Potvin, Ambrose University

• In Community Building
  – 3 is the magic number for groups
  – Course design is the “architecture” to build relationships
  – Inquiry = Solving a “real” problem. Facilitate answering of “real” questions where the question lives in the student’s world.
Community Building, Continued

• Design a course so students are “for” something

• “Community is built when a course or program is designed to be ‘authentically personalized.’”
Ten Strategies for BUILDING COMMUNITY WITH TECHNOLOGY

A Handbook for instructional Designers and Program Developers

Bernie Potvin • Nicki Rehn • David Peat
Consider:

1. How can you use technology to teach a physical or psychomotor skill?
2. How can you use technology to extend the reach of a critical question?
3. How can you use social media to reach your students or participants?
Consider:

4. How can technology support project-based learning?

5. How can you leverage technology to create lessons where students generate insight together?

6. How can you build self-efficacy with technology?
Activity and Discussion

• Break into small groups of three (preferably) and brainstorm answers to these questions.

• Come back together as a group and discuss answers.
Consider

How will you use technology or other tools to build community in your classrooms while considering your unique and diverse student populations?
Thank you!

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