

Strategies & Tips for the Intensive Week Of a Hybrid Course

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Question for Reflection: What can be done intentionally during the intensive face-to-face week that enhances the on-line experience to follow?

I. Small Group Bonding

A. Small groups are essential to holistic education:

They provide space to process course content and experiences.

They provide space to practice essential course skills.

They offer communities of support that enhance both student experience and learning.

B. What enhances small group experience?

1. Ground rules for 'safe-enough' space; for example:

Appreciation for each others' experience
Respectful dialogue when disagreeing
Reasonable confidentiality
Refraining from the impulse to fix each other
Empowering constructive feedback

2. Story-based relationship building

Stories build connections between persons.
Stories ground, concretize and integrate abstract reflection.
Stories can be calibrated from relatively less intimate to deeply intimate subject matters. Remain appropriate

3. Specific questions and tasks that guide small group interaction

- Open-ended small group discussions can be meandering, isolating, and educationally deadening.
- Allow each person to share on a particular topic (to avoid a few dominating and a few checking out)
- Integrate experience and reflection
- Have an identifiable question or task so the group knows when it is on track and when the discussion is completed.

Israel Valenzuela 5/5/2016 12:28 PM

Comment [1]:

Groups work well for deeper processing whenever 1 on 1 interactions are not possible.

Best group size: in the 6 range. Around 6 to 8 ideal. 4 is too few; 10 too many.

Groups can function as support groups.

Israel Valenzuela 5/5/2016 12:34 PM

Comment [2]: The use of Story is important in setting the space for a rich connection between students.

Using Story helps students to move beyond the "bare minimum" required engagement to being more invested in the learning.

General rhythm of learning during the week: Story...Passage/Topic...Application or Response/Reflection.

Plenary sessions which take place in real time (synchronously) are also part of the course. Students are not required to attend. Recordings are available.

II. Front load content best done face-to-face. Possibilities might include:

Frame and map the course for them.

Let them experience face-to-face what they will be asked to do together on-line.

Identify essential concepts/skills/exercises and use the face-to-face to ensure their understanding.

III. Trouble-shoot and launch the on-line experience together

Walk through the on-line process together on the last day of the intensive.

Discuss netiquette.

Have them experience their first on-line connection before they leave.

Israel Valenzuela 5/5/2016 12:36 PM

Comment [3]:

Set ground rules at the beginning of each course. Include behavioral expectations, level of engagement, and consequences for breaking the rules.