

**Hybrid Writing: From Pilot to Program**  
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**I. Executive Summary**

*“Hybrid’ is the name commonly used nationwide to describe courses that combine face-to-face classroom instruction with computer-based learning. Hybrid courses move a significant part of course learning online and, as a result, reduce the amount of classroom seat time.” – University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee Hybrid Web Site*

Hybrid is a model of educational delivery that blends classroom and online learning to improve educational outcomes. In the winter of 2000, writing instructors from the Northeastern University English Department applied for and received a \$25,000 Teaching with Technology grant funded by the Office of the Provost to redesign the Middler Year Writing Requirement (MYWR), a required upper level writing course. This paper begins with the background of the issue, describing the initial pilot and the expanded training program, the formation of a university-wide hybrid committee, and the development of an online training program to instruct additional MYWR writing instructors and faculty in different disciplines. Participants in the pilot phase of the program will be MYWR instructors. Following an evaluation by these instructors, the program will be modified and adapted to provide faculty from all disciplines with a core set of skills and to expose them to a core set of tools that can be used across curricula. In phase two of the project, the online training program will be incorporated into a summer institute for faculty from various disciplines who are interested in redesigning their courses for the hybrid environment.

Section three of this report addresses faculty resistance and motivation. Current research supporting the diverse reasons for faculty resistance and diverse ways to motivate faculty are described. Because one of the principle motivators for faculty is proof that hybrid instruction works, the report includes current research supporting the effectiveness of hybrid instruction. The paper concludes with the step-by-step instructional design process that will be used to develop and evaluate the hybrid online training program under development.

**II. Background**

The MYWR course was under review when representatives from the English department and Educational Technology Center considered it for hybrid conversion. Students and faculty had generally been pleased with the course. However, a few concerns with the course persisted. Students indicated the following:

- not enough flexible time to complete the work required;
- too much time in “filler” classroom activities rather than in productive research and drafting activities; and
- feedback on issues related to the subject matter of the final report was not rapid or extensive enough (Clarke, personal communication, 2002).

Although the Writing Programs Committee and various instructors expressed initial resistance to the idea because of a fear of, and negative experiences with, technology, the principal investigators believed the hybrid model might begin to address these issues by creating new ways to design flexibility into the course and to allow for students to move at different paces – to allow students independence and support.

After the grant was awarded, the pilot was developed and disseminated, and pre- and post-course surveys were administered. The results of the post-course survey are as follows:

- 80% of students would enroll in another hybrid course;
- 85% of students would recommend taking a course in the hybrid format to a friend;
- 90% of students indicated that access to the instructor was the same or easier than in a traditional course environment;
- 95% of students indicated that access to other students was the same or easier than in a traditional course environment; and
- 85% of students believed there was a good balance between time spent in class and time spent online.

The results of the pilot served as a catalyst to win a major private grant from the Davis Educational Foundation, which provided training and research funding to expand the program. Throughout the fall of 2001 and winter of 2002, four Davis Mentors (Tiane Donahue, Michael Salvo, Kalo Clarke and Cathy McCarron) trained 19 writing instructors to teach in the hybrid model. The results, to date, have been modestly successful. The first set of data indicates the following:

	Retention	Students	Fail rate	Pass	53 more students through MYWR <i>each quarter</i> (Salvo, 2002)
Traditional Avg. 600 students per quarter	87%	522	6.5%	488	
Hybrid Avg. 600 students per quarter	94%	564	4.09%	541	

English professor Michael Salvo is continuing his research on the effectiveness of hybrid instruction. Using university-wide student evaluation of instruction, he will:

- Determine pre-Hybrid (1999-2000) MYWR levels for student perception of satisfaction
- Determine non-hybrid (2000-2001) levels
- Compare pilot group Hybrid sections (3 sections, 2000-2001) to both
- Determine widespread (16 sections, 2001-2002) hybrid to:
  - Pre-hybrid 1999-2000
  - Non-hybrid 2000-2001
  - Hybrid pilot 2000-2001
  - Non-hybrid 2001-2002
  - Hybrid widespread 2001-2002 (Salvo, personal communication, 2002).

Salvo states that these comparisons will “ferret out any anomalies based on non-repeatable circumstances, or distinctions between experienced and less experienced instructors, as well as define consistent registration, shrink and failure statistics over time” (2002).

Black’s (2001) study at Arkansas State University supports Salvo’s early findings. A study of 116 students on their preference of traditional, hybrid and web-based course delivery showed, “[S]tudents prefer hybrid course delivery modes to either online-only or classroom-only modes; and as student level of computer expertise increases, so does their level of satisfaction with Internet and hybrid modes of course delivery.”

Salvo, Donahue, Clarke and McCarron and Dush will continue to gather external data on the effectiveness of hybrid to convince faculty across disciplines to consider hybrid course redesign.

### **III. Faculty Resistance & Motivation**

The discussion of faculty resistance is interesting because it does NOT apply to the MYWR instructors. Thirteen instructors, none of whom are tenured faculty, have volunteered to participate in the hybrid training program without receiving a stipend or course release time. The reason for the enthusiasm stems from the instructors' hearing positive feedback from other hybrid instructors, potential for research in the composition and computers field, interest in adding hybrid teaching to their vitae, and the desire to learn a new skill set (Dush, personal communication, 2002).

Gauging what inhibits and motivates tenured faculty is far more difficult. Some research indicates that resistance to hybrid instruction (and teaching with technology, in general) is rooted in the preparation time required, insufficient institutional support for technical support and course development time to learn to use the Web, inability to display the Web in the Classroom, lack of training in how to use Web, inadequate hardware in one's office (Bonk, 2001). A few years ago, a Dusquene University report stated, "Faculty members report that the stress of keeping up with emerging technology surpasses 'traditional trouble such as publishing pressures and teaching loads'" (Russell, 1999). Other research suggests that faculty's disbelief that technology can improve students' learning outcomes (Woodell and Garofoli, 2002) is the cause. Still others claim that the only way to move people to redesign for hybrid delivery is to create "intrinsic motivation" (Quinn, personal communication, 2002). One university professor stated:

People who have been teaching for a while don't need the little bit of money, the peripheral recognition, or the aggravation. Changing a culture is a tough thing to do. It's tougher if people think they're being directed to do something or being led by the nose. . . . Actually, most faculty truly care that the students learn more and that would be enough (Quinn, personal communication, 2002).

Clearly, changing a culture IS a tough thing to do, but it is even tougher if there are competing cultures among levels of faculty (instructor to tenure-track to tenured); different departments and different colleges. Thus, motivating college teachers to embrace a new way of teaching requires developing a menu of approaches. Woodell and Garofoli concur:

Not all faculty members will be interested in using technology for the same reasons, nor will they have the same expectations with regard to the outcomes they might achieve through technology integration. There are fundamental differences in the ways that people approach the adoption of an innovation, and programs designed to encourage such adoption must be sensitive to these differences (2002).

Central to these approaches are two elements: proof that teaching with technology is effective, and a collaborative, supportive environment in which faculty can learn to use and apply the technology. Citing a 1997 study by Parisot, Chang includes the need for both elements, noting they are critical to faculty's willingness to try new teaching and learning methods:

[The] ease of use is a primary factor in the adoption of technological innovation by faculty. Technology must also be consistent with existing values, and there needs to be a real educational value beyond the use of technology for its own sake. The study also found that faculty tend to be teacher-centered rather than student-centered and tend to view technology as an aid for current teaching strategies rather than as a vehicle for developing new approaches. To address potential faculty resistance, Parisot (1997) developed a conceptual framework for consensus building. Its steps include

acknowledgment of the need for change, awareness of the potential impact of technology, acculturation to new ways of teaching and learning, and affirmation by faculty to adopt the innovation (2002).

Bailey (2001) upholds the assertion by Quinn (stated above) that in order for faculty to use technology in their courses, they must be convinced that students learn better with technology:

If a teacher’s epistemological beliefs are a key mediating factor that determines if instructional technology is used in their classes (Maor & Taylor, 1995), then any increase in the frequency of technology use must be precipitated by evidence of clear benefits that will justify the increased effort. A change in thinking on the benefits of instructional technology (Bruder, 1991) linked with an increase in instructor skills (Norman, 1994) is also required. Incentives like increased student accomplishment attributed to technology use in the classroom (Hadley & Sheingold, 1993) will offset barriers identified by others.

Finally, the new learning environments model below developed by the International Society of Technology in Education (ISTE) is “a response to the recent research that shows that student-centered, constructivist and collaborative learning is more effective learning than the traditional top-down, lecture-based, text-driven model” (2001). ISTE developed the chart below to illustrate principle differences between traditional and new learning environments.

<b>Traditional Learning Environments</b>	<b>New Learning Environments</b>
Teacher-centered instruction	Student-centered learning
Single-sense stimulation	Multisensory stimulation
Single-path progression	Multipath progression
Single media	Multimedia
Isolated work	Collaborative work
Information delivery	Information exchange
Passive learning	Active/exploratory/inquiry-based learning
Factual, knowledge-based learning	Critical thinking and informed decision-making
Reactive response	Proactive/planned action
Isolated, artificial context	Authentic, real-world context

From <http://www.iste.org/>

#### **IV. Expanding the Program**

The gathering of research on faculty resistance and motivation is helping to shape two concurrent processes that are in place to expand the hybrid program across Northeastern University: the formation of the hybrid working group and the development of an online hybrid training course.

##### **Hybrid Working Group**

The establishment of the hybrid working group is the next step toward institutionalizing hybrid delivery of education. Faculty are developing hybrid courses in various disciplines at Northeastern including music, psychology and writing, but there currently does not exist cross-college curricular support for offering courses in the hybrid format. The group has considered that hybrid delivery can occur in the following formats:

- Replacing one of more face-to-face classes per week with online work;
- Shortening classroom time and replacing it with online work;
- Meeting in the classroom for several weeks at the beginning of the term; having students complete work online for several weeks; and meeting again at the end of the course; and
- Meeting in the classroom every few weeks during the term.

The working group views potential benefits of offering courses with hybrid delivery to include the following:

- Course consistency in multi-section courses;
- Course redesign to measure learning outcomes more effectively;
- Better, more focused use of class time;
- Technology fluency among students and faculty; and
- More student time on task.

Additionally, the group has developed a series of recommendations for the university's undergraduate and graduate curriculum committees related to the following issues:

- Selection of hybrid courses;
- Incentives;
- Faculty training and support;
- Student training and support;
- Assessment; and
- Intellectual property policies.

The group seeks to establish basic guidelines for hybrid courses as a first step in developing training modules that can be used across disciplines and working with individual departments and course coordinators to create course-specific training for instructors.

Hybrid course delivery is offered successfully in various courses at colleges and universities across the country. Northeastern's interest in making hybrid courses an option for most faculty requires effecting institutional change in the way instruction is delivered. The hybrid project is one of the programs we are promoting to serve as a catalyst to effect that change.

### **Hybrid Training Program**

To continue the momentum for expanding hybrid education, members of the hybrid working group have developed a proposal to launch an online hybrid training program.

The goals of the program include the following:

- To train instructors in the English Department to teach a hybrid version of the Middle Year Writing Requirement (MYWR) course, in which two-thirds of the course is taught face-to-face and one-third online.
- To develop a curriculum that expands the MYWR course from 11 to 14 weeks.
- To develop a training model that can be adapted by faculty from other departments and other colleges and disseminated in a summer institute to be held in 2003.
- To establish a training program that does not cost much.

The audience includes the following:

- English instructors who have applied to teach a hybrid course;
- English instructors who currently teach hybrid courses and have agreed to be mentors;
- Participants in the summer hybrid teaching with technology summer institute
- Faculty from other departments interested in launching hybrid courses; and

- Personnel from Northeastern University’s Educational Technology Center (EdTech Center), a central resource that supports faculty’s integration of teaching and technology.

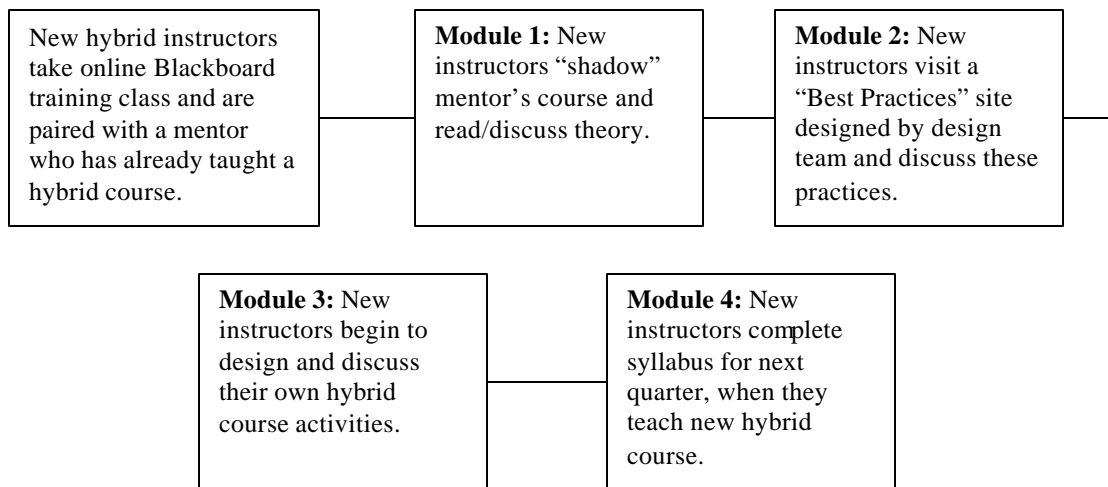
**Training & Development:**

The following chart developed by Dush (2002) outlines the training and development process from the design through implementation.

DATE	APPROXIMATE DURATION	ACTIVITY
Oct.-Dec. 2002	3 months	MYWR director, English instructor & EdTech Instructional Designer develop English department’s online hybrid faculty training course.
Jan.-Mar. 2003	3 months	English online hybrid training course is piloted.
Mar.-June 2003	4 months	English hybrid training course is revised to fit other disciplines.
July 2003	1 week	Summer institute to train interested hybrid faculty in other disciplines is offered.
Summer 2003	--	Newly trained faculty design hybrid courses for Fall 2003 semester.
Fall 2003	--	Summer institute instructors run hybrid courses.

**Method of Training Hybrid Instructors in the Online Course:**

The core delivery will be four online modules, co-facilitated by the director of the MYWR program, and an instructional designer from the Ed Tech Center. The program will be developed using best practices developed by Northeastern University hybrid instructors and from hybrid programs from University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee and University of Central Florida. The following chart outlines the four-module process (Dush 2002).



**Objectives:**

At the end of this program, English instructors will be able to:

- Build a syllabus that reflects that one-third of the course will be completed online;
- Design useful discussion forums;
- Critique student drafts and papers online;
- Design group assignments that facilitate students' online critique of peer drafts;
- Design interactive citation and documentation assignments that improve students' ability to cite sources correctly.

At the end of the program, the instructional designer will:

- Have a hybrid course template that MYWR instructors and other instructors can follow;
- Have a core training module for participants in a proposed Hybrid Summer Institute.

**Materials:**

The program will be developed as an online training course distributed through the Blackboard course management system. Articles will be available on the course site in PDF format. Online activities will be adapted from EdTech Center workshops, English Department workshops, and the grant-funded Hybrid Writing Workshop offered in fall of 2001. Additional materials will be uploaded from the MYWR CD that was also developed as part of the initial grant-funded hybrid project.

**Evaluation:**

The Hybrid Training Program is a mandatory course for all English instructors who want to teach in the hybrid format. MYWR Director Lisa Dush will recruit participants and mentors. English Department professor Michael Salvo will lead the evaluation effort for students enrolled in hybrid sections (See Section II, Background). With respect to evaluation of the training program, the following tools will be developed:

- Pre- and post-survey: survey hybrid training program participants to measure satisfaction and get feedback;
- Control and comparison group questionnaire: ask questions related to satisfaction with teaching a course in the hybrid versus traditional format;
- Tracking process: follow instructors' progress in subsequent semesters to see if they continue to choose to teach in the hybrid format and if they redesign additional courses for hybrid delivery.

**Conclusion**

From the work on hybrid conducted at Northeastern University to date, there have been several lessons learned. Among them is the recognition that most courses are candidates for hybrid delivery. Educational technology professionals understand that the distinction between web enhanced and hybrid courses continue to blur. With many universities requiring that faculty post an online syllabus, the intersection of teaching with technology is widening. Whether a course is called "hybrid" or "web enhanced" may soon be a matter of semantics. However, with respect to the growing demands by administrators, students and parents for a web presence for courses, it is clear that faculty training needs to be easily replicable and support must be available in multiple forms. With respect to student training, research indicates that their needs will diminish due to the expansion of web-based educational tools in the K-12 educational system. The final issue, which continues to grow in importance, is Intellectual Property. Ownership of technology-based educational materials is largely being decided on an ad hoc basis. Bringing this discussion to the forefront of educational technology issues is a pressing need.

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