General Course Information

Faculty Name: John Hagedorn  
Department: Criminology, Law, & Justice  
College: Liberal Arts and Sciences  
Course Name: Crime and Society: Gangs in the Media

Executive Summary:
I began teaching blended courses to deal with a specific problem: issues of violence that I addressed in both my 120 and 121 classes did not encourage discussion. Some of the readings were very explicit and some students, I learned, had personal experiences of violence they were afraid to share in class. Other students were uncomfortable in addressing issues of race in a diverse classroom.

The solution was to pose some of the central issues on the discussion board in the form of questions tied to provocative readings. The result far exceeded my expectations, as students not only debated controversial issues, but many shared intense personal experiences. Overwhelmingly, the evaluations of both classes pointed to the value of the discussion board as a “safe zone” to discuss sensitive topics. Many female students commented that the discussion board made it easier for them to participate and couldn’t be cut off by aggressive males. Similarly, foreign students were able to carefully write what they intended, and not fear they would “say the wrong thing.”

There were a host of other lessons; mixing pedagogical styles allowed something to work for everyone. The online classes allowed me to use video more liberally. Students posted links to other videos and articles, as the discussion board became the central focus of class participation.
Goals for offering course as blended:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose for Blending</th>
<th>Corresponding Sloan-C Pillar</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X  Enhance the teaching and learning/leverage technology to achieve pedagogical goals</td>
<td>Learning Effectiveness</td>
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<tr>
<td>X  Provide accessibility for more students (make the course available to more students)</td>
<td>Access</td>
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<tr>
<td>X  Provide flexibility for students</td>
<td>Student Satisfaction</td>
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<tr>
<td>X  Increase faculty satisfaction (i.e., addressing work load issues, increasing flexibility of work hours, teaching in a new way, etc.)</td>
<td>Faculty Satisfaction</td>
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<tr>
<td>X  Address institutional issue such as limited classroom space, or inability to offer technology such as internet connection in classrooms</td>
<td>Cost-Effectiveness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other: Please specify</td>
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**Learning Effectiveness:** Some students learned better from the free and open-ended discussion board. The use of video increased and better reached visual learners.

**Access:** The discussion board allowed for students to participate in class while at home or away from the classroom. Having exams online was very popular as well, since they were held on Fridays and students did not need to come to the university.

**Student Satisfaction:** Students strongly approved of the blended format in formal evaluations and said it added to their satisfaction.

**Faculty Satisfaction:** It meant more work, but it vastly increased my interaction with students. I could respond individually to student posts and enjoyed very much observing the learning process.

**Cost-Effectiveness:** Blended is not online, and classroom space must be reserved. But at least 1/3 of all classes were held online which makes physical classrooms underutilized.
Summary of course design/redesign process and product:

- The issue is pedagogical. The online questions and discussions were placed so as to bring out student questions. I started each class with a general question that got the class used to the discussion board, but also showed me the differences in the class. Then, there is an issue of pace: as lectures and readings covered a major issue, the online discussion was intended to both capture what they were learning, but more importantly draw out differences. Often students fear to express opinions that differ from the instructor and the online format countered that tendency.

- Preparation for blended classes and monitoring class participation took more time than lecturing and going home.

- In the beginning, I worked extensively with professionals from External Education. As I grew more proficient and acquired some advanced software, I relied on technical assistance from the software companies.

- I have been doing blended courses for several years. This last year, before I even posted a question on the discussion board, students were posting and talking with one another about the course. I can't imagine not using interactive online discussions in large lectures.

Student perspective:

"Having many types of media to help teach the class is what I feel helped drive the point harder. It has been common place that in college classes it's about reading a book and going to lecture, being able to go online and further research what we talked about in lecture makes the understanding of the lecture a lot more easier to grasp.

First I would like to say how much I enjoyed this class. I loved the design of the class because it was a much more independent style of learning than I'm used to. The class is set up in such a way that makes the student want to learn. The focus of the class is not to just receive good grades. The grade that I received in this class was not the motivation for me to do well in this class, I actually wanted to learn the material which is not something that happens often. I loved the group project because it provided me with an opportunity to meet a group of girls who were just as interested and motivated to do the project as I was."

And every instructor likes these comments:

"To be completely truthful, I don’t feel like I was in a class. I feel like I was taking a life lesson with a bunch of other people just as lost as I was. For that, I am thankful that I enrolled in CLJ 120. Thank you Professor Hagedorn!"
Results:
My goals were met. Students had more ways to learn and the evaluation reported they liked blended courses.

Data:
Assessment Statistics: On Line Evaluation
Attempts 70 (Total of 71 attempts for this assessment)
Instructions Completing the survey will add one (1) point to your overall grade.
Question 1
The discussion board was
Very useful 22.857%
Useful 57.143%
Didn’t make a difference 12.857%
Not Useful 7.143%
Unanswered 0%

Question 2
The best feature of the discussion board was
You could express your opinion 72.857%
You didn’t have to attend class 18.571%
you could interact with other students 5.714%
other 2.857%
Unanswered 0%

Question 3
The main problem with the discussion board was
there are too many threads to read 47.143%
some of the responses weren’t focused on the assignment 14.286%
not enough feedback from the instructor 2.857%
there was too much arguing 1.429%
other 18.571%
Unanswered 0%

Question 4
If you were designing this course for next year, how often would you replace a face to face lecture with Blackboard (Bb) activities:
Weekly - keep a face to face lecture and discussion, and replace one lecture with online activities each week 34.286%
The entire course should be online 8.571%
Every other week or so - have 5-6 sessions online throughout the semester 28.571%
Only a few - Keep it like it was done this semester (3 sessions) 22.857%
None - have two lectures each week 5.714%
Unanswered 0%

Question 5
Would you recommend this course to other students?
Yes-Highly 41.429%
Yes 42.857%
Maybe 11.429%
No 2.857%
Unanswered 1.429%

Question 6
Would you recommend a "blended" course like this for other students?
Yes-Highly 37.143%
Yes 44.286%
Maybe 14.286%
No 4.286%
Unanswered 0%

Question 7
Does the discussion board promote more participation in discussions about sensitive topics like genocide or rape than in a class with two lectures and a discussion group?
Promotes more participation on sensitive topics 80%
Promotes about the same amount of participation 10%
Promotes less participation 4.286%
Not sure 5.714%
Unanswered 0%