

Alternative Teaching and Learning Strategies for a First-year Introductory Psychology Course

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Traditionally, university-level introductory courses have relied for the most part on a lecture-based teaching strategy. Because of the significant amount of content that is usually covered in these courses, as well as increasingly larger class sizes, there is little opportunity for any significant instructor to student or student to student interaction. As a result, many students find themselves relegated to the role of passive learners. With the recent introduction of so-called "smart classrooms", as well as computer programmes to assist in the development of Web-based course materials, instructors now have access to an ever increasing range of teaching tools. If used appropriately, these tools can be used to enhance teaching effectiveness, promote the use of higher-order learning strategies, and create a more interactive teaching and learning environment. In this presentation we report on the development, the implementation, and the outcome of alternative teaching and learning strategies within the context of a first-year university-level introductory psychology course. The delivery model was Web-based enhanced with synchronous and asynchronous teaching and learning strategies. The description of the development phase of this project will provide an overview of the technologies used, the rationale for using these technologies, as well as other considerations pertaining to course redevelopment initiatives. The implementation and outcome of this project will be described from the perspectives of both the designer/instructor and the students enrolled in the course. The presentation will review some of the problems that were encountered, their resolution, as well as perceived changes in teaching and learning habits and effectiveness.