Design and Implementation of a Foreign Language Hybrid Course

In the fall of 2005, an in-house grant from Austin Community College was awarded to develop and pilot a true hybrid (50% in-class, 50% web-based) first semester Spanish course. This is being looked at as a way to increase the number of high-demand sections of foreign language courses without increasing the use of physical classroom space (which is already at capacity during high-demand times). A single course meeting twice per week was converted into two courses meeting once per week and the other half of the contact hours were fulfilled through the use of assignments in Blackboard. Some of the challenges included how to effectively teach and practice all skills (reading, writing, speaking, listening and culture), how to use the classroom time, what and how much to put on the Blackboard course and how to deal with holidays that gave one class section fewer meeting days than the other.

The presentation will include a brief overview of the interaction related theories that guided the instructional design. It will also provide a walk-through of the Blackboard assignments and their rationale from the perspective of the guiding theory. Additionally, I will present and discuss the lessons learned during the pilot semester in terms of what worked well and what didn’t. The results of an end of semester online student survey will also be shared. Finally, conclusions and recommendations for future endeavors of this nature will be offered.