Enhancing the Quality of Online/Hybrid Courses

Here is a checklist or food for thought as you work to enhance the learning that occurs in your course.

Do you:

❖ Provide enough of a reason or purpose to drive students to your online/f-2-f course? In other words, is it busy work or meaningful/purposeful work?

❖ Provide student-driven opportunities for learning the course material? For example:
- Students find and discuss web resources/apps.
- Students help each other learn (peer assistance/study buddy).
- Students self-assess or check their own homework assignments.
- Students analyze case studies/scenarios using course content to get to solutions.

❖ See student interactions stretching beyond the simple student discussions?

❖ Give options for discussions? For example:
- Build discussions that can be graded on a weekly basis vs. every discussion post?
- Do you still require 2 replies to discussion questions? What about 1 or reply as moved?
- Do you offer opportunities to select 1 of 2 discussions to respond to for the week?
- Assign student (students sign up for week) to create one of the discussion posts (scenario/situation) for the upcoming week.
- Offer a course "character/avatar" who gets into situations or asks the questions.
  - ♦ Students like to see what will happen next in the storyline of your character.
  - ♦ Enjoy solving the weekly/biweekly event or crisis.
  - ♦ Students are the resident experts for their "Dear Abby/John".

❖ Give options for learning the content? For example:
- Student can select from textbook, video, or MP3 recording.
- Student shares a resource they found regarding topic and/or arranges for a guest speaker.
- Student asked to find out what industry/community is saying about the topic. "Current Practice or Current Event."

❖ Use action research regularly (write yourself notes on schedule of what's working or not)? Do you share notes with program team (data analytics) to come up with solutions/approaches to solve student learning problems?
- Online/hybrid learning requires an increase in time for student response.
- Look at frequently asked questions and tweak design of course to reduce FAQ's.
- Emphasize importance of study skills throughout the length of the course – not just at beginning, mid-term, or when student is in "crisis".
- Monitor student's progress. Coach or facilitate where needed. Refer. Call/use voice feedback when text could be interpreted in a negative way - minimizes errors in tone or delivery of message.

❖ Use multiple resources for different perspectives? Open-source?

- ❖ Offer multiple practice times/opportunities to advance skill? In other words, you avoid covering once and moving on to another topic.

  - ▪ Students have opportunities to articulate or revise their understanding.
    - ♦ Write a paper throughout the semester. Build sections of it throughout the course. Use instructor/peer feedback to revise final product due at the end of the semester.
    - ♦ Students learn skill and then can practice with guidance and then on their own in lab to improve/perfect skills. Do you use a skill check-off to note areas for improvement?
    - ♦ Offer reflection, journaling, or "end of shift" documentation time.
  - ▪ Bring up topic again as you cover the next section of content. Help students see how earlier knowledge impacts or builds into content under discussion. Offer perspective/contextualization of past – present – future.

- ❖ Help students manage their time? This is one of the biggest reasons students drop out.
  - ▪ Provide a detailed schedule/due date of assignments at the start of the semester.
  - ▪ Discuss how they will manage their learning time. What is their plan for being successful?
  - ▪ Set up automatic alerts/reminders in Learning Management System.
  - ▪ Discuss how to break up a big assignment into do-able bites.
  - ▪ Post realistic time expectations for the lesson/unit and homework hours.
    - ♦ Post video length in case on mobile device or buffering issues on slow internet connection.
    - ♦ Review or study time to prepare for tests or skill demonstrations.

- ❖ Use ice-breakers in f-2-f class, as well as, online?

- ❖ Use the cognitive overload formula to switch out activities in the f-2-f classroom and online?
  - ▪ 1 minute per age. Maximum is 20 minutes of new content.
  - ▪ The mind maxes out after 20 minutes and can't take in any more information. Change the activity.
  - ▪ In an hour, there should be 3 distinct learning activities for optimum learning.

- ❖ Use smaller and frequent quizzes to lessen test anxiety on large tests or high-stakes tests.

Other ideas?