Large Course Redesign Project Report  
(To be submitted by Friday, August 12th 2011)

Course title(s): First-Year Spanish  
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1. Project Abstract/Description  
(A brief synopsis of reasons you wanted to redesign, what the redesigned format looks like, what the impact is, and how you are going to sustain/expand the new format, etc. Example at http://www.thencat.org/RedesignAlliance/C2R/R3/UNCC_Abstract.htm)

The University of North Carolina at Charlotte piloted a redesigned first-year Spanish course in fall 2009 and spring 2010. The full redesign implementation in first-year occurred in fall 2010-spring 2011. The redesign of the first two semesters of Spanish will ultimately affect some 3000 students a year, including fall, spring and summer.

2. Representative Images of the Project  
(Two or three images/screenshots of new course materials or student learning scenes)

(The redesigned course in Moodle)
3. **Impact on Student Learning**

1. **Improved Learning**
   (Comparison of student achievement between redesigned format and traditional format, and factors/teaching methods that might have resulted in the difference)

The instrument chosen to measure learning was a common final exam. This exam had a multiple-choice section that accounted for 75% of the points and two open-ended sections that accounted for 25% of the points. The open-ended questions consisted of five questions and a 60-word composition.

The average percentage of As, Bs, Cs on the common final exam was slightly higher in the traditional sections of first-semester and second semester Spanish. The average percentage of Fs and Ds was slightly lower in the traditional sections. However these differences were not statistically significant. If these results are interpreted as measures of learning outcomes, the conclusion is that the learning outcomes for both the traditional and the redesigned sections of the pilot group were similar.

2. **Improved Retention**
   (Comparison of DFW between redesigned format and traditional format, and factors/teaching methods that might have resulted in the difference. Please describe your definition of DFW.)

Retention was measured by analyzing final course grades as they were recorded on the students' transcripts. The focus of this analysis was letter grades D, F, and W. The DFW rate analysis of the fully implemented redesigned first-semester Spanish of fall 2010 showed a 5% increase in DFWs when compared to the three previous fall semesters. In contrast, the analysis for the fully implemented redesigned second-semester Spanish of spring 2011 showed that DFW rate was comparable to that of the three previous spring semesters.

3. **Other Impacts on Students**
   (Student perception on the new format measured through surveys or student evaluations)

During the pilot phase, 59% of the students assigned to the redesigned (hybrid) first-semester Spanish course indicated that they wanted to take their second-semester Spanish course in a hybrid format.
Students’ comments on their end-of-the-semester evaluations reveal that they usually react negatively or positively to the course depending on who the instructor is.

4. Impact on Cost Savings
(How much you saved cost by redesigning, and kinds of cost saving strategies you used such as changes in the overall time spent by the instructors including faculty, GTAs, and undergraduate assistants, use of instructor time to improve student learning, use of classroom space, etc.)

Now that the redesigned first-year Spanish is fully implemented, the program has reduced the need of physical space and instructors by 50%. This savings result from having increased the enrollment in each section by 100% as each section used to enroll 30 students and now they enroll 60 students. Because the face-to-face instruction has been reduced by 50%, the need for classroom space has been reduced accordingly.

5. Lessons Learned

1. Pedagogical Improvement Techniques
   (Issues you faced to implement new teaching methods)

   The lesson plans for the face-to-face sessions are designed around activities that promote communicative activities in the four language skills, that is, reading, writing, listening and speaking. Lecturing about grammar and lecturing in general has been removed from the face-to-face sessions.

   An oral exam has been implemented to reflect the communicative approach of the new hybrid courses.

   Under the label “Individual Instruction (I.I.),” a term coined by current first-year Spanish coordinator Sandra Watts, the department has established a robust tutoring service for students who may need one-on-one assistance. With this service the department is establishing a new culture that promotes the understanding that individual instructional attention is an integral part of hybrid Spanish courses.

2. Cost Reduction Techniques
   (Issues you faced to implement cost saving strategies)

   Grading time had to be reduced. Since the electronic materials include a wealth of machine-graded activities, instructors need to grade only two compositions, two exams, an oral exam, and 25% of the final exam.

   Class preparation time has been reduced by providing a common lesson plan for each of the fourteen (14) face-to-face sessions.

3. Implementation Issues
   (Advice for other people wanting to redesign their course)

   • Activities/Strategies that worked best

   Redesigning the face-to-face lesson plans to promote the communicative use of the language.
Drafting sample messages that could be used by any instructor for efficient communication with students whether via email or electronic board.

- Activities/Strategies that worked least well

Students are not taking full advantage of the excellent tutoring service that the program offers.

Glitches in the electronic materials cause confusion, time loss, and some level of frustration in both students and instructors.

Having to work out of three virtual environments (publisher’s virtual site, email, and moodle) causes confusion, fatigue, and has a negative impact on users’ time.

6. Sustainability
(How you are going to sustain/expand the new course format, and the kinds of activities you are doing currently to achieve sustainability)

As indicated earlier, the pilot study was completed in spring 2010. The results indicated that the redesigned course could be sustainable and we completed the full implementation of the redesigned (hybrid) first-year Spanish program in spring 2011.