Project Summary

Title: Large Lecture General Education Health Classes: Evaluation of Core Assignment Data

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Personal Health Management (HPD 110) is a basic requirement of the general education program at Kutztown University. In the past, students enrolled in this course completed an extensive individualized behavior change plan that targeted a lifestyle factor negatively impacting health status. However, increases in class size and multiple large-lecture sections per instructor rendered this valuable behavior modification core project impractical. Subsequently, a 10-point core assignment quiz consisting of true/false and multiple choice questions related to the behavior change process, and associated assessment rubric (9-10 = target, 7-8 = acceptable, and < 7 = unacceptable) was approved by the Department of Human Kinetics in Fall 2007.

The purposes of this project were to analyze and describe results of existing core assignment quiz data, quantify limitations of this process, and to evaluate the online core assignment quiz as a form of assessment. The intended outcomes of this study were to modify or enhance assessment methodologies if applicable.

I’ve adopted the following methodology: key aspects of the behavior change process are presented in class, the core assignment quiz is announced and posted online in Blackboard for a finite period of time, with the quiz to be completed within 15 minutes of activation. Though convenient from a time- and class-management perspective, this form of assessment has limitations.

Data obtained during the 2007/2008 and 2008/2009 academic years included nine (n = 9) sections of Personal Health management taught by the same professor, with class sizes ranging from 81 to 144 students (n = 976). Overall, analyses related to student learning outcomes found that about one-third of students scored at target, a little over one-third scored at acceptable levels, and under one-third scored unacceptable. Moreover, 13% of students failed to access and complete the online core assignment quiz.

Along with categorizing student learning outcomes, a second purpose of this study was to evaluate this assessment methodology. During the Spring 2009 semester student (n = 162) patterns of all online quiz usage were documented (students also complete online quizzes related to healthy diets and alcohol usage), and the same core assignment quiz questions were included in the written final examination. With respect to failure to complete the online assignment, just under one-fifth of the students did not complete the alcohol and core assignment quizzes, while approximately one-third did not complete the
diet quiz. With respect to performance on the online quiz, almost one-quarter of students’ scores were unacceptable, and performance was generally lower at the end of the semester.

Based on these findings, it appears that, first, approximately 15% of students failed to access and complete the online quizzes. Second, students tended to perform better during the online testing, compared to the written examination. However, it should be recognized that the online quiz immediately followed discussion of material, so that while there was a decline, there is evidence of a good amount of retention of material. Based on these findings, the following changes have been made in administration of the core assignment quiz as a result of this investigation:

- The 10 questions comprising the core assignment quiz are now included in the first and final examination; and not as a stand-alone quiz posted in Blackboard
- The score obtained on the final examination will be used for assessment reporting purposes
- Evaluation of this assessment methodology and related research is ongoing

A full report of this project is available upon request