Week 01 Webinar Follow-up to Q&A Questions

Thanks again to those that were able to view Week 01's webinar and to our guest speakers.

If you haven't had a chance to view the video, it is not too late:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pgtg_-EaQ8U

Also, we had some questions posted to the Q&A section during the live webinar. Those questions were sent to our guest speakers Alisha and Dylan. I have pasted their replies below.

Please note: This is not a required assignment.

Q&A:

1. **How much technology do you incorporate in the classroom setting aside from the pre/post activities and readings that may be in your LMS course?**
   a) Alisha: A lot! I use PPT, YouTube, and clickers in my classes
   b) Dylan: My course is actually pretty low-tech. I teach the face-to-face sessions in an active learning classroom that has movable tables and chairs and some portable whiteboards, both of which I use extensively. Although there are monitors in there and ways for students to project their work out, I find that the in-class time works best for community-building and -learning. That said, I use the LMS quite extensively for the online work, including discussions, assignment, quizzes, reminders, and record-keeping (grades).

2. **What about online content where the learner is completing "quizzes" and other practice activities without penalty? I'm interested in knowing what would be a good balance between evaluated assignments (for marks) and content that should be just completed.**
   a) Alisha: I think this depends on the course and what you are trying to accomplish with the activities. I try to stay away from busy work and focus on the learning objectives for the course and consider what is best graded and what might be better just for practice or participation purposes. The general rule of thumb I've heard is that there, for a 3 hour course, students should expect to complete 3 hours in class and 6 to 9 hours at home. With mixed-mode courses (and online too) this gets confusing because your "at home" time and "in class" time overlap. I, therefore, tell students to expect to be involved in the class (face-to-face, online assignments, reading, etc.) for at least 5 hours and week and sometimes more (depending on project due dates).
   b) Dylan: You might check out Linda Nielson's book, Specifications Grading, which addresses this to some extent. I think that using a completion model for many assessments is just fine as long as you define the threshold between what counts and what doesn't count as completion. A rubric helps.

3. **What do you think of breaking down high-stakes exams into a bunch of 5 to 10-minute little quizzes, and base grade primarily on authentic assessments and projects**

a) Alisha: I think this is a very good approach! I don't know how large your classes are (mine can be quite large - over 100 in some instances) so I'm always conscientious of my own time and ability to grade papers, projects, etc. but as a general model I think this is an excellent way to go.

b) Dylan: I think that this is a great idea! One tip is to add in a question or two from previous quizzes on each upcoming quiz so that there's a cumulative element.

4. **What key differences (if any) do you see with regards to blended learning course design for undergraduate vs. graduate audiences?**

a) Dylan: I think it is important to provide clear expectations to both undergraduates and graduate students. The biggest difference I see is that in graduate courses, you can be a bit more broad in terms of your approach to online discussions, as there tends to be more accountability held to graduate students to contribute. Undergraduates require more structure, in my opinion, in terms of prompts and guidelines for asynchronous conversations.

5. **What can we do as teachers when a student rejects this modality?**

a) Dylan: I have never had a student outright reject the blended format, but I make it clear on the syllabus that if they feel uncomfortable in the blended format, then I will help them find another section. This may not be possible if you are teaching the only section of a course, so in that case, it would be especially important to help students understand the advantages of the blended format and what will be expected of them.

6. **Regardless of how much effort goes into a blended course many students feel the loss of face to face time reduces their experience.**

a) Dylan: If you have experienced this, then I think it might be a sign that your online activities need to be re-examined, and you might need to focus more integrating the online and face-to-face components. Facilitating effective online discussions can be very challenging, but this tends to be where students can feel connected to the online portion of the course.