

IIF Grant Final Report, June 8, 2011
Using Digital Media Technology to Teach Writing in the Nursing Discipline
Louise Miller PhD, RN; Valerie Bader, MSN, RN; Bonita Selting, PhD

Planned II project evaluation includes:

- **Pre and post writing assessments, completed by each student at the beginning and end of the curriculum, administered to the individual student at his/her start and completion dates.**

Writing assessments were completed prior to and at the end of the Spring 2011, Evidence-Based Nursing Practice course. This course is the designated Writing Intensive Capstone course. To assess writing skills, students wrote a response to a writing prompt in January at the beginning of the course and then again to the same prompt in May, at the end of the course. The prompt was:

In your own words, write a thoughtful essay exploring the concept of evidence-based practice and what it means to you. Please use examples and clear description.

Pre-post writing assessments were evaluated on (1) clear purpose statement, (2) well-developed and relevant content, (3) word and writing fluency, (4) integration of ideas into nursing concepts and clinical care. Overall, the assessments indicated students were better able to conceptualize evidence-based practice and express their more coherent ideas in their written responses. These writing assessments will be used as a component of the needs assessment and pilot data for a HRSA grant proposal to support continuation of this project.

- **Pre and post course-specific digital video media assignment, with results.**

The digital media assignment covered the final six weeks of 4930. Students used work completed during the early part of the semester to develop a “best clinical practice” video product. During face-to-face class in March, students were loaned a flip camera, practiced using their cameras, and critiqued instructor-produced videos. Writing components of the required video project included:

- (1) full sentence outline of the best practice video, completed during class time and submitted for peer review;
- (2) storyboard describing the planned video scenes, submitted to Blackboard assignments;
- (3) video script with all details of the video written out, and peer reviewed by classmates;
- (4) filming and editing best practice video and video upload to YouTube;
- (5) rebuttal paper addressing likely arguments opposing proposed best practice, with use of evidence to support student’s position; peer reviewed by classmates.

Students were graded on the project as follows. The outline, storyboard, script, and uploaded video were graded as complete/incomplete; peer reviews on the outline, script and rebuttal papers were graded as complete/incomplete; 100 points were awarded for completing all components. The rebuttal paper was graded by instructors, with 50 points possible.

Forty of the 42 students enrolled in the course completed all components of the video assignment. These videos were posted to YouTube. Techniques used by students in their videos ranged from simple ‘talking heads’ to creative use of live actors, video of own hospital environment, pictures including professional resources and consumer or own pictures, and superimposed text and other word processing techniques. All students incorporated a reference list (credits), and all but one were explicit in describing the evidence supporting their best practice.

Quality of the videos varied, however the script assured the videos moved along, were not repetitive, incorporated evidence from the literature, and avoided rambling, stumbling, and pauses/'fillers'.

Students were asked to evaluate the usefulness of the video assignment to learn about communication skills, and writing skills in particular. Selected survey comments are included below; these are grouped by overall themes.

Overall reaction to the video project

Students reported satisfaction and more engaged learning about evidence-based practice concepts and effective writing skills.

- I learned writing can be fun and different. Working on the video project was a new challenge. Something I had never done before. I learned a lot while shooting the video about communication. It was great to see myself on camera and know where I need to improve not just in my writing skills but in public speaking as well.
- I learned that my views are only that; my views!! If I believe something, the best way to persuade someone to see my point of view is to talk to them on a personal level and give them all the facts that I know. If they see how much I know and still decide that I am wrong, there is nothing that I can do that will change their minds.
- That is was easy! I loved this project. I was doing everything that is involved with writing a paper, but it did not feel the same.
- It was more entertaining and interesting to write. It provided more motivation and seemed easier to approach. However, I also realized that I needed to be more concise so that I could give an elevator speech.
- It was fun to do the video and break up the continuous papers. The video allowed me the see the project as a whole and really understand classmates' projects.
- I was really nervous when we met in Jan. and I found out there was a video project involved! I have really enjoyed getting to the point of actually writing the storyboard and script. I really had to use my imagination to create the script. I've never written a script before so it was a fun learning experience.
- Video can help express writing in a whole new way. It really adds more than just writing alone. It was actually fun.

Writing skills learned during project

Student feedback focused on learning to be concise, constructing a persuasive argument, and attention to the audience when writing.

- It's one thing to write well. Many people can do that. It is another very useful skill to learn how to deliver it with your body language, tone of voice, inflections, eye contact, etc. to be personable and still professional. Likewise, some people do not write well but have a great bedside manner and speak well. Combining the two for the video project was ingenious. I think it will help a lot of us with how we present ourselves in the professional world.
- I learned that transitions need to flow and be frequent enough to keep interest.
- I learned how to be concise and stay on topic. The video made it extra important to be concise in order to keep the attention of the audience.
- Importance of organized material, supporting evidence, data base searching for evidence, importance of knowing who your audience is. Importance of effectively communicating an idea with evidence and not opinion.
- To be more focused, more to the point, and to remember who my audience will be.
- Writing is communication. The video project was a way to tie all the writing skills together that were learned throughout course and to bring the information together so that it could be distributed to more people in a manner that was not time consuming.
- Keeping my project within the allotted time frame was difficult. I learned to keep editing and cutting, while maintaining the prime points of my assignment. This was an eye opening experience. When I realized it was too big, I felt that reducing the words would decrease the meaning. By patiently removing the extraneous ideas, I was able to refine my points into a cohesive presentation. Less was more.
- That tone is a large factor.

- Having to come up with the script for the video project really helped narrow down exactly what I needed to say to get my point across. The video allowed me to put the pertinent information only in the clip, therefore making it sound more professional. I learned how to capture the audience and keep their attention for the five minutes. The video project is a much better final product than a traditional paper about the same subject would have been.
- I learned to be more articulate and think about the power of words I use.

Peer review was identified as a useful skill for improving writing and revising components of the project.

- Peer reviewed allowed me to see how others viewed my project. I learned that people interpret what you are trying to say in many ways and this ensured that I was able to accurately what I wanted to get across. If more than one person was having issues with a part of my paper, I knew that it needed to be fixed to help my readers.
- I learned to read others papers in a critiquing manner. It helped me to critique my own paper as I was writing it. The others reviews gave my paper a fresh set of eyes, which I think always makes a paper better. Often what makes perfect sense to the writer is not perfectly clear to the reader.
- Peer reviews were helpful for identifying these areas.
- I loved to see how other people write, their styles and the emotion behind each of them.
- I appreciated the feedback I received from my peers. They helped me look at my project from several different aspects that I had never even considered before. I would like to think I did the same for my peers. I found this to be very helpful. I was apprehensive to let others see my work and anxious for critiques. I think that my peer reviewing others in my class made my writing better. I went back to my work and could then see the same mistakes.
- I learned that even though it is uncomfortable to critique someone else's work, it is a very important aspect of learning. I can come away with good examples for writing, and it helps expand my knowledge about procedures, medications, etc.

Presentation skills learned as a result of completing the project

Students identified that careful writing preparation for constructing the video “best practice” also gave them experience with learning how to be an effective presenter.

- It's easier to get the message across to my audience because it not only includes verbal but also includes non-verbal communications. It is more effective in persuasion.
- I write and talk differently. When doing the video presentation, I had to make a conscious effort to pronounce wash correctly. To hear me talk in normal conversation, one might think I would spell it "warsh". Also, there is a huge difference in presenting abbreviations using APA format when writing than when giving a video presentation.
- How to present the information in a way that is well articulated. How to write a script in a way I can get my point across without boring my audience.
- I feel more comfortable writing than speaking, so this helped me to focus more on preparing something that I could present rather than just a paper.
- It is difficult to present information in a way that will capture the attention of your audience. It feels awkward talking to a video camera. Even though it is difficult and awkward, it is more fun than writing papers. Any video presentation should begin with a well-written script and storyboard or it is easy to get off track and lose your professional tone.
- I learned how to present information in a professional way. I also learned that quality video presentations can make a lasting impression, and present a multitude of information in a short period of time.
- Importance of maintaining eye contact when shooting a video! Also learned about how to effectively communicate everything you learned about your topic within the 5 minute video. It is harder to fit everything you want to say into such a short time frame. It makes me understand more of what was reviewed on the on-campus days.

Technology issues encountered

Few issues were identified. No problems were encountered with the Flip Cameras; software issues were primarily PC-related.

- How to make a video and how to use Utube. To be more focused.
- More practice using I Movie Maker.
- It is difficult to present information in a way that will capture the attention of your audience. It feels awkward talking to a video camera. Even though it is difficult and awkward, it is more fun than writing papers. Any video presentation should begin with a well-written script and storyboard or it is easy to get off track and lose your professional tone.

Faculty participation in DMAC, June 2 – 14, 2011:

• **Digital Media and Composition Institute (DMAC)**

Two nursing faculty on this project are attending DMAC to learn more about combining writing and video technology to teach effective communication and writing skills to students. Hosted by the English department at Ohio State University, this two-week workshop focuses on effective use of digital media in college composition assignments. In this institute, a range of contemporary digital literacy practices is explored —alphabetic, visual, audio, and multimodal—with application for design of meaningful assignments, syllabi, curricula, and programs.

Use of II funds to date:

Cisco Flip Cameras purchased (29) = \$2702.06 (15 with II grant funding; 14 cameras were initially purchased through funds from the Vice Provost's office). Additional cameras will be purchased with remaining funds to meet expected increased enrollment in the program (80 or more students per semester in the upcoming years) as well as take advantage of the opportunity to buy cameras now available. Unfortunately, Cisco, makers of the Flip Camera, are ending production of the camera, justifying this decision that this simple technology will be obsolete in the face of more advanced (and expensive) technology, particularly the iPhone.

MAC computer for faculty use in producing and managing student videos = \$1799.00

DMAC conference fees for two nursing faculty = \$4311.80 to date; *Additional expenses* to be added include transportation, lodging, meals.

Total spent to date = \$8,812.86

Additional expenses:

Flip cameras as funds permit

External back up drive to be purchased for archiving videos and file storage as new materials are developed = \$196

DMAC Institute fees

Next steps for video media /writing projects:

Course revisions to the video assignment will be made to 4930 based on instructor and student evaluations of the successes and limitations to this semester's assignment. Rather than awarding points

for completing (not completing) the video components, points will be awarded based on both content of the video and form elements related to video production.

Nursing faculty and Campus Writing Program coordinators are writing and submitting a HRSA (Health Resources and Services Administration) proposal to replicate this project and sustain funding for the video equipment and resources needed. This grant will be submitted in the Nov-Dec, 2011 HRSA cycle.

Faculty are working with MU's Alpha Iota chapter of Sigma Theta Tau (STT), Nursing's honor society, to acquire server space to permanently host students' best practice videos. Funds to support the web hosting services will be included in the HRSA grant proposal. An alternative for support of web services if this proposal is not funded is STT funds from member dues or from Innovations funds.