

PY 110 General Psychology

A proposal to Increase Student Success and Retention

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PY 110, General Psychology, is a large enrollment, freshman-oriented course for all majors. It is a Social Interaction course which is required by many majors offered by Somerset Community College and by every college or university in the Commonwealth. In addition, it is one of the few courses that can be taken by SCC's first semester, Developmental students in conjunction with Developmental courses. The goal of this project is to redesign the course to improve Student Success and Student Retention.

The objectives of this project are:

- to assist students to successfully complete the course with a grade of C or better,
- to develop/purchase web-based and Audiovisual Instruction providing students with visual opportunities to supplement lectures, and
- to develop a repository for:
 - 1) a pre-test to be administered on the first day of class to determine student knowledge of the subject matter;
 - 2) online course materials to enhance the students' learning;
 - 3) practice tests to allow students to become familiar with online testing
 - 4) online exams to allow students opportunities to take exams once they believe they have mastered the concepts; and
 - 5) a post-test to be administered at the end of the semester to determine Student Learning Outcomes (SLO).

In Fall semester 2003 and Spring semester 2004, PY 110 had a student enrollment of 948. Because of the extraordinary demand for the course and because Developmental students can register for it, sections close quickly. Of the sections offered in these two semesters, 697 students (73.5%) made a C or better in the course. Conversely, 251 students (26.5%) made a D, E, I, or withdrew from the course. This high percentage of students who were either not retained

or who made a D or an E in the course provides the impetus for this proposal.

Traditionally, the course meets for 2.5 hours per week and is 90% lecture. Furthermore, for the last three years the average class size for SCC North Campus is approximately 35 students; and for the most part, the course does not utilize computer technology or audiovisual materials to assist Student Learning Outcomes (SLO).

Plan for Course Redesign

PY 110 satisfies the Social Interaction requirement in all programs offered by SCC. Redesigning the course is a challenge since large numbers of students (both traditional and non-traditional) take the course. However, as stated earlier, the goal of this project is to increase Student Success and Student Retention.

Two full time faculty members, Dr. Steve Mitchell and Mr. Warren Lambert, will be involved in the course redesign. These two professors will either develop the learning materials or purchase them. In addition, Dr. Mitchell and Mr. Lambert will attend a national conference regarding Student Success and Student Retention during Fall semester, 2004 to learn additional ideas that can improve SLO. The project will be implemented during Spring Semester, 2005. If the course redesign is successful, Dr. Mitchell and Mr. Lambert will work with other PY 110 instructors in implementing the redesigned course during Fall semester, 2005.

In order to help ensure success in the web-enhanced PY 110, Dr. Mitchell and Mr. Lambert strongly recommend that all students score a minimum of 80 on the Compass Reading test prior to registering for the course and recommend that students have had a Keyboarding or other computer course. The rationale is that in order to increase Student Success and Student Retention, students must be able to read and comprehend at the college level and should have fundamental, computer skills.

The two sections of the redesigned course will decrease the amount of class time spent lecturing (from three days to two days per week) and increase Computer-Assisted Instruction (CAI) supplemented with

Audiovisual Instruction. On Friday each week students will be required to go the STAR Center to take practice tests and receive feedback, to take quizzes, to take online exams, and to receive tutorial assistance.

Evaluation of the Project

During Spring semester 2005, two PY 110 sections will be redesigned courses. The remainder of the PY 110 sections will be traditional courses. At the end of that semester, a post test will be administered to all students in the redesigned courses and students in two of the traditional courses on SCC's North Campus to examine if the new approach increases SLO. In addition, students in the redesigned courses will be surveyed to ascertain their assessment of the course.

The proposed budget for this redesigned PY 110 course assumes that there will be substantial amount of programming and web page development assistance throughout the duration of this project.

Projected Expenses

Fall Energized Conference: Student Success (October 21-24, 2004)

Sponsored by Houghton Mifflin
San Francisco, CA

Registration fees for two = \$ 450.00

Room and Travel for two = \$2000.00

Meals for two = \$ 360.00

Taxi fees = \$ 100.00

Audiovisual Instruction = \$3750.00 (15 Instructional DVDs or VHS @ 250 each)

Cases for CD storage = \$ 500.00

Blank CDs = \$1000.00

Miscellaneous = \$1000.00

Total expenditures = \$8660.00