

Design Project Report: SCD - Concurrent Teaching Presentation

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SCD - Concurrent Teaching Presentation

CSUMB plans to offer courses in the Fall of 2021 using a concurrent hybrid modality due to Covid-19. Therefore, courses will need to be redesigned to accommodate both in-person and remote students. Our client, Dr. Bude Su, head of the School of Computing and Design (SCD) at CSUMB, proposed a two-part project which included migrating her CST300 course from iLearn to Canvas, and providing her SCD professors with evidence-based solutions for concurrent teaching. This report will focus on the design of the second part of the proposed project.

The knowledge gap, in this case, can be defined as how to successfully teach a concurrent hybrid course in a way that effectively engages both virtual and in-person students at the same time. The Team Uno design team developed a one-hour training presentation containing best practices for concurrent teaching to be implemented by Dr. Su with her department. After completing the analysis process, we chose to include key best practices to support professors in converting their existing distance learning lesson plans to equitably include in-person participants.

Background

After reviewing our Client Project Description, we summarized the project as having two goals. First, migrating the CST300 course from iLearn to Canvas and reorganizing the modules for concurrent teaching. Second, providing a job aid to help other CS professors complete the same process. Our proposed solution included that we would “develop a short training presentation or module to support around 30 faculty within the CS department with their transition to Hybrid teaching this fall.”

Team Uno presented a Draft Project Definition to Dr. Su at our Kick-Off meeting. After considering our understanding of the project, Dr. Su clarified that she did not want us to redesign

the first week of CST300; instead, we would simply ensure the first two were functional after the migration process. Additionally, she expanded on her expectations for part two, the job aid, and directed us to build a slide presentation for her SCD faculty.

At this point, the two components of the project were no longer connected, and it became clear that there would be two distinct tracks for Team Uno. First, the technological process in Canvas, and second the design of the presentation. We ultimately decided to allocate the migration component of the project to Donny Gillson (Technical Team), and the design of the slide presentation to Lisa Lark, Maricel Manglicmot, and Mark Angel (Design Team).

Project Description

Upon completing the analysis, design, and development process, we provided our client with the following deliverables:

- Slide Presentation: concise slides with detailed elaborative text provided in the notes.
- Teacher Guide: detailed instructor notes for facilitating the presentation.
- Google Form Survey: short poll used as a warm-up activity.
- Resource Page: job aid summarizing key takeaways from the presentation.

Our presentation design recognizes that our learners are college professors and experts in their field, who appreciate opportunities to collaborate with colleagues. Therefore, the content is direct and evidence-based, and the agenda includes time to discuss implementation strategies. The presentation is intended to be relevant to the professors and allow them to build on their experience and prior knowledge; it is not intended to tell them how to teach or rehash recent distance learning training. The agenda is flexible, allowing Dr. Su to pivot and adjust the session based on the participants' needs.

The presentation content focuses on multimodal practices that ensure an equitable experience for all students regardless of how they are accessing course materials and lessons. Participants are comfortable with face-to-face teaching, and they have been forced to become familiar with distance learning during the pandemic. Making a transition from one way of teaching to another is always a complex process with many unknowns. The concurrent model necessary for the Fall Semester will compel instructors to overhaul their lessons yet again. Furthermore, the need to teach concurrently is a source of concern for many instructors. They are reluctant to use a model that is both challenging and seems to violate many best practices implemented during in-person teaching. By exposing the instructors to leading research-based strategies, our presentation may help alleviate their reluctance.

Design Decisions

Upon completion of our design document, we had a meeting with Dr. Su to discuss her feedback. She liked the direction we had planned for the presentation and expressed that our content analysis and design description was thorough and well-executed. Dr. Su also provided updates on changes to COVID restrictions and policies. In particular, social distancing requirements have been lifted, no longer limiting the number of students that can attend in-person classes. However, CSUMB would continue to offer the virtual option they had promised for the upcoming semester. This information ultimately resulted in no changes to our course design.

After reviewing our storyboard and sample materials, Dr. Su gave us the green light to begin development. For the most part, our presentation slides matched what we had described in our design document. The one area that we did modify was the scenario section at the end of the presentation. In our storyboard, we created three slides per scenario intended for identifying

roomer and zoomer needs, teacher needs, and breaking down our solutions and recommendations for each. As we started to fill in the content, we quickly realized that the needs and solutions had significant overlap. Anticipating that the current design would be unnecessarily complicated and confusing, we identified universal needs and solutions from within the scenarios. We placed this information in two new introductory slides while simplifying the scenarios themselves into brief descriptions covering issues specific to each case.

Next, we presented Dr. Su with completed drafts of our final deliverables. Her feedback was minimal and easily resolved. We deleted a redundant bullet point and answered some questions Dr. Su had about specific slides she wanted to better understand before presenting. Interestingly, she brought up a concern with our recommendation to pre-record lectures. Even though our research highlighted the benefits of these videos, Dr. Su explained to us that she and her professors have struggled to hold students accountable for watching video lectures on their own. We had a productive discussion about possible solutions and ultimately added recommendations to the relevant slide for instructors to track student video activity using Playposit or Edpuzzle.

Finally, we introduced Dr. Su to the Mentimeter poll we added for the warm-up activity. While she liked the questions, she decided she would be more comfortable sticking to a survey application she and her professors are already familiar with. We created a Google Form version of our Mentimeter survey, updated all links in the slides, and shared the files with Dr. Su.

Evaluation

During our final meeting, Dr. Su clicked through our presentation and tested each slide. She asked clarifying questions as we went along to ensure that there were no issues and that she was confident about how to present each section. No functionality problems were observed

during this process and no errors were found. We intended to get her feedback as soon as possible to give us time to make any necessary changes and complete developmental testing. However, because there were no problems and she was happy with the deliverables, this made further testing unnecessary. As a result, we did not end up completing any formal developmental testing, although in hindsight this might have been a helpful step to have completed before sharing our finished deliverables with Dr. Su. In a follow-up email, Dr. Su stated, “Everything looks good to me. Thank you very much for all of your thoughtful work! I am very happy with the final deliverables. Cheers!”

To evaluate reactions and learning (Levels 1 and 2), Dr. Su will informally observe the attendees as they participate in discussions and complete the practice activity. There are currently no plans to formally determine if behavioral changes in the workplace take place after the presentation (level 3). However, Dr. Su and other leadership team members will be able to observe how the course objectives are applied by learners in the weeks and months after the program is presented. There is no plan to do a cost-benefit analysis (level 4) on the program at this time.

Teamwork

The breakdown of responsibilities for Team Uno is shown in Table 1. Both the design team and the technology team worked independently on their respective project responsibilities. However, if anyone needed support, we were all there for each other. As Project Manager, Mark Angel was the primary contact with the Client for the design team; however, he rarely sent an email or made a call without first consulting the team. All design team members participated in the development and editing of all slides. As Strategist, Lisa Lark took the lead on formatting and

refining much of the project content. As Communications Coordinator, Maricel Manglicmot was responsible for internal communications, conflict resolution, and proofreading all documents.

Table 1

Team Uno Project Responsibilities

Design Team	
Mark Angel	Project Manager
Lisa Lark	Strategist
Maricel Manglicmot	Communications Coordinator
Technology Team	
Donny Gillson	Technical Lead

One successful strategy for our group involved keeping the client informed at all key points throughout the project. When each deliverable was ready in draft form, we composed a meeting agenda. Each team member was responsible for a particular topic for a specific number of minutes, and Dr. Su was always given plenty of time to contribute. When a draft was emailed to Dr. Su for feedback, the relevant agenda was also included for review.

Another thing that was particularly successful, and is perhaps a somewhat unique characteristic of Team Uno, is the judicious implementation of intentional frivolity. This process often extends the time it takes to complete a team meeting session. That time is well spent, however, as it increases team cohesiveness and reduces burnout. For example, working late one night last Fall Semester we established our team symbology (Figure 1), our team motto of “Uno, Uno,” our team law “Work hard. Laugh hard,” and other frivolities, much of it loosely based on word-plays respecting the 80’s sit-com “Mork and Mindy.” It should be noted that most of the team members at the time had never heard of Mork or Mindy, nor were they even born when that sitcom was popular--or was it ever really popular?

Figure 1

Team Uno Logo: “Work hard, laugh hard.”



This team spirit quickly became a foundation of support with individual assignments, studying for tests, and coping with personal issues. Additionally, inviting immediate family and emergent situations into the team environment helps the team feel like a safe place to be for extended periods of time. Subsequently, more time can be spent developing the deliverables and refining the projects. Furthermore, when family members and other stakeholders feel included, they are less likely to object as strongly to the time commitments inherently necessary for project development and completion. Therefore, we were able to overcome substantial hardship and controversy in order to produce these superior project deliverables.

That brings us to how intentional frivolity helps us approach project development and revision. This is perhaps the crowning highlight of our team’s success. Once we settle on a topic, we brainstorm until we have a rough outline. Then each team member works on a designated portion of the project. Coming back together, we have a fairly uninhibited discussion about the work. In the average project team, this can be the source of much discord. Allowing ourselves to be vulnerable to the suggestions of others without immediately defending our position makes it possible for us as a group to arrive at a far better product than any one of us could do alone. It also makes our work, which is at first cobbled together from different and divergent authors,

cohesive and united into one voice. Being open with our work helps us to open up personally. This, in turn, allows us to be even more open with our work causing even more team bonding and so on in a positive feedback loop which amplifies our team spirit, resilience, and productivity.

Challenges

The first challenge we faced was working with the Client Project Description and figuring out how we wanted to approach it. Because it did not initially involve a training component, there was not a clear-cut path forward. We presented our Project Definition to the client and soon had a new direction in which to proceed. This direction had two distinct paths, one was primarily technological, and the other involved instructional design. Later this worked out to great advantage.

Another challenge emerged during our first major revision session. In our initial design document, we planned to approach the whole project as a single team. Unfortunately, during the design process, it became evident that we should separate into a design team and a technology team. Mark, Maricel, and Lisa felt comfortable working together on the presentation design. Donny, the Technology Lead, felt well suited to working in Canvas and took on that part of the project. Ultimately, breaking the projects into two distinct parts was a natural progression due to the content of the two revised goals.

Finally, the idea of developing a course for a group of professors was daunting at first. This was challenging because each of us is used to working with target audiences who need substantial scaffolding. We had to set aside our personal instructional habits and be mindful of how we would approach the presentation. Our instincts lead us to a decision to avoid an overt teaching approach, and focus our presentation on peer discussions allowing these experts to bring

their own ideas to the table. The presentation became an avenue for peer collaboration meant to provide quick access to evidence-based best practices. In the end, the client supported our choices, citing the propensity for engagement among her peers.

Advice for Future Students

One piece of advice is to set a consistent schedule on day one that everyone in the team is comfortable with. If started from the very beginning, blocking out a day in the week allows you to look ahead and finish your contributions to assignments before meeting with the team. Additionally, this allows you to schedule everything else around that day. While it may seem that a team meeting could take just an hour or two, it would be beneficial to work together for longer chunks of time by collaborating on a Google Doc or other shared document to revise and edit the entire team draft together.

A critical component of a successful project is how you communicate with your client. For example, have a single point of contact and work together as a team to craft important emails. Read and reread emails before you send them and double-check any links. Create clear and consistent agendas for every meeting ahead of time and share them with your client. Assign specific topics to specific team members and prepare your sections beforehand. Before communicating with our client, we always paused to think if we were creating extra or unnecessary work for them. If the answer was yes, we didn't bother them. Be vigilant and respectful of your client's time constraints; instead of reaching out for every little thing, compile a list of your questions and set a single meeting to review them all at one time.

Be flexible and communicate with your group. Emergencies, late nights and tired days, work conflicts, or family schedules can sometimes override team projects. In cases like these, rescheduling would be better than plowing through as the issues could inhibit workflow. When

times get intense from all the work and stress, instill some intentional frivolity. Let yourselves be silly with the team as a mental break before delving back into an assignment. Watch a short YouTube video together, chat about a show or movie you all have watched separately, or talk about something you have in common. Mental breaks can help refresh the team and provide a new perspective for the design.

And by all means, don't forget to get up and move early and often throughout the process. Stand at your desk when you can. Being physically active stirs the blood flow and increases circulation to vital organs especially the brain. Physical and mental breaks ultimately enable more productivity.