

New Ways to Teach and Learn

Today's college students, or "millennials," as they are sometimes called, embrace technology and often favor nontraditional learning environments. A 2006 article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* summarizes this demographic cluster as liking group work, experiential learning, and flexible study contexts. It was suggested that students engage in as much learning outside of the classroom as in it – if not more.¹ Not adapting to this current cohort of students and failing to incorporate new vehicles for instruction would therefore be a serious mistake. Not only would we be failing to reach many of our students in ways that they can learn most successfully, we would also be wasting the very limited resources the college has available. Pedagogy and fiscal responsibility can come together in a very real sense: that which represents best learning practice could also be made available considerable

members opt to shift their students' learning experiences outside of class, they would reclaim up to three hours per week that could be redirected to additional areas of professional development.

The accompanying course schedule is a draft of one such way to lay out modules in accordance with this change. In this plan, each course would meet for three hours each week, unless the instructor decided that s/he wanted to retain the fourth meeting hour, in which case an hour would be made available on Wednesday for this purpose. Otherwise, faculty would articulate how students would utilize the fourth, out-of-class hour, thus preserving the four-credit system. The out-of-class hour is justified by the fact that so much of education, and so much of each course, occurs beyond the classroom itself. For instance, faculty members are now able to communicate with students through a number of different media that were not available when the college was founded, including on-line chat rooms and debate sites, email, podcasts, webcasts, and other such media. Similarly, students frequently engage in service learning to enhance their education. Furthermore, many faculty presently teach hybrid classes that take students beyond the classroom during their four-hour weekly experience. So to organize learning strictly around the time that students are in their classroom seats, as if these other things were not occurring, does not correspond to Stockton reality.

A. Advantages of Moving to the Proposed Schedule

In addition to the greater simplicity of this schedule, with starting and finishing times occurring either on the hour or the half-hour, the advantages of such a model would be:

1. Flexibility

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- a. Modules may be combined to make it possible to hold 3-hour seminars, and 3-hour labs and studios sessions in the sciences and arts.

b. On any evening graduate courses could be held in 3-hour classes that begin at either 5:30 or

Peer teaching/TA model. An advanced student receives independent study credit for leading small group discussions of the material outside of class.

Informal meeting with the professor. Students could discuss issues with the professor outside of class over coffee, etc.

Class trips. Faculty would be encouraged to take trips that relate to and enhance course material.

Service learning. This would provide an opportunity to expand our offerings in this area.

Webstreamed movies and documentaries. Movies and documentaries could be assigned (which would normally be seen during class time) and response papers could be written – or web discussion could be framed around them.

Webstreamed PowerPoints. Additional lectures and short instructional pieces could be made available on webstreamed PowerPoints. Lectures based around the writing of formulas and providing mathematical solutions and proofs could be done visually via Chalkboard (which would enable students to go back over them repeatedly).

Field trips or field research. Students are assigned to observe the application of their course learning at relevant sites, or to collect samples for analysis and discussion.

Case studies. Students identify or develop case studies that illustrate issues raised in the course and analyze these practical situations in relation to the theoretical content of the course.

Group meetings

3. Space and Finance:

The old system has 14 modules during the week; this alternate model has 20. This represents a more than 40% increase in number of modules. Therefore, this plan could relieve current areas of congestion and better accommodate the goal of controlled enrollment growth over the years.

4. Workload:

Stockton faculty members are expected

learning beyond the confines of the classroom itself, crediting students for such learning, and assessing the learning outcomes.