

March 5, 2009

Mark Schlesinger
University of Massachusetts
225 Franklin Street, 12th Floor
Boston, MA 02110

Dear Mark:

This is the final report regarding the Professional Development Grant in Instructional Technology, *Tablet PCs in a Nursing Education Classroom*, awarded June 1, 2005

Faculty redesigned a Systems Leadership course offered within the nurse educator specialty in the UMass Graduate School of Nursing by integrating student laptop work into selected learning activities, facilitated the implementation of these activities and evaluated student learning outcomes. The students worked in small groups to complete selected learning activities, using 4 wireless tablet laptop computers purchased with funding from the Professional Development Grant program. The study was examined and exempted from review by the University Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research.

The participants were 10 full-time graduate nursing students. An exploratory design was used to answer two questions: 1) “What are graduate nursing student and faculty perceptions of using tablet laptops as a teaching/learning strategy in a classroom environment?” 2) “What structures and processes are needed for faculty to use tablet laptops as a teaching strategy in a classroom?” Data were collected by observation, student surveys, group discussion, and a faculty reflective journal.

Results were that students enjoyed using this technology during class, as demonstrated by survey comments such as “really liking this class,” “I love this!” and “This is making learning fun.” A few students noted working with new technology or an

unfamiliar computer “can be trying.” Faculty felt a sense of excitement about the project throughout the course redesign process. Once the course and student group-work activities began, faculty observed that the students worked well together and asked few questions. Each student group quickly used the problem guidelines and learning outcomes to develop a focus for their activities. The Internet wireless network worked perfectly during the course, enabling students to access web sites. However, use of the wireless LCD adaptor was abandoned early in the course due to an unreliable wireless sub-network. The most time consuming processes for faculty included creating authentic learning activities on problems in systems leadership at the graduate student level, locating scholarly web resources for each problem, and creating student guidelines for using laptop computers. All students were very engaged and collaborated well during the group activities. When developing group presentations, students synthesized content from preceding classes. Students increased skills using online databases.

Continued research is needed to examine the impact of selected technology-based instructional strategies on student learning outcomes as well as to examine the use of classroom-based laptop teaching and learning strategies with other graduate nursing specialties.

Results of this study were disseminated by a peer-reviewed poster presentation at a regional conference.

Thank you for your support of this project.

Elaine Parker
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