Enhancing Asynchronous RN to BSN Online Instructor-Learner Engagement Using Video-Recorded Assignment Directions: A Descriptive Study

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Online instructors who convey a personable, enthusiastic class presence promote student engagement for learning (Foronda, 2014). Teaching strategies that use technology are especially important in asynchronous online programs (Quality Matters Standards, 2014) where access to course content must be deliverable 24-hours a day. In this descriptive study, instructor-to-student interactions are assessed before and after four (4) narrated video assignment directions are embedded in an online RN to BSN course.

Leaners enjoy the flexibility and accessibility of the online environment (Parsh, 2016). Asynchronous online courses are designed so learners do not need to be present at a particular time for 'class lectures' Time zones do not impact an online course's availability. Yet, returning RN-to-BSN learners, many new to the online environment, feel anxious and disconnected from their peers and instructor (Button, 2014) while sitting alone with a computer screen. Many have self-doubt that their assignment understanding aligns with the instructor's expectation (Fisher, 2014).

Technology is available today to increase personalized instructor presence in fully online asynchronous RN to BSN courses (Fisher, 2014). Specifically in this study, Camtasia © video software was used to produce four short (< 10-minute) instructor-narrated videos introducing assignment directions. The learner can view these screen-capture videos limitlessly, which is especially important to those who learn visually and benefit from repetition (Holland, 2013).

This study looked at 131 learners' questions in two (2) terms of a Public Health Nursing course. Instructor-narrated videos were not used in one course, and were embedded in the second course. Results show that the proportion of learners' course questions was reduced by 34% with video intervention (Z value = 3.8; $p < 0.001$).

Qualitative data reveal that videos give learners a more personable connection to the instructor by seeing and hearing the instructor on screen-capture videos. Learners, overall, approve of the 24-hour access that videos provide to demonstrate website navigations and assignment examples.

Conclusion: This study indicates that using technology for instructor-narrated videos promotes instructor-to-learner engagement. Access to both written and video directions provides learners multi-modal instruction, as evidenced by the decrease in course questions. Around-the-clock video accessibility is especially important for RN learners everywhere who have unpredictable work schedules. Another important, unforeseen benefit was that instructor time was freed-up for other constructive course interactions.

Title:
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Keywords:
RN learner engagement, video instruction and web based virtual classroom

References:

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Abstract Summary:

This descriptive study demonstrates the significance of using technology to enhance instructor-to-learner engagement in an asynchronous RN to BSN online course. Participants will learn steps to create instructor-created, video-recorded assignment directions. Data analysis is expressed using pre-and post-intervention course questions. Benefits to both learner and instructor are discussed.

Content Outline:

Online instructors who convey a personable, enthusiastic class presence promote student engagement for learning (Foronda, 2014). Teaching strategies that use technology are especially important in asynchronous online programs (Quality Matters Standards, 2014) where access to course content must be deliverable 24-hours a day. In this descriptive study, instructor-to-student interactions are assessed before and after four (4) narrated video assignment directions are embedded in an online RN to BSN course.

Background:

 Leaners enjoy the flexibility and accessibility of the online environment (Parsh, 2016). Asynchronous online courses are designed so learners do not need to be present at a particular time for 'class lectures.' Time zones and the International Date Line do not impact an online course's availability.

Technology can enliven course content and open new communication pathways for online learners (Foronda, 2014). RNs returning to BSN studies, historically, are kinesthetic learners in their previous face-to-face, clinically focused program. Understandably, RN-to-BSN learners, many new to the online environment, feel anxious and disconnected from their peers and instructor (Button, 2014). Returning learners have self-doubt that their assignment understanding aligns with the instructor's expectation (Fisher, 2014).   Insecurity develops when sitting alone with a computer screen.

Technology is available today to increase personalized instructor presence in fully online asynchronous RN to BSN courses (Fisher, 2014).   Instructor-narrated videos, online streaming, commercial videos, even you-tube videos bring life to the online environment.

Methods: UWF School of Nursing updated the RN to BSN online asynchronous program so learners can graduate in 12 months of full-time study, instead of the previous 18-24 months. To accomplish this, courses were accelerated from the traditional 14-week semester to 7-week terms. Thus, two (7-week) courses could be completed within the 14-week semester. Faculty maintained CCNE standards and student learning objectives by combining modules and assignments. However, complex assignment directions were often confusing to students. This resulted in many questions asked in the Instructors' Q&A forum. Instructors' time was spent typing answers, or making phone calls to desperate students. Blended and asynchronous online instructors decided to study the impact of embedding instructor-narrated videos.

Specifically in this study, Camtasia © video software was used to produce four short (< 10-minute) instructor-narrated videos introducing assignment directions. The learner may view these screen-capture videos limitlessly, which is especially important to those who learn visually and benefit from repetition (Holland, 2013).

This study looked at 131 learners' questions in two (2) terms of a Public Health Nursing course. Instructor-narrated videos were not used in one course, and were embedded in the second course.

The video's script was organized by using prior semester course questions. Instructor used a conversational format via Camtasia © screen-capture software. Guideline items were described, giving examples when interactive websites were linked. Just as if the instructor and student were face to face in a classroom, the video demonstrated how to navigate and take action on important information.

Findings: A 2-sample Z-test was used to compare the difference of the proportion before (or pre) video interventions to proportion after (post) video intervention of students who had clarification questions. Results show that the proportion of learners' course questions was reduced by 34% with video intervention (Z value = 3.8; $p < 0.001$).

Qualitative data reveal that videos give learners a more personable connection to the instructor by seeing and hearing the instructor on screen-capture videos. The following comments summarize class sentiment:

"I liked that the professor posted a video with each of the assignments. Sometimes reading a whole page of instructions can be difficult to follow (with a toddler running around). She also posted the written instructions for reading in case students needed to refer back after reading the instructions."

"The video tutorial on the big projects clearly helped identify requirements and what to do."

"I really enjoy instructor's videos she presents in the modules. The videos help me understand the assignment with her explanations."

"I decided I would come home, get online and start again as new...I re-read everything, watched your video, downloaded the checklists, etc. I posted my second response in the discussion group for this week. I can do this."

Learners, no matter the time zone, have 24-hour video access that can demonstrate website navigations and assignment examples.

Limitations: One public health nursing course was used, so the findings are not generalizable. No standardized video was made. All 131 students had an RN license, but may have had other unmeasured differences.

Conclusion: This study indicates that using technology for instructor-narrated videos promotes instructor-to-learner engagement. Access to both written and video directions provides learners multi-modal, understandable instruction, as evidenced by the decrease in course questions. Around-the-clock video accessibility is especially important for RN learners everywhere who have unpredictable work schedules. Another important, unforeseen benefit was that instructor time was freed-up for other constructive course interactions.

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Author Summary: Dr. Hobby is an assistant professor at the University of West Florida where she has taught for eight (8) years. She is a certified online instructor by Quality Matters, that sets national benchmarks for quality online courses. She has been an STTI member for 35 years and has an interest in making complex information understandable to her students.

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