

Allison Shearer
Sabbatical Summary (Spring 2021)

Project

Creation of New BIO Class and Study Materials (currently a BIO 299, will be submitted as new class after 2 test iterations): Pre Allied Health Prep Class

Highlights

- Read 8 books on pedagogy, DEI strategies, college success strategies (listed as references in new course) and incorporated them into class.
- Wrote class outline (recently submitted to curriculum) with SLOs, assessments, projects.
- Wrote DE proposal for class.
- Completed DE certification at Grossmont.
- Created course with 7 modules (all pages original writing), assessments, rubrics, grading criteria that is ready to deploy as face-to-face, hybrid, or fully DE class.
- Class is ZTC.

Presentation

Class will be presented to Biology department for discussion and refinement based on input by other faculty members.

Summary

Success rates in Allied Health classes (BIO 140, 141, 141L, 144, 145, 152) are less than ideal. We have found that students entering these classes are often taken aback – and are not successful with the rigor of these classes (especially students who earned a C in BIO 120, have not taken BIO 120 in a long while, or bypassed BIO 120 because they are declared nursing majors). Due to the demands of the programs we are preparing students for, and our articulation agreements, we cannot decrease the rigor or slow the pace of the classes- there is far too much required content to cover per class. Students need a strong foundation in both hard and soft skills to be successful in these classes. Nursing students are under greater duress because the nursing programs only allow 1 retake of the core classes, and Cs are not competitive for entry into the program.

The class that I designed is for a short-term course (intersession or summer, 2 units, pass/no pass) that will help students refresh their memories and build stronger study skills before they enter the “high stakes” classes. Originally, I was going to write a formal OER for the class, but after teaching ERT for most of Spring 2020 and all of Fall 2020 I decided to pivot and embed all the writing and activities into Canvas. (Also, I took an online class and realized that OERs can be detrimental to learning if not well designed... which would take more than a one semester sabbatical.) This Canvas format makes the class more adaptable and accessible for students. It will also be easy to allow multiple teachers to run the class with aligned content and assessments if the demand is present.

Usage of Canvas modules also allows the course to be better assessed because I can track student reading using the “Mark as Done” function on pages, add requirements to progress through the modules, assign discussion boards, embed useful links, and create assessments to bookend each module. The class was designed with UDI principles and used as my final project for DE certification. The class addresses both hard and soft skills, and includes activities that should build a sense of community within the cohort to support them as they move through their future classes.

If the 299 is approved through curriculum we could run the class as early as intersession 2022.

The Module Titles are

- Section 0: Welcome to BIO 299, Allied Health Prep Class (explains pedagogy and purpose of class)
- Section 1: Your Past Biology Experiences (establishes foundation of class and creates a safe learning environment)
- Section 2: Time Management (the most important soft skill for success)
- Section 3: Study Skills for the Biological Sciences (building on section 2, with emphasis on content)
- Section 4: Basic Biology (a review of key content necessary for Allied Health)
- Section 5: Analyzing Biology (aka "How Do I Answer Those Test Questions?") (key test preparation and test taking skills that are specific to science)
- Section 6: Building Your Support System (creating a learning community and getting students to engage with student services)
- Section 7: Further Reading (bibliography of reference texts)