

Development of a Guided Self-Directed Online German for Reading Knowledge Course on the Beginner Level Applicable in Various Hybrid Instructional Modes

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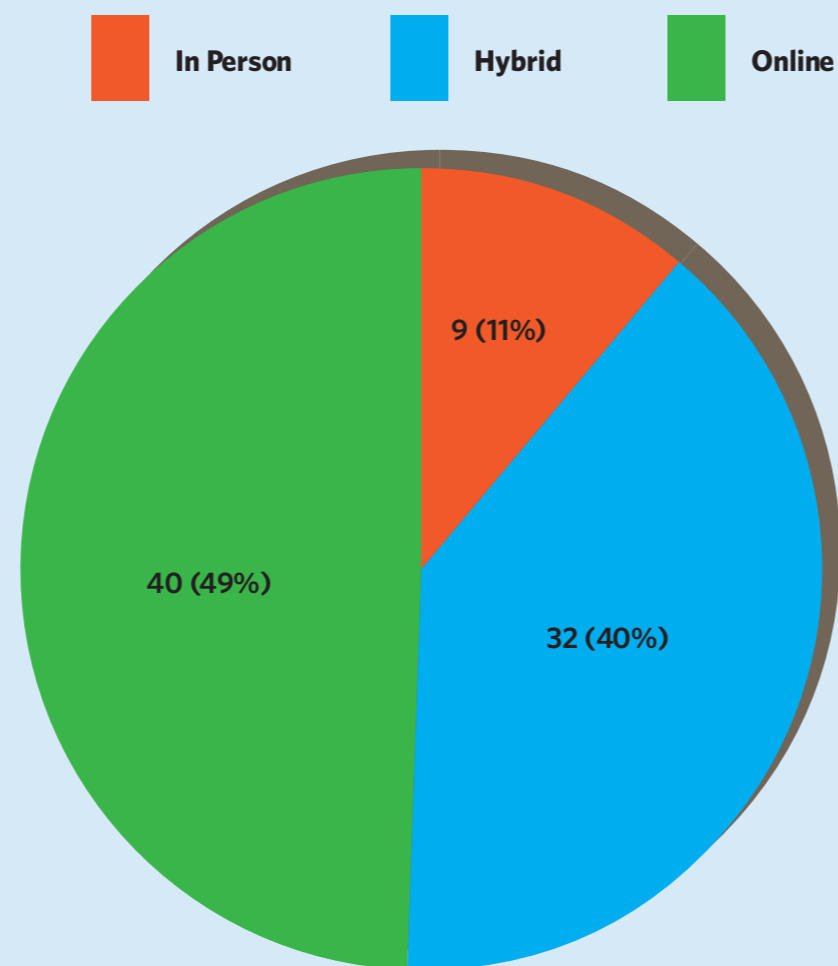
What is German for Reading Knowledge ?

- ▷ It is a guided self-study online course.
- ▷ No prior German knowledge required.
- ▷ No prerequisite required.
- ▷ No textbook required.
- ▷ No formal final exam!

What will you get?

- ▷ You will develop a variety of strategies and acquire reading skills in German to apply in your own discipline or research field, or individual area of interest.
- ▷ You will understand major grammatical and syntactical concepts of German.
- ▷ You will expand on German vocabulary which is also useful for communication skills.
- ▷ You will enhance your own understanding of the German speaking world, its cultural and historical diversity and its challenges.
- ▷ You can take this course in combination with another course in the CENES Department.

Preference Mode of Course Delivery



Teaching Practices

The teaching practices underwent significant changes as a result of the project. Previously, students used a textbook and the focus was primarily on traditional lecture-based instruction. However, with the teaching and learning enhancement funds, a shift towards incorporation of technology tools was possible. This greatly enhanced the students learning experiences in that the course delivery could be managed online. All course material, i. e. textbooks as well as all pedagogical tasks and learning activities were embedded in the course material in Canvas. This greatly improved not only instructional approaches but also allowed multiple access to other online resources, e.g. videos and other ways of visualization which greatly enhanced instructional delivery and student engagement. The incorporation of technology enables the application of comparable and equitable forms of online assessments and evaluation that take into consideration the mode of delivery.

Project Sustainment

The sustainment of the project involves components that can be realized through a number of different factors: The diverse application of technology in the German reading course enables the instructor not only to adapt, modify, and implement new content or components such as reading material about authentic current and past events and developments addressing indigenous, environmental and social concerns but it also enables to scaffold and differentiate the content according to students' needs (Piaget; Vygotsky). This again addresses and promotes the inclusion and wellbeing of our students. Furthermore, the sustainment strategy also includes ongoing professional development that is provided by UBC CTLT and Arts ISIT to ensure the continuation and possible expansion of the initial project's initiatives. Sharing resources, experiences, and expertise will contribute to the long-term success and viability of the project.

Why it is Important

The new German reading program emphasizes the wellbeing and inclusiveness of all students. This is achieved by the diverse choice of reading material that takes into consideration the cultural, linguistic, and social background of students.

The program is accessible at any time no matter the location of students and gives students as much autonomy and self-determination over and flexibility in their learning process in a way that could not be achieved with the previous textbook. The application of technology allows course delivery online or in any other chosen hybrid forms. It also allows higher enrollment per section (50-60 students) in contrast to traditional language courses with 35 students.

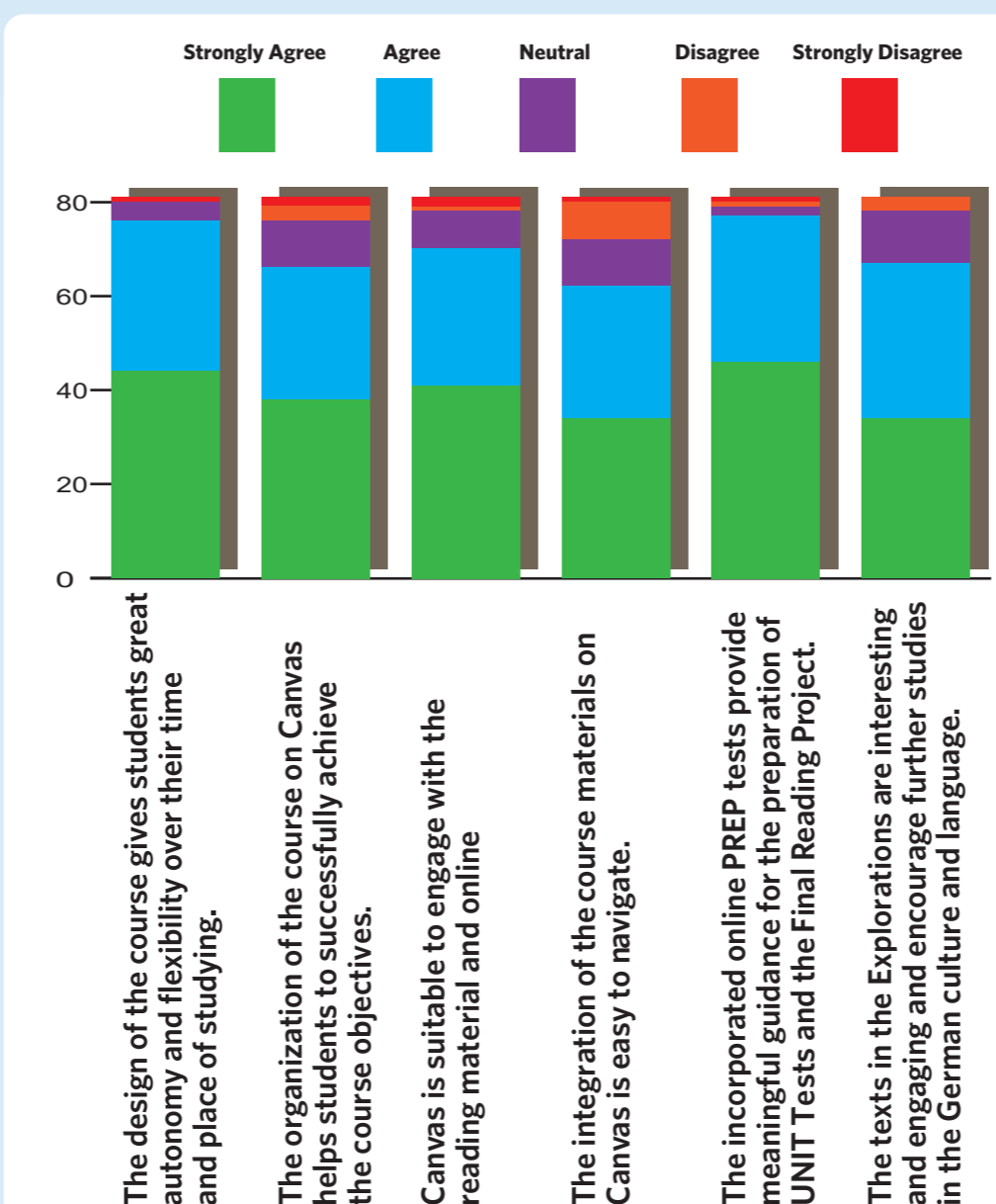
The program keeps students engaged in regular scheduled synchronous online classes, where they can discuss issues with their peers and also through interactive pedagogical tasks for which they have immediate access to answer keys. Students have access to their instructors during regular office hours and by appointment.

The program is cost-saving for all students since all German reading course materials are located in the Canvas Learning Management Platform and available without additional costs.

As observed in Canvas and as evidenced through surveys and student interviews, students engaged with the online material regularly and were very active and engaged in the online classes by way of commenting on certain topics or asking questions by directly "unmuting" themselves and state their comments and observation or use the chat. This was truly a very exciting and rather unexpected experience to observe how willing students were to participate in all class activities, much more than when the German Reading course was taught in-person in class.

Examples of Student Comments From Anonymous Surveys

1. I think the course is quite well designed and easy to follow.
2. I like that the course is self-directed because it allowed me to power through the content at my own pace. Also, the online format supported this self-directed aspect very well. Overall it is an extremely well-organized course which makes it fairly easy to follow.
3. The iClicker is much appreciated for checking our understanding for new grammar rules, and the quizzes are good for practicing application.
4. Clear instructions. Interesting subject material and interesting course content. Get to problem solve in different methods than in my other classes (computer science courses)
5. Flexible deadlines and welcoming learning environment. The readings in this course helped me to learn my histories and contents about German.



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