

FROM “SIT-DOWN” TECHNOLOGY TO LEARNING BEYOND THE CLASSROOM



PHYSICAL & DIGITAL
ACCESS



PERSONAL
APPLICATION



FACILITATE
CONVERSATION

Our Client:

William Paterson University is one of New Jersey’s largest public institutions of higher education offering about 80 undergraduate and graduate degree programs. WP’s Kinesiology Department enrolls 300 students per semester in its Active Lifestyles for Health (KNES 1000) course. Active Lifestyles for Health is a core curriculum class, meeting WP’s commitment to the Exercise is Medicine® on Campus initiative set forth by the American College of Sports Medicine.



Problem Addressed:

Gordon Schmidt, Ph.D., and professor of kinesiology realized that teaching methods in use at the time did not always keep pace with how students learn. Schmidt and his WP colleagues mostly used a variety of textbooks. While wonderful sources for students to learn the evolution and rules of sports such as archery or badminton, textbooks in the fitness realm amount to what he calls “sit-down” technology.

“As education evolves, we look for innovations in technology,” said Schmidt, recalling a time a few years earlier when a colleague asked him to help teach strength training to her class. “I said, ‘Will you be bringing them down to the gym?’ She said, ‘No, we discuss it in class and then I send them to the gym.’”

“I was thinking that wasn’t appropriate, really. It wasn’t practical, at least,” said Schmidt.

Solution Provided:

Core Product

FitQuest: A Personal Journey. Custom Build.

Strategy

In the spring semester of 2015, Schmidt became one of the early adopters of the *FitQuest* web-based learning and assessment system for fitness, sport and activity classes. By using *FitQuest*, the university combines online learning with time in the gym and components that encourage students to evaluate and record their own progress while practicing a sport or engaging in healthier eating practices.

Enabling students to easily track their own progress using their constant companion—their smartphone—can make health and fitness more top-of-mind and lead to more thoughtful discussions in class. WP professors tap into students' heightened sense of health and fitness consciousness to initiate discussions, such as asking students to ponder how physically active they are in college compared with their high school days.

Or, perhaps they're about to go on spring break in the months ahead -- what about preparing themselves for beach volleyball by playing intramural volleyball on campus, first? Need to learn the intricacies of volleyball? It's one of 14 sport and activity modules in *FitQuest* that provide interactive instructional videos, photos, and guides.

The integrated discussion and reflection elements of *FitQuest* enable the opportunity for students to discuss the results of their assessments, share their observations, and learn from each other's experiences.

Results Experienced:

"We're now at the stage where the Active Lifestyles for Health course has used the *FitQuest* book to accomplish all the goals and objectives for student learning assessments," Schmidt said. "Anecdotally, we have tons of references from students, saying: 'This is the best class we've ever had. We love the teaching style'"

For example, in the health component of Active Lifestyles for Health, students receive online assignments. They might study a wellness topic in the first week then reflect on their own experiences. The following week, a faculty member might meet students in the gym and discuss student observations and engage in a sport such as basketball. During the online health lesson, students read a chapter from *FitQuest* on the multiple Dimensions of Wellness. In the practical lesson, the students apply life skills such as leadership, self-responsibility, and sportpersonship, all the while, engaging in a vigorous physical activity.

During their health lessons, in their weekly Discussion Board, they comment on topics such as The Freshman 15 (weight gain phenomenon), or stress related to their impending exams, or even substance use and the effects on their lifestyles.



PERCEIVANT: CASE STUDY

FitQuest has also helped professors do a better job of assessing student progress, particularly in courses heavy on assessment. Before, some students would start missing assignments and fail to submit assignments on time.

“The professor has to grow with student enrollment. As an older professor, I’ve taught for generations -- for 40 years. In this case, I know how students learn. And if I don’t keep up with what their style is I may be out of date.”

Now, professors such as Schmidt can ask students studying a unit of archery to take a video or photo of themselves practicing and to critique themselves as they progress in the course. Or to record a fitness assessment such as the results of a one-minute sit up test and post it on the student’s blog to gauge whether the student is completing the assignment and meeting learning outcomes. The key is for students to plan how the assessment or sport can be applied to a lifetime commitment to an active lifestyle.

“What should occur, and Perceivant has this, is the ability to pull together all of the data that shows how student trends are changing over time. Are the assignments being completed on time? Are the professors getting the results or are we just acquiescing to what the high schools are teaching -- copy, paste and insert into a reflection paper?”

William Paterson faculty are looking to incorporate *FitQuest* in other curricula across campus and to marry subjects, such as swimming, into broader health topics including body mass index, weight loss, body image, body art or even a discussion on skin cancer.

“We talk about how they should be proud of who they are and if they want to make changes to analyze their body fat. Instead of being a negative, it becomes a positive—maybe you can lose some weight.

“That’s where (Perceivant’s) program is designed to capture information and feed it back to us.”

Written by Chris O’Malley
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— *Gordon Schmidt,
Ph.D.*

We engage your students by making concepts timely and relevant. Using our online tools, learners self-assess, analyze, reflect and create strategies for change.

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