

HSET 250 Intro to Hospitality and Tourism

Updated: 4/29/2025

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Program

Teaching Innovations Program (TIP): a year-long program that supports faculty teams in developing or redesigning a course or academic program

Intervention

Redesign the course as a project-based curriculum to improve student outcomes and provide motivation to continue with upper-level HSET courses.

Participating faculty

Esther Kim and Yawei Wang

Pilot faculty: Esther Kim

Implementation

- Fall 2024 (HSET 250_05FA24):
 - Implemented the redesigned course in the full in-person section (Hawk-to-Hawk) with 35 students enrolled.
 - The new design included:
 - Nine instructional modules covering essential hospitality and tourism topics.
 - A semester-long project consisting of five group projects, which collectively accounted for 55% of the final grade.
 - Group work was emphasized to foster collaboration, with consistent instructor feedback provided throughout the project phases.
- Spring 2025 (HSET 250_01SP25 and HSET 250_02SP25):
 - Implemented the redesigned course in both a hybrid section (Hawk Mix, 32 students) and a full in-person section (Hawk-to-Hawk, 35 students).
 - Adjusted the course design to reduce reliance on group grading:
 - The weight of the group project was reduced to 40% of the final grade.
 - Continued to use the nine modules and multi-part group project structure.
 - Incorporated more individual assessments and activities to ensure grading fairness and support diverse learning needs.

Course Redesign Goals and Analysis

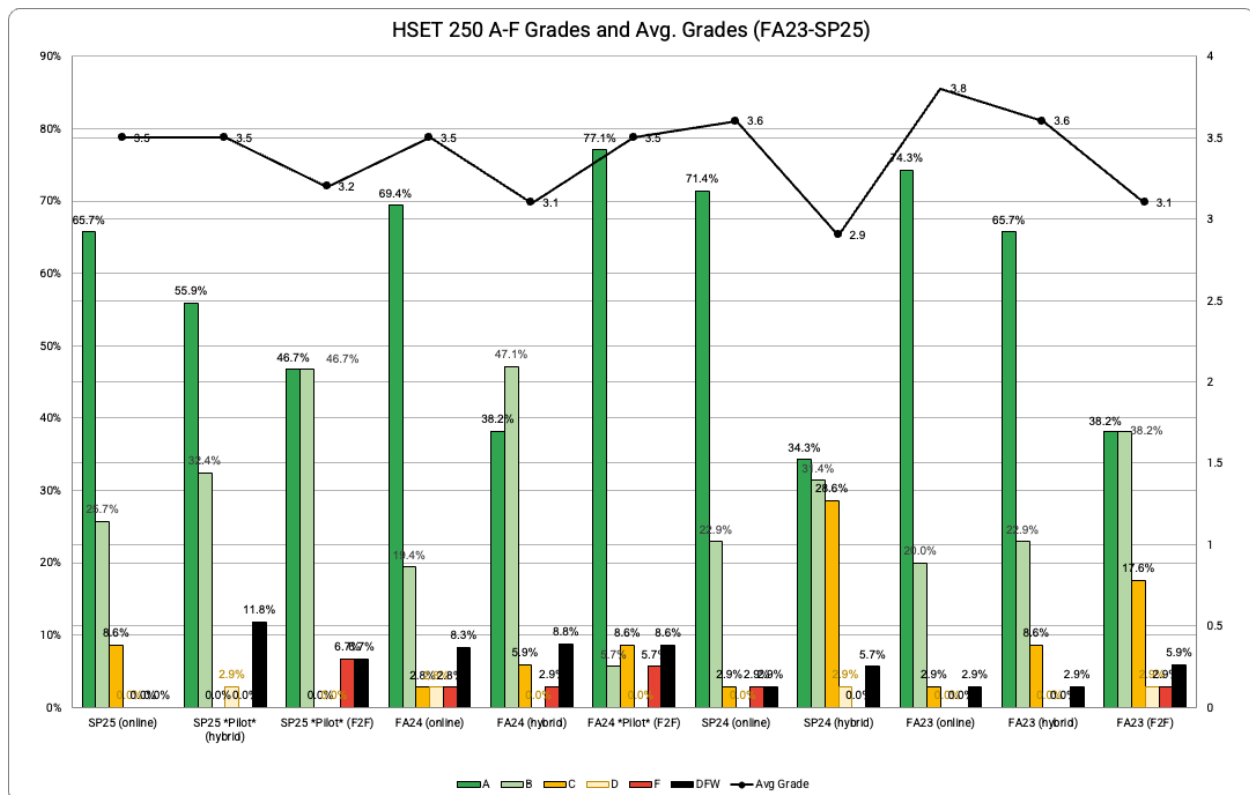
Summary

Goal 1: Increase student success

Status: Done

Discussion: The implementation of the TIP course redesign led to noticeable improvements in overall student performance. Face-to-face sections demonstrated significantly improved outcomes, with more students achieving higher grades, and overall grade averages improving. These gains suggest that the redesigned structure effectively enhanced student engagement and learning. However, in the hybrid section, while academic performance also improved, there was a higher rate of course withdrawals or failures. This indicates that the hybrid format may require additional support structures to ensure student success under the new course design.

1) Summary



The % of A Grades increased significantly; avg GPA improved across all formats; and DFW rates also increased:

2) Comparison to Non-Pilot Course (Previous Terms) by Modality

- F2F Comparison

Semester	Format	% A	Avg GPA	DFW
FA23	F2F	38.2%	3.1	5.9%
<u>FA24</u>	<u>F2F Pilot</u>	<u>77.1%</u>	<u>3.5</u>	<u>8.6%</u>
<u>SP25</u>	<u>F2F Pilot</u>	<u>46.7%</u>	<u>3.2</u>	<u>6.7%</u>

The shift to the new course in the Fall 2024 face-to-face section led to a notable improvement in student performance compared to the previous spring. More students achieved higher grades, and the average GPA increased, reflecting enhanced learning outcomes. Although the DFW rate rose slightly, the overall gains suggest that the new design was effective in promoting academic success, with minimal trade-offs in course retention. However, the substantial increase in A grades was largely due to the course's heavy reliance on group grading. In response, additional individual assessments were incorporated in the following semester to more accurately evaluate each student's performance.

The Spring 2025 face-to-face section showed a slight decrease in A grades, accompanied by an improvement in individual assessments (e.g., module quizzes, term exams, reflection papers), indicating that the individual assessment was successfully captured, resulting in fairer grading. The DFW rate decreased to 6.7% compared to the previous pilot course (FA24), which provided more proactive engagement and support for individual students.

- Hybrid Comparison (Spring Semester)

Semester	Format	% A	Avg GPA	DFW
SP24	Hybrid	34.3%	2.9	5.7%
<u>SP25</u>	<u>Hybrid Pilot</u>	<u>55.9%</u>	<u>3.5</u>	<u>11.8%</u>

The implementation of the new course in the Spring 2025 hybrid section led to a significant improvement in overall academic performance, with higher grades and an increased average GPA. However, the DFW rate also rose noticeably. This may be attributed to new course requirements, such as a semester-long group project and mandatory attendance. While these elements have motivated stronger engagement among many students, they may have also contributed to higher withdrawal or failure rates among those less able to meet the increased demands.

Goal 2: Align curriculum around essential topics

Status: done

Discussion: To align the curriculum with essential industry topics, the course was redesigned around project-based learning, with each project tied directly to the core modules. This approach enabled students to apply key concepts, including service, transportation, and business innovation, through hands-on assignments. Based on the fall implementation outcomes, which showed grade inflation due to heavy reliance on group work, we incorporated more individual assessments in the following semester to better evaluate student understanding and promote accountability. These adjustments also created more structured opportunities for peer interaction and engagement, fostering a more balanced and inclusive learning environment.

Goal 3: Achieve comparatively strong reviews on local, abbreviated NSSE student assessment

Status: done

Discussion: Student feedback from the course evaluation indicates that the course redesign was well received. Across all sections, the course consistently earned high ratings, with the mean score for Question 10 (“Overall, the professor delivers this course with the level of excellence one should expect at our School of Business”) ranging from 4.79 to a perfect 5.00 in the 2025 Spring semester. The percentage of students selecting “Strongly Agree” also increased steadily, from 78.6% in FA24 to 100% in one of the SP25 sections. This overwhelmingly positive feedback aligns with the instructor’s own observations of increased student engagement, stronger classroom dynamics, and deeper learning outcomes.

Goal 4: Address male student success

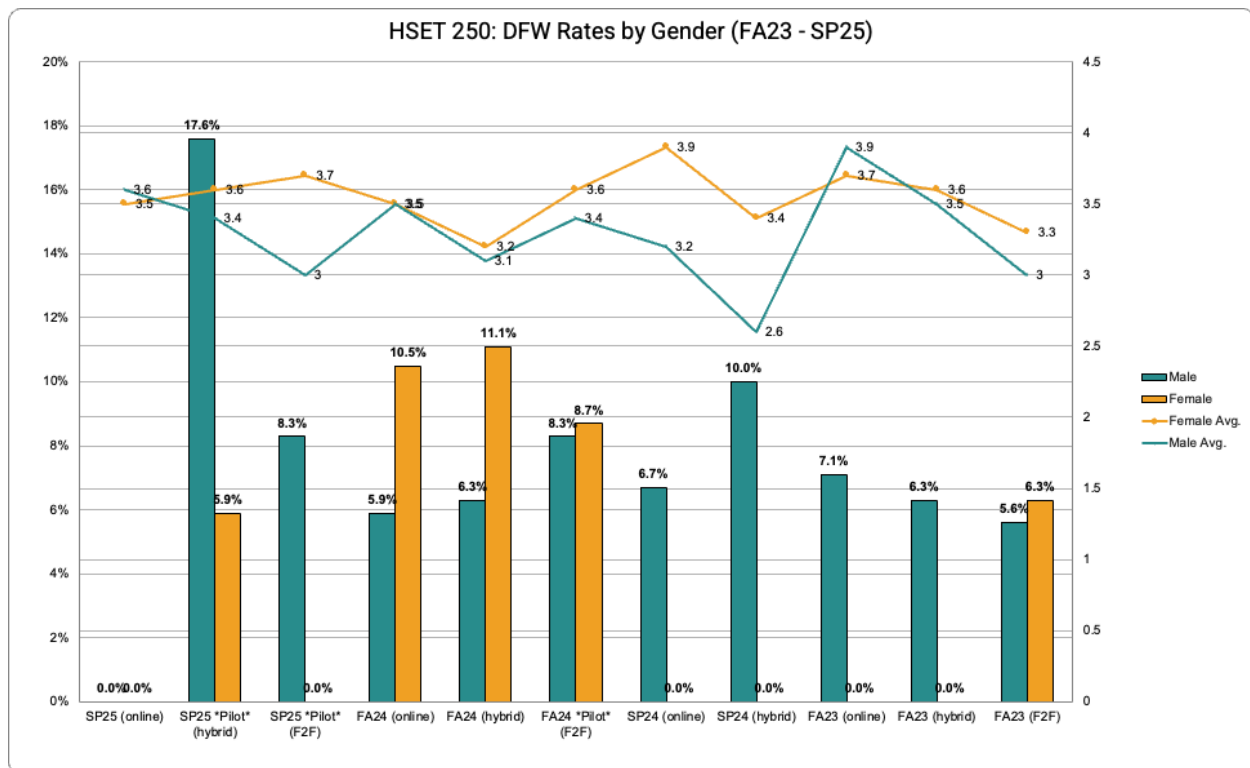
Status: done

Discussion: F2F Modality: In the FA23 in-person section (pre-pilot), male students had 27.8% A grades, a GPA of 3.0, and a DFW rate of 5.6%. Following the redesign, the FA24 in-person section saw A grades increase to 75.0%, GPA rise to 3.4, reflecting a substantial gain across all metrics. A DFW rate was increased to 8.3%. In the SP25 in-person section, male students continued to show improvement with A grades at 41.7% and GPA at 3.0.

Hybrid Modality:

In the FA24 hybrid section (pre-pilot), male students received A grades at 31.3% and GPA at 3.1. In SP25 hybrid section with the new course design, male students showed higher achievement, with 47.1% A grades and a GPA of 3.4. However, the DFW rate increased to 17.6%, suggesting that while academic engagement improved, the hybrid format may still present challenges for some students.

Comparison to Female Students: Female students consistently outperformed their male peers across all pilot sections in terms of A grade rates, GPA, and DFW outcomes. In response to these disparities, targeted outreach and support were provided to male students throughout the semester, including personalized check-ins and detailed feedback during projects. However, the results also indicated that additional interventions, especially in hybrid sections, may be needed to close the achievement gap further.



Student Perspectives

- Overall satisfaction and recommendation
 - Over 90% of students across sections selected “Strongly Agree” when asked whether they would recommend the professor to a friend and whether the course was delivered at the expected level of excellence.
 - Many students described the course as “engaging,” “well-paced,” and “structured for success.”
- Perceived course strengths
 - Students appreciated the relevance and clarity of the content, especially the real-world applications and connections to the hospitality industry.

- The group projects were frequently mentioned as a major strength, helping students develop collaboration and communication skills.
 - Several students highlighted the instructor's supportive approach, passion for hospitality, and ability to break down complex topics.
- Suggestions for improvement
 - Some students expressed a desire for more hands-on, experiential learning, such as field visits or virtual tours of hospitality venues.
 - More interactive components, such as in-class simulations or deeper engagement with case studies.
 - A few students noted the need for clearer assignment instructions, especially during the early stages of projects, and more in-class time for project work.
 - There were mixed feelings about group work, with a few students suggesting changes to improve individual accountability and reduce coordination challenges.

Grade Data Highlights

Grade highlights are noted above.

Next Steps

To further enhance individual accountability and critical thinking within the course, the following steps are planned for the upcoming semester.

- Integration of Packback for Individual Assessments, an AI-powered discussion platform:
 - To facilitate weekly student-led discussions.
 - To provide targeted feedback, fostering a growth-oriented learning environment.
- Diversification of Individual Assessments
 - Incorporate field trips and virtual tours to provide a hands-on experience of hospitality venues.
 - Develop simulation-based assignments that mirror real-world hospitality scenarios to enhance practical understanding.
 - Assign reflective essays to encourage personal connection with course material and self-assessment of learning progress.
- Male Student Success Initiatives
 - Identify and support male students early in the semester through individual check-ins, academic progress reviews, and optional coaching sessions.
 - Assign rotating roles within group projects to promote equitable participation and accountability.
- Integrate the group projects into the 14-week online session