Aug 18th, 2:40 PM - 3:30 PM

Saving Your Time for Where it is Most Effective

Margaret Crowe
Bridgewater State University

Follow this and additional works at: http://vc.bridgew.edu/edtech


This item is available as part of Virtual Commons, the open-access institutional repository of Bridgewater State University, Bridgewater, Massachusetts.
Saving Your Time for Where It Is Most Effective

or Some of the Things I Have Struggled with and Hope I Am Using Technology to Do Better Now

Prof. Margaret Crowe
mcrowe@bridgew.edu
**General Problem:** Too much paper

- **Solution:**
  Use the technology — nothing hard copy that does not have to be
  - Advantages:
    - Saves trees
    - Saves mess
    - Student work does not get lost or “misfiled”
    - Sets the stage for moving to on-line teaching
General Problem: Too much time spent on preparation and composing testing

• Solution:
Use the publishers of your texts—get all of the support materials you can, including course cartridges

– Advantages:
  • Starting point for everything from tests to PowerPoints
  • It is all editable, does not make you do it their way
  • Can provide support your students with no work for you
Problem: How do we get them to read and know they are doing it?

- **Possible Approach 1:**
  Ignore it – let the test sort them out
  - Drawbacks:
    - Issues are not obvious in a timely fashion
    - Students fall too far behind
    - Increases the number of “drops”
Problem: How do we get them to read and know they are doing it?

• Possible Approach 2:
Daily or weekly Quizzes – check up on them regularly
  – Drawbacks:
    • Takes class time
    • Generates grading for professor
    • Raises issues about “make-ups”
Problem: How do we get them to read and know they are doing it?

- Possible Approach 3: Reading Journal – make them write to prove they read

  - Drawbacks:
    - May remove focus from in-depth reading
    - Many students see it as “make work”
    - Can be very time consuming to grade
Problem: How do we get them to read and know they are doing it?

• **Current Solution:**
  Homework Quizzes—short True/False quizzes on Blackboard due before class
  – Advantages:
    • No grading time
    • Automatically entered in Grading Center
    • Consistent barometer of student performance
    • Availability window with “no make-up policy”
Problem: How do we get them to read the Syllabus and keep referring to it?

• Possible Approach 1:
  Keep plenty of hard copies available and hope for the best
  – Drawbacks:
    • Wastes paper
    • No guarantee students ever read it
    • Students ask professors for information they have already gone to great lengths to provide
Problem: How do we get them to read the Syllabus and keep referring to it?

• Possible Approach 2:
  One hard copy per student- if they loose it is their problem
  – Drawbacks:
    • Many will lose it
    • Makes it hard for the professor to refer students back to it with confidence
    • Raises issues if changes have to be made
Problem: How do we get them to read the Syllabus and keep referring to it?

- Current Solution:
  Electronic syllabi only with (electronic) Quiz one week into class
  - Advantages:
    - No wasted paper
    - Endlessly editable
    - Short multiple choice Syllabus Quiz pressures students to read syllabus at the beginning of semester or lose points
Problem: Helping students who are looking for information/notes for classes they miss

• Possible Approach 1:
  Ignore it- they missed class, it is their problem
  — Drawbacks:
    • Disadvantages students who are working hard to recover from illness or personal problems
    • Makes the professor look unsympathetic
Problem: Helping students who are looking for information/notes for classes they miss

• Possible Approach 2:
  Send them the PowerPoint and/or lecture notes
  – Drawbacks:
    • Makes work/takes time for professor, especially for extended absences
    • Nobody gets to see my messy misspelled notes
    • Could be too much a crutch for lazy students
**Problem:** Helping students who are looking for information/notes for classes they miss

- **Possible Approach 3:**
  Find a student to share notes with them
  - **Drawbacks:**
    - Student may agree, but be slow or forget to provide copies
    - Helpful student make take lousy, useless notes
Problem: Helping students who are looking for information/notes for classes they miss

• Current Solution - Part 1:
  Official Class Secretary/ Secretaries- notes posted on a discussion board
  – Advantages:
    • Each student has responsibility for one lecture
    • Absent students or poor note takers know where to go to check something they missed
    • Very quick to grade
Problem: Helping students who are looking for information/notes for classes they miss

- Current Solution - Part 2:
  Post PowerPoints on Blackboard

  – Advantages:
    • Accessible- Students can prepare lecture outlines ahead of time to aid note taking or access them when they are absent
    • Students often use them as overviews for reviewing
Problem: Testing - specifically the time it takes to grade tests

• Possible Approach 1:
  • Paper tests comprised of mostly objective questions
    – Drawbacks:
      • Does not always test depth of understanding
      • Wastes paper
      • Still a lot of time grading - 35 questions x 105 students = 3,675 ✔️ and ✗️ s
Problem: Testing—specifically the time it takes to grade tests

• Possible Approach 2:
  Short paper tests comprised of mostly subjective questions
  – Drawbacks:
    • Does not generally test breadth of retention
    • Tends to disadvantage students outside of their major concentration
    • Wastes paper
    • Depending on length of tests can demand time consuming detailed grading
Problem: Testing- specifically the time it takes to grade tests

• Current Solution:

Electronic tests comprised of a variety of question types (matching, multiple choice, and essay)

– Advantages:
  • Objective questions graded automatically, saving professor’s time for detailed feedback on subjective questions
  • Linked directly to Grade Center
  • Allows for different learning styles
  • Students and professors can look back at them whenever they like- nothing to misplace
  • Randomized questions decrease chance of cheating
  • Many editable questions available from Course Cartridges
Problem: Papers- specifically the time it takes to grade them

- Possible Approach 1:
  Hard copy papers- with detailed editing in red pen
  - Drawbacks:
    - A lot of paper
    - Danger of losing papers or pages
    - Very time consuming
    - Puts all of the work of spotting plagiarism on the professor
    - Students are subjected to my handwriting
    - Complicates receiving and returning late papers
Problem: Papers—specifically the time it takes to grade them

- Possible Approach 2:
  Hard copy papers—read quickly and given an appropriate grade
  - Drawbacks:
    - Most of the drawbacks of 1st approach (except time) plus:
    - Students often do not understand their grades
    - They do not learn from their mistakes
    - At least partially negates the purpose of such an assignment
**Problem:** Papers- specifically the time it takes to grade them

- **Current Solution (a work in progress):**
  Papers submitted electronically through anti-plagiarism software
  Detailed close edit of first page, with occasional examples from elsewhere
  General comments for the paper as a whole, often containing stock phrases/ explanations for common issues
  Comments emailed to students with quotes from their papers and corrections to them
  
  - Advantages:
    - Saves paper, nothing to lose
    - Well organized, linked to Grading Center
    - Makes most cases of plagiarism or poor paraphrasing obvious
    - Allows students to see examples of issues in their own work without dissecting the whole paper
    - Gives the students feedback to keep, without using paper
Problem: Papers- specifically the time it takes to grade them

- **Current Solution (a work in progress):**
  Papers submitted electronically through anti-plagiarism software
  Detailed close edit of first page, with occasional examples from elsewhere
  General comments for the paper as a whole, often containing stock phrases/ explanations for common issues
  Comments emailed to students with quotes from their papers and corrections to them
  - **Still contemplating:**
    - How do I make this more efficient (It still takes huge amount of time)?
    - Would “Track Changes” be better than quoting their paper and commenting on it?
    - How can I get them to do things like citation correctly the first time to avoid requiring corrections?