Digital Teaching Summer Camp

Managing Your Marking Load
(Or, "Takin' Care of Business
and Workin' Overtime")

What We Talk About When We Talk About Workload

What has you worried about the Fall term when it comes to workload? Share your thoughts in the public chat, if you would.

Online Courses – especially those developed by novice online teachers – Tend to Be Overstuffed!

One study in a recent article published in Nurse Education Today found that most online courses required 6-24 hours **more** work per week than comparable face-to-face courses. That's bad for students – and for you.

Northrup-Snyder, K., Menkens, R. M., & Ross, M. A. (2020). Can students spare the time? Estimates of online course workload. *Nurse Education Today*, *90*. https://doi-org.ezproxy.tru.ca/10.1016/j.nedt.2020.104428

Why Are Remote Courses "More Work"?

- Readings and forum posts add up quickly, as does the time spent watching lengthy video lectures or reviewing voice-over-PP.

- Most/all interactions are typed, which takes time.

- Sometimes, in our desire to cover everything we would in a F2F, we can get overzealous – remember to review learning objectives and keep things streamlined.

Use a workload calculator to see how **your** course stacks up.

Wake Forest University made the best one I've seen: https://cat.wfu.edu/resources/tools/estimator2/

Prioritize Your Assessments

- Which assessments **must** you mark / comment upon, **and why**? (eg. summative, significant % of the grade, ladders another assessment)

- Which assessments **just need to be done**? (eg. the completion is the goal)

- Which assessments could be **reviewed by peers** and still achieve learning outcomes?

- And while we're here… which assessments can you **cut**?

A Note on Communicating Weights to Students

- The amount of time you intend students to work on an assessment, the amount of time you intend to spend marking it, and the "worth" of the assignment to the class should all be in conversation with each other... but they aren't always.

  - Confusion about this can lead to students spending far more time than you intend on relatively minor assignments.

  - How you intend to evaluate an assessment is a powerful signal about its weight to the course (and to student learning).
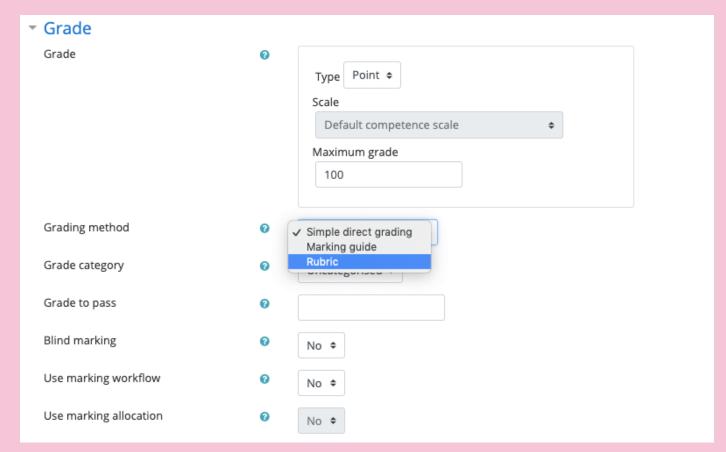
When lengthy feedback is needed...

- ... think about your workflow well in advance.

- Options to save time:
  - Uploading feedback files – note! Do not change file names if you wish to do this.
  - Commenting on computer vs. tablet.
  - Marking within Moodle (requires PDF).
  - Audio / video feedback.

- Consider buying an application to expand text (I use aText for Mac) or a feedback compiler (I use Essay Grader for iOS).

And Consider Rubrics When Lengthy Feedback is Required

Good rubrics explicitly specify:

1. Criteria for evaluation, as well-defined as possible.

2. Range of grades and sense of value relative to other components (eg. if the total of the assignment is 100, how many grades are you assigning to, say, following the correct style guide – and does that align with your learning objectives and your instructional time?).

Test out your rubric on a previous semester's assignment, if possible.

After you create the assignment, you can define the rubric from the Advance Grading option in the Settings menu.

When assignments need to be done, but don't need extensive feedback…

- Consider a course portfolio!
  - Student upload files as the semester progresses.
  - You can check in as often (or not) as you like.
  - Students **submit** the assignment at the end of term.

- Use the Assignment Activity with the following settings:
  - Max number of uploaded files: 20 (or your preference, but not 1)
  - Require students to click submit button: yes
  - Ensure the Due Date is for the **latest possible submission**.

And what about peer review as a feedback option?

- Be sure to spend time explaining to students what good feedback looks like, and give them focused questions to address.
- Peer review works best when groups are already established for other purposes and students trust each other.

- Consider using Forums for this purpose (use Separate Group setting to make it private to Peer Review groups, but so you as the teacher can still see everything).
- Can you let students use audio/video for their feedback?

And Some Non-Tech Tips…

- Plan for marking, especially if the heavier load is new for you. Just as you plan out your due dates, plan our your marking windows and block them off.

- Pay attention to your optimal focus period. I can't mark more than three essays in an hour and still have a non-melted brain. Plan accordingly and don't stress yourself by overdoing it.

- Think about timing. **Can** you mark after a string of videocalls, or when you're minding your toddler? I can't. Arrange your day to maximize your productive time.

And remember the other things that make up your workload…

- We have talked a lot in these series about establishing a communications policy and sticking to it. It's good for community, for student belonging, **and for your work-life balance**.

- Most online course are front-loaded with all the content created in advance. This allows you more time to keep up with the flow of the course. If you have time to prepare this summer, do!

And then there's the little matter of fighting with Moodle…

… don't! You have to live with this tool for a while yet, and we want you to enjoy it (or at least feel as neutral towards it as you do towards a classroom space). If you find yourself struggling with any part of your course for more than ten minutes, get in touch with us.

Congratulations!

You've earned a badge!

You'll see this appear on your Moodle later today; it also includes a very brief summary of the workshop that might be useful for your APAR/PRC.

Remember that if you complete eight of these sessions this summer, you'll earn our Certificate of Digital Competency to recognize your hard work and engagement.

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