

Teaching Professor Newsletter Articles You Might Have Missed

Be sure to include login instructions unique to your institution.

Reduce Online Course Anxiety with a Check-in Quiz (August-September 2015)

<http://www.magnapubs.com/newsletter/the-teaching-professor/115/Reduce-Online-Course-Anxiety-with-a-Check-in-Quiz-13635-1.html>

“Online classes are often intimidating for first-time students,” writes David St Clair. “They wrestle with the gnawing fear that their class has no anchor in the physical world and that there will be no one there to address their fears and concerns.” (p. 129) His solution? A simple, online check-in quiz.

Using Quizzes to Improve Students’ Learning (December 2014)

<http://www.magnapubs.com/newsletter/the-teaching-professor/108/Using-Quizzes-to-Improve-Students-Learning-13293-1.html>

In an instructional experiment, I split students into three groups—no quiz, announced quiz, and pop quiz. I used the same instructional style and teaching materials (including the same textbook and handouts) with each of these three groups. I also gave the same two midterms and final exam to each group. There were no mandatory attendance policies or bonuses for attendance. The announced-quiz group took 10 quizzes, each worth 2.5 percent of the course grade.

The Boring Syllabus (February 2014)

http://www.magnapubs.com/newsletter/the-teaching-professor/100/the_boring_syllabus-8027-1.html

The writing style of the standard syllabus is frequently flat, emotionless, and formulaic. It’s made so in part by the list of things that faculty are required to put in the syllabus: contact information, learning objectives, course description, ADA and other policy information, etc. These policy guidelines are considered necessary for a variety of good reasons. Even so, I have yet to see a policy on syllabi that demands they bore the reader! Much like first impressions of individuals, the course description in the catalog and the syllabus are the “official” first impressions that a student will have of a course (though many now turn to RateMyProfessors.com for “real” course information). What kind of impression do they make?

Assignment Options (January 2013)

http://www.magnapubs.com/newsletter/the-teaching-professor/89/assignment_options-7941-1.html

No, the objective isn’t to make assignments optional. But the article referenced below raises the possibility of giving students some choice over the kinds of assignments they complete. In previous issues of the newsletter, we have shared systems that give students some discretion in the weighting of various assignments. Letting them decide whether they will take exams, write papers, prepare online materials, make presentations, or use other assignment options goes a step further. This article explores the various issues and objections associated with the approach.
