Faculty Center Summer Academy

Category C – Remote Virtual Conference

Jacket Give-Back Faculty Network Report

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"The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go." — Dr. Seuss, [I Can Read With My Eyes Shut!](#)

Teaching Strategy - Utilizing Technology in the Classroom

Empowers learners to stay connected, stay motivated and engaged in the reading process, a fundamental skill for learning success.

- o **Specific Technology**: **Perusall** is a platform for motivating reading through collaborative annotation. Visit: https://perusall.com/

    A. **Why pre-read?**

In the flipped classroom method of instruction, the typical lecture-followed-by-reading & homework arrangement is reversed. Learners are asked to actively engage in pre-learning activities as a precursor to class attendance. Time during the class session is then freed for alternative, student-centered learning possibilities such as focused question-answer sessions, group discussions, and experiential learning-by-doing exercises.

College Success by University of Minnesota emphasizes the importance of mastering active reading. Active reading is "a planned, deliberate set of strategies to engage with text-based materials with the purpose of increasing your understanding." *College Success* stresses that active reading is "the primary method for absorbing new ideas and information in college. But active reading also applies to and facilitates the other steps of the learning cycle; it is critical for preparing, capturing, and reviewing, too." (Source: https://open.lib.umn.edu/collegesuccess/part/chapter-5-reading-to-learn/)

In my courses I, like most instructors, assign readings because I, too, believe reading is key element to success in the course as well as in facilitating the habit of life-long learning. My teaching experience, however, strongly attest to the fact that reading is a lesser priority for my students. Research confirms my suspicions. A study performed by Mary E. Hoeft (2012) entitled "*Why University Students Don't Read: What Professors Can Do To Increase Compliance*," highlights findings of earlier researchers on topic of reading compliance.

"Burchfield and Sappington (2000) found that fewer than 25% of 100- and 200-level psychology students completed assigned readings. Clump, Bauer and Bradley (2004) found that the reading compliance rate was slightly higher when considering psychology classes overall. They found that 'Students read on average 27.46% of the assigned readings before class' (p.1). Connor-Greene (2000) found that 72% of her students reported that they 'rarely or never read assignments on schedule" (p. 85).' "

Results from Hoeft's study revealed a declining pattern of noncompliance as the semester progressed.

"In the first survey, 56% of students in the large section reported not having read the assignment while 38% of the students in the small section indicated noncompliance. At mid-semester, 55% of students in the large group and 56% of the students in the small group reported their failure to have read. At the end of the semester, noncompliance in the large group dropped to 52% while noncompliance in the small group soared to 68%."

(Source: Hoeft, Mary E. (2012) "Why University Students Don't Read: What Professors Can Do To Increase Compliance," *International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*: Vol. 6: No. 2, Article 12.)

B. How to incentivize reading compliance?

If reading is fundamental to learning success, but "'compliance with course reading' is only 20-30% per class (Hobson, 2004)," how do instructors incentive reading to increase student overall course success? ***Best Practices: Encouraging Student Reading*** emphasizes the central role of the instructor in course design. These three (3) guidelines are easily executed.

1. Purge the endless list of readings. The course syllabus needs to motivate student interest by relating how a reading connects to specific course learning outcomes or course concepts.

2. Set due dates close to the "use" date.

3. Deploy "low stakes" quizzes, journaling, worksheets asking open-ended readings related questions, or other scored activities to assess reading compliance.

(Source: https://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/learning-teaching/teaching-resources/teach-a-course/encouraging-student-reading.pdf)

C. Using classroom technology to incentivize reading compliance.

Perusall is a digital learning platform developed at Harvard University designed to motivates reading compliance through collaborative annotation. The platform automatically scores reader engagement based on the timeliness, quantity and quality level of the annotation/ comments preset by the Instructor. Because **Perusall** integrates fully with Blackboard scores to transfer into the **Bb** Grade Center without Instructor assistance. Best of all, students pay nothing for the use of **Perusall**.

My **ECN 379-S01 Intermediate Statistical Methods** course is conducted as using a flipped classroom experience with students engaging in out-of-class pre-reading activities and in-class "learning by doing" exercises. To increase the likelihood of all learners arriving to class more than marginally prepared I have deployed **Perusall.** I found the set-up quick after Kingsley made the initial contact with **Perusall** to obtain the appropriate codes for our LMS and intuitive. Because the course textbook was in the **Perusall** catalog, it was approved and placed in the Library within a few days. I spent only a couple hours creating the reading assignments for the full semester. The assignments follow the ***Best Practices*** guidelines outlined above.

1. Purge the endless list of readings, the course syllabus needs to motivate student interest by relating how a reading connects to specific course learning outcomes or course concepts.

   A set of learning objectives have been identified for each chapter. Learners are strongly encouraged to review the set of learning objectives prior to beginning the reading assignment. Learners have been reminded that assessments are premised on the chapter learning objectives and should be the primary focus of notetaking. Course grades are premised on the learner's degree of success in mastering the learning objectives.

2. Set due dates close to the "use" date.

   Each chapter reading has been divided in half (approximate 7-9 pages per assignment) and scheduled for completion not later than Monday for the Tuesday class and Wednesday for the Thursday class. The course policy on Late Assignments excludes **Perusall** reading assignments.

3. Deploy low stakes quizzes, journaling, worksheets asking open-ended readings related questions, or other scored activities to assess reading compliance.

   The **Perusall** digital platform has been embedded in the **Bb** course. Each reading assignment is valued at 5 points or 10 total points for the weekly chapter reading. Reading assignments account for 20% of the course grade. Student engagement is scored automatically by **Perusall** and the score transfers automatically into the **Bb** Grade Center.

   To assist learners in understanding how to get the most from **Perusall**, the course menu provides a hyperlink to Perusall Support and students have access to two written documents for review: How Perusall Works and Perusall Scoring Examples in Module 0 – Getting Started.

In the **Perusall** Welcome Message learners are reminded of their goals in the reading-annotating-notetaking process:

- *… to stimulate discussion by encouraging* [you] *to **post good questions or comments**, to help others by **answering their questions**, and to **upvote good questions or comments** to draw the attention of* […] *classmates to important ideas*.

Like **McGraw Hill's Connect** platform, **Perusall** metrics track student progress. The collective output of comments and annotations are used to produce a "confusion report." This summary report is an ideal guide for managing in-class time that bypasses the known and focuses more exclusive on specific concepts and concerns.

At **Perusall** < https://perusall.com/ > one can read the following lofty claims—interestingly, each a testable hypotheses at semester's end!

- **Ensure every student is prepared for every class.**
  Only 20-30% of students in the average classroom do assigned reading; in Perusall classes, >90% consistently do the reading.

- **Engage at scale.** Bring interactivity to a course without sacrificing efficiency.
  Students help each other learn by collectively annotating readings in threads, responding to each other's comments, and interacting.

- **Save your time, improve classroom time.**
  Instead of the blank stares students often give to "Any questions?", start class using **Perusall's** "student confusion report" — a one-page summary of concepts students had trouble with or most engaged them, along with some of the best annotations.

As an enthusiastic earlier adopter of classroom technology, I am looking forward to a trial run of this tool and assessing the end results!

Do you have questions or comments? I'd be happy to share. Contact me: Kay Strong **kstrong@bw.edu** .