

My Introduction to ECollege

I am familiar with the online platforms WebCT, Blackboard, and ANGEL. This is my first experience with ECollege. There will be a natural learning curve in the beginning as I become familiar with the platform interface. Gervedink, Nijhuis, & Collis (2003) found that an instructor could expect to add significant time to basic class preparation if learning a new web-based delivery environment (p. 94). Practice in navigating ECollege will allow me to become more efficient, thus reducing time demands in this basic task.

Time Management in the Class

There are a few techniques that I have discovered, through practice and research, that are time-efficient facilitation methods. Of note, anticipating student questions and utilizing the discussion boards effectively are some of my favorite techniques.

I review the instructional material for upcoming units one week before the unit begins. I am able to digest the instructional material, brainstorm various angles and examples of approach, and anticipate questions regarding assignments and assessments. Fowler (2005) recommends that online instructors plan a full week ahead of time, complete complex tasks first, and use a calendar to stay organized (p. 6). I find Google Calendar very helpful.

I then construct my unit work products before the first day of the unit and distribute them when needed. For example, I find that most grading rubrics are ambiguous as to what is specifically required of the student. Many students express that they find the ambiguity frustrating. I add subsections to each grading rubric criteria that enumerate exactly what I am grading. I can easily construct these before the beginning of the upcoming unit with proper preparation. Most students find this very helpful because they know exactly what I expect of

them. I distribute my detailed grading rubrics along with the unit welcome email and then post the rubrics on the applicable discussion board.

This technique saves me a tremendous amount of time. I found that I was receiving numerous emails that asked the same questions before I employed this practice. Spector (2005) found that (for online instructors) email was much less efficient than discussion threads (p. 16). I could not agree with Spector more; I noticed a great reduction in time after I anticipated student questions and posted detailed grading rubrics.

In summary, I can apply numerous techniques for effective time management. I have a realistic understanding of the time commitment required when teaching. I have proven time management techniques that will assist me. I am sure that my effective use of time will only increase as I navigate ECollege.

References:

Fowler, D. (2005, March). Are on-site courses as effective as online? *Online Classroom*, p. 1-6. Retrieved from Academic Search Premier.

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