

Teaching Tip

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What Not to Do

Recently, a colleague reminded me that Teaching Tips should not only focus on “What to Do” to make learning meaningful to students and instructors, but that these tips should also consider “What Not To Do” to make learning more meaningful. Although “what not to do” is often implied in any good teaching tip, such a notion is a good thing to keep in mind when designing and developing a course.

Here are a couple of things to consider when imbedding technology into the structure of your course design. Do not:

- Hesitate to use technology to enhance the learning experiences of your students. However, do not forget that students must be informed about how technology is going to be used in the class. For example, if an instructor has assignments or syllabi posted on the web, make sure the students know about this ahead of time and that they know how to access this important material. Remember, some students still think that such things as syllabi, activities and assignments will be passed out in class in the traditional paper format.
- Hesitate to use new technologies in the classroom if such technology is effective in enhancing the learning of your students. Do not, however, assume that your students know how to use such technologies, including hardware and software. Talk with others, including a consultant, to see what technologies are absolutely necessary for students to complete an assignment. The Center for Teaching, Learning & Technology <http://ctl.t.bgsu.edu/> offers workshops, and individual consulting to faculty interested in learning new technologies and how to use those technologies for teaching and learning. Also, contact the Student Technology Center <http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/studenttech/> to establish support, in the form of workshops and individual consulting for your students.
- Waste valuable class time teaching a technology that some of your students may already know. But do arrange for support for students who are unfamiliar with a particular technology such as software for developing e-portfolios or Blogs. Again, contact the Student Technology Center for this kind of support.

Whatever technology you want your students to use to complete tasks in your course (this includes email, overhead projectors, VCRs, etc.), keep this final thought in mind: What kind of support for those technologies does BGSU and others provide? Is such technology necessary for students to learn in my course (s)? And finally, why use technology at all? This final question is similar to questions we might ask ourselves when using any kind of method, philosophy or strategy in relation to our classes.

Teaching Tips is brought to you by the Center for Teaching, Learning and Technology at BGSU. Contact Dan Madigan dmadiga@bgnet.bgsu.edu if you have an idea for a tip or suggestions for this service.