Spectrum

Faculty Development and Instructional Design Center, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois 60115

Time Management Strategies

One topic that never fails to capture our attention involves how we can organize our limited time to get everything accomplished. With budgets tight and enrollment at an all time high, there is never a shortage of work for faculty and staff across the university.

Last fall, twelve people attended a "FacDev Friday" get together to discuss strategies for coping with the seemingly endless tasks we deal with on a weekly basis. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the lunch-hour discussion proved to be the vastly diverse methods people use to organize and accomplish their assignments and projects. The consensus of the group was that whatever methods one uses, it is important to find strategies that work for one's individual work style.

Suggestions from the group included:

- Set time for specific tasks, including grading papers.
- Work no more than two hours without a short break. Use the break for a walk or other physical activity to refresh mental processes.
- When working on multiple projects, do just one piece of each project. Variation: give each project just 15-20 minutes, focusing your time entirely on one part of that project.
- Break large projects into list of smaller tasks; check off each task as completed.
- Handle each email/document only once; include all pertinent information the first time to avoid having to deal repeatedly with the same document.
- Allocate one day a week to catch up on grading and writing without having too many interruptions.
- If you have a project that looks intimidating don't put it off; list what you can do and do it, then list what you need and seek out resources needed to complete the task.
- Post answers to FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) online so you have to answer students' questions only once.
- Use devices (calendar, PDA, Groupwise) to keep personal schedule.
- Schedule virtual office hours so you can deal with more than one student at a time or have office hours from home (or when traveling).
- Keep grades in an online grade book so students can check their grades without contacting you; use electronic grade book to summarize grade statistics.

Spring 2004

Inside this issue:

Deadline to Note

Multicultural Curriculum Transformation Institute Application Deadline: March 5, 2004

Return to Center!

If you had checked out the 2 videos titled, "Publish and Flourish" by Tara Gray, please return them to the Faculty Development and Instructional Design Center for others to check out and use.

- Apply project documentation to other tasks/projects. Are there certain procedures, phrases, techniques that can be recycled to another project? Keeping electronic files allows us to copy, paste and reformat quickly and easily.

What works for you? If you have suggestions you would like to add to the list, please feel free to email them to facdev@niu.edu. And watch the Faculty Development and Instructional Design Center monthly flier for upcoming FacDev Friday lunches. The topic differs each session but we always have an interesting exchange of ideas.

Additional resources on time management:

Benson, Edmund and Susan Benson. (1999) <u>Learning Strategies and Time Management</u>. ARISE Foundation.

Cvach, Peggy A. (1989) <u>Time management strategies for achieving success</u>. U.S. Dept. of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, Educational Resources Information Center.

Silber, Lee. (1998) <u>Time Management for the Creative Person : Right-Brain Strategies for Stopping Procrastination, Getting Control of the clock and Calendar, and Freeing Up Your Time and Your Life</u>. Three Rivers Press; Reprint edition.
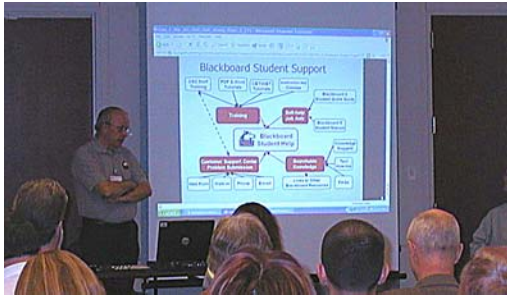

Did You Know?

- Impatica ™ software (http://www.impatica.com/) will further compress PowerPoint slides while saving audio, video, animations and transitions. Compressing PowerPoint files is an important step to delivering presentations online. You can use Impatica in the Faculty Development Collaboratory.

- Saving slides in PowerPoint XP compresses the file size.

- Useful information for faculty on using Blackboard can be found at http://www3.niu.edu/blackboard/

- Faculty can download their class lists from the web at: https://webcluster.niu.edu/WebApps_Admin/servlet/signon_servlet

- Blackboard users can now upload grades into Blackboard.

- Faculty can find links to all grants available at NIU from its website at: http://www3.niu.edu/facdev/development/grants.htm

- Blackboard provides a virtual forum for online office hours.

- Faculty Development offers an Excel template for recording and calculating grades and provides periodic workshops on how to use the template.

- Document Express is a service that provides rapid delivery of journal articles unavailable in NIU Libraries. For more information, check http://www.niulib.niu.edu/docexp.cfm

- Faculty Development has a number of videos on teaching and related topics that faculty can checkout for instructional use. For more information, check http://www3.niu.edu/facdev/resources/videos.htm

- Media Services offers services for faculty on designing posters for exhibits, and producing CD, DVD, videos, etc. For more information, check http://www.media.niu.edu/

- Information about general characteristics of NIU students can be found at the Office of Institutional Research's website at http://ffsrv01.fifa.niu.edu/InstitutionalResearch/databook.htm

- Information Technology Services offers a number of short courses and online tutorials on various technology topics. For more information, check http://www.its.niu.edu/its/CSupport/sc.shtml

If you have additional "Did You Know?" tips, please email them to facdev@niu.edu to consider for inclusion in the future editions of this newsletter.

Because of the changing needs of students, economic shortfalls and readily available resources, the number of faculty members using online technologies in their courses is increasing exponentially. Courses using

Larry Vint (ITS) presents at SLATE 2003

Blackboard at NIU have more than doubled over the past two years alone. The issues regarding support of an integrated learning system often transcend campuses. In an attempt to better address questions about teaching with Blackboard, several institutions have banded together to pool information about how to effectively support faculty who use the Blackboard web course management system.

Established in 2002, SLATE, the Midwest Blackboard Users Group consists of Illinois education institutions that draw together their expertise to establish a broader and more assessable support system. NIU was one of the original core of eight institutions involved in SLATE that has now grown to almost 30 in less than a

year and has gained international recognition. The group's founder and organizer is Ken Sadowski of The University of Chicago. SLATE was created from the concept that all educational institutions that are developing and/or currently using Web-based components to enhance their teaching and learning activities have the same questions and the need for the same solutions.

SLATE held its 1st Annual Conference, "Build it Better – Enhancing the Learning Experience," in October 2003 at The University of Chicago. This event was a huge success with more that 150 participants from over 40 institutions. The conference had sessions of interest for faculty using Blackboard in their teaching, technical and pedagogical support staff, anyone involved with online and distance education programs, developers of programs for e-learning, and library personnel--basically everyone who has contact with Blackboard.

Technical staff from the NIU's College of Business, Faculty Development and Instructional Design Center, and Information Technology Services (ITS) presented a session titled, *Making Campus Support Work Effectively: NIU's Integrated Blackboard Support System,* while other universities presented sessions such as:

Fred Williams of ITS (second from left) presents at SLATE 2003

- *Making Your Syllabus Sing,* Northeastern Illinois University

- *Opening a Course to Every Learner,* Purdue University Calumet

- *Learning by Example: A Look at Exemplary Online Courses,* University of Illinois

- *Copyright and E-Reserves,* Northwestern University

- *Pedagogy of Online Learning,* Roosevelt University

Aside from the newly formed annual October conference, SLATE meets monthly to discuss a variety of issues including upcoming topics such as:

- Sony -"Live Video" Presentation

- Creating Usable and Presentable Video

- Approaches to Creating Faculty Training Programs & Useful Documentation

- Best Practices in Using Blackboard

- Vendor Showcase - what tools are out there?

The SLATE 2004 Conference will be held on Friday, October 15 at the University of Chicago Gleacher Center. If you are interested in attending the 2004 conference or would like more information about participating in SLATE meetings, you can visit their website at: http://slategroup.uchicago.edu/ or contact Dawn Karlovsky, Online Technology Coordinator, Faculty Development and Instructional Design Center at dawn@niu.edu.

PDAs in the Classroom

Want to quit lugging your laptop to make PowerPoint presentations? PDAs may be the solution! But PDAs these days offer more.

The personal digital assistant or 'PDA' is an evolving hand-held electronic technology appearing with increasing frequency in many sectors of society. This device once used primarily as a personal organizer now allows one to orchestrate a variety of functions including computing, telephoning/faxing, presenting, and even permitting access to the Internet with a wireless connection. Special operating systems have been developed to run PDAs including the Palm OS, Windows CE, and Pocket PC. With an appropriate docking device, PDAs can even be synchronized with one's desktop or laptops to exchange data. Data can also be entered with either a stylus or modified keyboard.

A priority to promote hand-held technology in classrooms has been established with the recent "Prepare Tomorrow's Teachers to Use Technology" grant awarded to NIU's College of Education by the U.S. Department of Education. The grant will prepare future teachers to use PDAs for assessment/evaluation of student performance and provide immediate feedback, as well as encouraging them to cultivate innovative applications.

While conducting in-class presentations has been the established norm for quite a while, gaining access to a desktop computer, or securing, transporting, and setting-up a laptop computer can represent enough of a significant barrier to discourage new users of this technology. An innovative product offers benefits to PDA users that may directly address these issues. It enables a PDA's screen to output to a data projector or VGA display, while simultaneously enhancing portability (0.75 lbs. versus 6 lbs. for a laptop) and ease of use to users (little training and much quicker boot-up times). The 'Margi Presenter-To-Go' allows one to generate slides from many printable applications including PowerPoint, Word, Excel and Acrobat. Users now have the option of using a PDA for presenting material to audiences ranging from small groups to larger formal professional meetings. For more information about this technology, contact the Multimedia Coordinator at 753-0613 for an upcoming workshop.

Multicultural Curriculum Transformation Institute 2004

The Provost's Task Force on Multicultural Curriculum Transformation will host its eleventh annual Multicultural Curriculum Transformation Institute from May 11-19, 2004 at NIU. The institute is designed to assist tenured and tenure-track faculty and SPS in incorporating multicultural perspectives and content into their teaching and courses, leading to curricular as well as personal transformation. The institute format includes plenary workshops by invited scholars, presentations by NIU faculty, panel discussions, syllabi feedback sessions, video presentations, and group activities that focus on issues related to race, ethnicity, gender, social class, sexual orientation, disabilities, etc.

All tenured and tenure-track faculty and SPS at NIU are encouraged to apply and be eligible to receive $1,000 award each in support of specific multicultural curriculum transformation projects, including the development of new courses and the revision of existing courses. Those on 12-month contracts will not be eligible to receive the $1,000 award.

Each applicant must submit five copies of a letter of application, a 2-3 pages statement of objectives for participating in the institute and anticipated outcomes, and a letter of support from the supervisor. Applications are due on Friday, March 5, 2004 to LaVerne Gyant, Chair, Provost's Task Force on Multicultural Curriculum Transformation, c/o Center for Black Studies, NIU. For more information about the institute and application guidelines, contact mcti@niu.edu or 753-8557 or check the task force website at http://www.niu.edu/mcti.