

# Lessons from Revamping a Large GE Course

CTLE Sharing

Dr. Zhou Yisu 周憶粟, FED

2019/01/16

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# Context

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## About the course

GEA2002 Globalization & Education (Global Awareness)

120 students in 2018

Enrollment from across all faculties:

- FAH 13
- FBA 42
- FED 18
- FHS 4
- FSS 25
- FST 18

Medium of instruction: English

# Challenges

## 1. **Diverse student background**

- English language proficiency
- Socioeconomic status (they had very different upbringing)

## 2. **Varying degrees of engagement & commitment**

- About 10-20% of students are very committed
- Equal proportion of students had very had time stay on track

## 3. **Distractions everywhere** (mobile devices)

## 4. **Decaying modes of knowing** (e.g. associative & discursive ways of learning in traditional social sciences & humanities)

# Key strategy #1

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Involves lots of hand-holding and communication. For example, in each assignment:

- assignment reminder before each submission of assignment
- assignment incomplete reminder after the due date
- assignment late reminder 5 days after the due date

Each student's completion is displayed on their Moodle home page so that they know their progression. I believe this strategy works well. A back-of-the-envelope analysis shows that, the on-time submission rate steadily increase from the first assignment to the final assignment.

[1] Thaler, R. H. and Sunstein, C. R. (2009). *Nudge: Improving Decisions About Health, Wealth, and Happiness*. Penguin Books.

# Technology helps me with

- Attendance call (via **Moodle quiz**)
- Open-ended short quiz (via **Moodle quiz**)
- Online discussion (via **Moodle forum**)
- Organize activity (via **Google form**)
- Open-source teaching material (via **Github**)



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## Some personal lessons

- Moodle isn't particularly user-friendly (involves lots of checkboxes but not much reproducibility)
- Fall-back plans: for high-stake activities, bring paper copies.
- You will need a TA (or two) for larger classes (not just grading, but help test technologies)

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### Email from a student

Dear Professor, Initially, thank you for replying me and in fact, I am so touched for your patient teaching. As you see, I was missed for some assignment and quiz, actually, there was something trouble happened in my family and I was upset for a time, so I missed many assignments and quizzes, not only in your course. I am so sorry about that but most professors did not accept it and indeed it is my fault. I will post my missed assignment as soon as I can, thank you for giving me a chance.

[2] Cohen, D. K. (1988). Teaching Practice: Plus Que ça Change. In Jackson, P. W., editor, *Contributing to Educational Change: Perspectives on Research and Practice*, chapter 2, pages 27–84. McCutchan Publishing Corporation, Berkeley, Calif.

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I embrace that with:

- Group presentation with a twist: **Video presentation**
- **Public display** of final project
- Social aspects: **comment on each other's presentation & work**

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We can take a look at my gradebook setup on Moodle