Considering Instructor Wellness when Designing a Course

We often see advice for how instructors can help support student well-being within their courses, but not as much consideration for how to keep your own wellness in mind. An instructor's well-being is important because it is the foundation of your teaching, not the reward for completing it at the end of the semester. Additionally, student success and well-being are influenced largely by their instructors, whose ability depends on their own well-being. Every course design decision has implications for your workload and this resource guide provides a few suggestions for managing your wellness before you start teaching the course.

- **Limit demands on your time**: Protect your time and make recurring work more manageable by setting guidelines for yourself. Create clear and detailed policies that limit one-off decisions and batch grading, so you do not get fatigued. You can also consider having clearly communicated response times or schedule time blocks for answering class emails rather than being continuously available.

- **Create systems to reduce repetitive task times:** Use templates for creating assignments and create rubric and comment banks for frequent responses so providing quality feedback does not take as long. Build a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document for common questions or create just-in-time videos for explaining common pitfalls in your course.

- **Reconsider how feedback is provided:** Providing feedback does not always mean you have to apply a grade to an individual student's work. Consider using low stakes, ungraded or automated checks for understanding. Incorporate group work, peer feedback, or metacognitive reflection to reduce grading load.

Resources

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Kennedy, D. R., Clapp, P., DeLuca, J. L., Filtz, T. M., Kroon, L., Lamberts, J. T., Oliphant, C. M., Prescott, W. A., & Ray, S. D. (2022). Enhancing Pharmacy Faculty Well-Being and Productivity While Reducing Burnout. American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education, 86(5), 8764.

For more information or to discuss how you might incorporate these ideas into your courses, contact the Reinert Center by email at cttl@slu.edu.