South Plains College enhanced engagement and interaction in online learning

Using
FeedbackFruits Tool Suite

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COURSE FORMAT</th>
<th>CLASS SIZE</th>
<th>LMS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online/Blended</td>
<td>20 – 70</td>
<td>Blackboard</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DOMAIN</th>
<th>LEVEL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English; Composition</td>
<td>Bachelor</td>
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Background

About the institution
South Plains College is a comprehensive, 2-year community college that provides innovative educational programs spanning the arts and sciences, technical education, continuing education, and workforce development.

About the instructor
Sharon Race is a professor of English at South Plain College (SPC), and has been teaching for 26 years. Since August 2015, she has served as chairperson of the English and Philosophy Department.

Buffy Rattan is an Assistant Professor of English at South Plains College. Here she is responsible for preparing and teaching several English courses at different levels.

Course objectives

• Composition I: Developing writing, comprehension, and rhetorical skills
• Composition II: Sharpening argumentation and critical thinking.

BLOOM’S TAXONOMY

- Creating
- Evaluating
- Analyzing
- Applying
- Understanding
- Remembering

The learning activities, according to Bloom’s Taxonomy, were mainly at the level of:

- Remembering grammatical, linguistic, and rhetorical rules
- Understanding different styles and forms of writing
- Applying feedback to iterate on written assignments
- Analyzing own and peers’ work for adherence to a rubric using critical reading
The challenge

The emergency switch to online education presented many institutions, including South Plains College’s English department, with a great challenge: ensuring an active learning environment which stimulates quality feedback, meaningful interactions, and collaboration.

With the need to offer “an extremely quality” learning experience for students, Sharon Race – Head of Department for English and Buffy Ratten, Assistant Professor of English at SPC sought innovative ways to enable both student-student and student-content interaction in the online setting. That’s why the instructors decided to adopt the FeedbackFruits toolsuite after a successful pilot; thanks to its proven capacity to enhance student engagement and interaction.

The solution

The instructors adopted the tool suite in their Composition I & II courses, which focus on English language and critical thinking skills for undergraduates. These courses feature both synchronous and asynchronous sessions, where students undergo a number of writing, comprehension, and feedback assignments.

Various FeedbackFruits tools were incorporated into the assignments throughout the courses:

- **Peer Review** facilitated peer feedback on draft essays
- **Interactive Study Materials** allowed students to answer questions and make notes on videos and texts
- **Comprehension** helped guide students with reading texts
- **Discussion on Work** was used for both text analyses and building social engagement between students

Turn to the next page to read how each tool was used →

“It is so easy: I love how I can copy an assignment, and then use it as-is, easily change anything I need to...and now we can extend a deadline for students; that’s really helpful as well.”

Buffy Rattan
Assistant Professor of English
The setup

Peer Review activity
Students submitted essays and reviewed each other’s work based on a 7-point scale-rating/comments rubric, before writing a final reflection in the tool. Peer feedback was used to iterate on improved final versions.

Interactive Video
Lesson materials such as explanatory videos were annotated with questions and discussion threads, allowing students to indicate if a concept needed further elaboration in class.

Comprehension
Students practiced the SQ3R (“Survey-Question-Read-Recite-Review”) reading method, identifying the sections and structure of texts, and seeing their peers’ annotations.

Discussion on Work
Discussion topics were posted in a weekly “Wednesday Watercooler Chat”, letting students use the tool like an online forum. Questions about reading assignments were posted using the tool, and students could respond and engage with each other’s interpretations.

The outcomes

Using FeedbackFruits tools throughout the course greatly enhanced the overall quality of education, as remarked by both the instructors and students.

Learning and using the tools had been “super easy,” according to the instructors. The abundant tool functionalities such as grade- and group-synchronization, assignment sharing, and creating templates helped save significant time by reducing the manual workload of data entry and activity setup.

Another advantage that FeedbackFruits offered was access to student analytics, which shows learners’ progress and performance for each activity. Such insights allow instructors to identify the knowledge gaps or challenges, and to make timely interventions.

Compared with the native Blackboard discussion boards, instructors found FeedbackFruits Discussion tools to be “smooth, well-embedded, and with no clicking outside,” resulting in “great levels of engagement and critical thinking”.

As for students, the ability to access all FeedbackFruits activities within Blackboard without extra accounts or sign-ins significantly spared the extra cognitive load of navigating numerous sites and software to engage in course activities.

“FeedbackFruits is helping us to introduce new and innovative ways of allowing students to interact with one another and with the content in the online environment rather than the traditional ways.”

Sharon Race
Head of English Department