

Seven Suggestions from Professor Tips

For IT-enhanced Teaching



How to develop the use of IT in your teaching

Seven Suggestions from Professor Tips

For IT-enhanced Teaching

How to develop the use of IT in your teaching

Center for the Studies of Higher Education
Center for Information Media Studies
Nagoya University

Furo, Chikusa, Nagoya 464-8601, Japan
Phone +81 52 789 5696
Fax +81 52 789 5695
E-mail info@cshe.nagoya-u.ac.jp
URL <http://www.cshe.nagoya-u.ac.jp/>

ISBN 978-4-86293-020-0
March 25th, 2008 (the first edition)

Printed in Japan

Copyright © 2008 by Center for the Studies of Higher Education, Nagoya University.
All rights reserved.

Preface

This booklet was originally written in Japanese and compiled by the Center for the Studies of Higher Education (CSHE) at Nagoya University. This English edition aims at showing the status of Japanese practices on higher education to researchers, practitioners and trainers in the world, which would facilitate further discussion.

Seven Suggestions from Professor Tips

The *Seven Suggestions from Professor Tips* is a series of booklets compiled by the Center for the Studies of Higher Education (CSHE) at Nagoya University. The series aim at improving the quality of teaching and learning at the university. Quality of education would be stepped up with tiny improvements of everyday practice by stakeholders, such as students, faculty members, academic and student affairs staff members, university executives, etc. Therefore, each booklet offers each stakeholder suggestions for daily practice categorized by purposes. Moreover, the quality would be much enriched when efforts towards it by different stakeholders are integrated. Accordingly, all the booklets use the same framework of purposes, that is, the seven suggestions for better teaching and learning at university. We named the person who gives the suggestions as Professor Tips, a fictitious character who was first featured in the book, *Learn with the Professor Tips: How to Develop Your Course Design*, authored by members of the CSHE.

For IT-enhanced Teaching

- How to develop the use of IT in you teaching

This booklet offers suggestions and specific ideas for faculty members and teaching assistants to realize quality education by using new information and communications tools such as the Internet and e-mail. Thus, this booklet contains ideas developed and improved from the existing booklet for faculty members, from the viewpoint of IT use.

Technology has great impact on education. History proves this. Type printing technology enabled the distribution of textbooks and reference literature to all students, while video equipment enabled the use of video images in class. Similarly, modern ITs, such as the Internet and e-mail system, have great potential to further develop the form of teaching.

Many instructors in Japanese universities are already teaching with IT. But teaching cannot be improved simply by introducing new technologies; it is improved by making effective use of the characteristics of such technologies.

Suppose you planned a discussion to deepen your students' understanding of your teaching. Often you do not have enough time for discussion during the class period. In such a case, an electronic bulletin board that can be accessed from anywhere via the Internet would be an effective means of holding discussions outside the class period. However, valuable discussions cannot be realized simply by preparing a bulletin board. Additional actions, such as notifying users of the bulletin board rules in advance, encouraging students to check the bulletin board often, intervening in the discussion to clarify a point so as to avoid confusion, and inviting external specialists may be needed to ensure the success of discussions outside the class period.

In this booklet, sample cases gathered through various surveys conducted on and off campus, which were compiled in a database and organized based on the framework of the *Seven Suggestions from Professor Tips*, are summarized and presented in simple expressions. The aim of this booklet is to identify the good teaching practices and knowledge of each instructor, and offer a framework to promote the wide sharing of such knowledge. The IT-enhanced teaching mentioned in this booklet refers to teaching using e-mail, bulletin boards, websites on the Internet, personal websites and WebCT, a teaching support system. This booklet contains many ideas that can be easily introduced by instructors who have not yet used IT in their teaching.

The basic concept of this booklet comes from the *Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education*, which was developed by the American Association of Higher Education. Based on these principles, the *Seven Suggestions from Professor Tips* was developed, employing advanced concepts, for use in Japanese universities. Unlike the other booklets, this IT-enhanced teaching booklet was developed jointly by the Center for the Studies of Higher Education and the Center for Information Media Studies of Nagoya University. The teaching practice samples accumulated by the WebCT User Society, an organization consisting of faculty members implementing IT-enhanced teaching in Japan, were highly useful materials for the development of this booklet. We believe that, with the addition of this IT-enhanced teaching booklet, the *Seven Suggestions from Professor Tips* became a highly original work.

We hope that this booklet will prove effective for good practice in academic and student affairs, as well as for reflection on their practice by other stakeholders.

How to use the *Seven Suggestions from Professor Tips*

The following are the possible uses of this booklet:

1. The seven suggestions are written in simple and easy-to-remember sentences. You can use them as a framework to organize and systemize what you usually keep in mind and try to do.
2. The 49 ideas presented may include ideas that you have never tried. If you are interested in any of these ideas, why not you try them in your teaching? Particularly, ideas that appear high on the list can be easily implemented, even by the instructors who have not used IT much in their teaching.
3. The Seven Suggestions from Professor Tips series contains other booklets. You are encouraged to read the booklets for faculty members, students, staff, and the executives. These booklets are closely related, suggesting what each of the entities - faculty, students, staff, and the executives - should do to achieve the same goal. Especially, the booklet for faulty members, which comprises general teaching ideas, would be very useful. If you hand out copies of the booklet for students in class, the effectiveness of your teaching improvement approach will be enhanced.
4. You may have better ideas than those contained in this booklet. Please let us know at the Center for the Studies of Higher Education about what you think is important or what you find effective in your teaching. Your ideas will be helpful for future revisions.

Suggestion 1

Increase opportunities to contact students

A big advantage of using IT is that it increases your contact with students beyond the classroom space. You can receive students' questions or give advice on their learning without limitations of time and space. In addition to teaching in classrooms, why not introduce e-mail, electronic bulletin boards and other means that enable contact with students outside the classroom, thereby enhancing student participation in class and increasing learning effect?

- Call your students by their individual names in e-mails.
- Tell your e-mail address to your students to accept questions via e-mail.
- Via e-mail, quickly recommend newspaper articles or TV programs that are relevant to the course subject.
- Introduce websites that provide information about the instructor's research achievements.
- Post an invitation message from the instructor on the bulletin board, to make students feel easier about posting their opinions.
- Send a welcome e-mail to each student immediately after the beginning of a course to show your expectations.
- Transmit relevant information on a regular basis using the class website.

Suggestion 2

Encourage cooperation among students in learning

It is not easy for students to get together to study outside the class period. By using IT, however, students are able to study in cooperation with others through the Internet, without meeting. But cooperative learning cannot easily occur spontaneously. It is therefore encouraged to facilitate an atmosphere or system that encourages cooperative learning.

- Have students introduce themselves on the bulletin board after the first class.
- Feedback on questions received via e-mail should be made available to everyone, using a bulletin board or mailing list.
- Prepare mailing lists or bulletin boards that can be used by students' groups.
- Disclose the group's learning achievements on the Internet.
- Tell students to have preliminary discussions, using a bulletin board, prior to classroom discussion.
- Appreciate the courage of the student who speaks first in a discussion on the bulletin board.
- Offer opportunities for students to mutually comment or evaluate their learning achievements.

Suggestion 3

Encourage students' active learning

Even if IT is introduced for teaching, high learning effects cannot be expected from passive learning. You are encouraged to employ IT as a tool to support students' active learning. Use of IT will enable students to write, store or transmit on the Internet what they have learned or what they think.

- Have students write their study plans on the bulletin board to enhance their motivation for learning.
- Have students write reviews on reference literature and post them on the bulletin board.
- Introduce useful websites or mailing lists for students' learning.
- Take in good teaching materials available on the Internet for your teaching activities.
- Give assignments that are combined with fieldwork or other activities, so that students can't complete them simply via computers.
- Post on the website sample tests and exercises that are not used for exams.
- Prepare some tests that students can take repeatedly, using the online test system, until they pass.

Suggestion 4

Encourage students to review their progress of learning

For students, confirming how far they have progressed toward the goal of the course provides them with important information regarding their subsequent progress. It also gives instructors a good opportunity to check their teaching pace. The use of IT also enables instructors to give frequent and individual feedback, so as to help students review their learning.

- Respond to students' questions, sent via e-mail, within two days or as soon as possible.
- Contact by e-mail students who cannot keep up with the class or are often absent.
- After a regular examination, post on the website interpretations of any problems that many students could not answer correctly.
- Introduce activities using e-mail that enable quick feedback and revision of students' reports.
- Make available the recording or video files of the class, to be used in preparation or review.
- Have students set up a portfolio website to summarize their learning achievements.
- Notify students of their learning conditions and grade distribution, to keep them aware of their positions in class.

Suggestion 5

Emphasize time on task

While the importance of learning outside of class seems to be widely understood, many instructors find it difficult to encourage students to learn outside of the class period. Use of IT will enable frequent asking and answering of questions, and will support students' learning outside of the class period by enabling instant distribution to many students of teaching materials and exercises for preparation and review.

- Tell students to check e-mails and bulleting boards at least twice a week.
- Indicate the expected number of opinions that a student should post on a bulletin board.
- At the beginning of a course, put the teaching schedule and a list of assignment deadlines on the website.
- Send e-mails to notify students that an assignment deadline is approaching.
- Intervene in discussions by posting opinions on a bulletin board that may be helpful in clarifying the point of discussion, so as to avoid confusion.
- Prepare materials on the website that can be used by students for preparation or review to encourage their learning outside of the class period.
- Instruct students to print out materials to be used in class, so as to save time in distributing materials to many students.

Suggestion 6

Communicate high expectations for students

Use of IT will simplify the sharing of learning achievements. By showing excellent learning achievements in a class, instructors can not only praise the good students, but also stimulate other students. Students are required to be aware of rules and manners because IT enables access and information transmission to the world beyond the classroom.

- Introduce the websites relating to the most advanced research in the field relevant to the course.
- Tell students that their learning achievements will be released on the Internet, to encourage them to write for wide range of readers.
- Have good achievements shared in class, to show examples of good learning achievements.
- Teach the importance of respecting the writings of others, and show how to cite information from the Internet.
- Ask outside specialists for comments on students' learning achievements.
- If you know the author of any literature used in class, collect students' comments and questions and send them to the author.
- Prepare advanced learning resources on a website for motivated students.

Suggestion 7

Respect student diversity

Vitality can be generated in a university by accepting the fact that various students have different learning styles and characteristics. By using IT, students can partake of various learning experience that meet diverse learning needs. Student diversity should be viewed as a means of broadening students' views and enhancing educational effects, not as a factor that hinders teaching.

- Teach students that the Internet is a tool that enables them to get in touch with various ways of thinking, positions and experiences.
- Check students' environment for the use of computers and skills, and be careful not to create a digital divide in class.
- Offer orientation for students who are not good at using computers.
- Prepare a bulletin board that allow anonymous posting of opinions about the class.
- Do not overlook any discriminatory or inappropriate expressions in class; use such occasions to increase students' awareness.
- Offer several types of materials or assignments for outside of the class period, to offer students choices.
- Promote collaboration with researchers or students in overseas universities in teaching.

Notes

The original Japanese edition had notes as shown below;

1. For those who are interested in using IT tools at Nagoya University, the Center for Information Media Studies offers the following services:

- WebCT (Teaching support system)

All the IT tools introduced in this booklet, including mailing list, bulletin board and small tests creation services, are available with WebCT.

- Mailing list for class
- Website for class

For further details, contact the Center for Information Media Studies office.

E-mail office@media.nagoya-u.ac.jp

2. Your feedback regarding impressions of this booklet, suggestions for improvements, or important ideas not included in this booklet, is always welcome.

E-mail info@cshe.nagoya-u.ac.jp

3. A website (in Japanese) is available for those who are interested in ideas that could not be included in this booklet and the contents of the other booklets.

URL <http://www.cshe.nagoya-u.ac.jp/seven/>

References

- Center for the Studies of Higher Education, Nagoya University, 2005, "Development of *Seven Suggestions from Professor Tips* (Tokushoku GP Serial Reports vol.3)".
- EMIT Japan, 2005, *WebCT: e-learning community changes university*, Tokyo Denki University Press.
- Ikeda, T., Todayama, K., Chikada, M., & Nakai, T., 2001, *Learn with the Professor Tips : How to Develop Your Course Design*, Tamagawa University Press.
- Japan WebCT User Society, 2003-2005, "WebCT User Conference Abstracts", annual issues.
- Japan WebCT User Society, 2003-2005, "WebCT Workshops Abstracts", annual issues.
- Nakai, T. & Nakajima, H., 2005, "Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education", *Nagoya Journal of Higher Education*, 5: 283-299.
- Nakai, T., Yamazato, T., Nakajima, H., & Okada, H., 2003, *e-Learning Handbook*, Manahouse.

Authors for Japanese edition (2006)

Center for the Studies of Higher Education, Nagoya University

Kazuhisa Todayama

Tatsuya Natsume

Masahiro Chikada

Toshiki Nakai

Tomoko Torii

Hidehiro Nakajima

Yoshiko Saitoh

Center for Information Media Studies, Nagoya University

Takaya Yamazato

Hiraku Okada

Translation

Center for the Studies of Higher Education, Nagoya University

Toshiki Nakai

Yoshiko Saitoh

Illustration

Skhole Co., Ltd.

Printing

DAITEC Co., Ltd.

ISBN978-4-86293-020-0



Center for the Studies of Higher Education
Nagoya University