

Mark Teague | PHD | Teaching a Class

“I’d really like honest, immediate feedback so I can improve my course.”

Scenario: Easy Feedback

Mark Teague, a faculty member in the College of Literature Science and the Arts, started the term excited and ready to go. He had developed a new course for his department earlier in the year, and had worked all summer pulling together what he thought was a collection of great material. He had hoped his course, *The Role of the Prosumer in Contemporary Art*, would provide a good experience for both his students and himself.

Because it is a new course Mark is very interested in getting feedback from the students so that he can make adjustments to the course materials, the pace of the class, and the assignments if needed. This information will be important for the current term, but also make for a better class next term.

Mark has done paper surveys of his classes in the past, and has used CTools to survey students, but both methods have drawbacks. The paper surveys always take a lot of time to prepare and analyze, which will be an issue because Mark is trying to make changes to the course “on the fly”, and needs the survey results quickly. Mark can get results more quickly using a computerized survey, but his previous experiences with CTools were not very good. Perhaps this would have been better if he felt more comfortable with using all the functions of CTools, but Mark is a bit “old school”. For example, he doesn’t accept assignments online, preferring that students hand in hardcopy for grading.

About a week into the term, Mark runs into his colleague Rob Hancock who is teaching at the School of Information. During the conversation, Mark outlines his new course and his desire to survey the students. Rob mentions that he has tried a new online service called Bblis. He says that it is easy to use (“Much better than CTools!”), and provides the kind of immediate survey feedback that Mark is looking for. Rob promises to email a link to the Bblis website.

The next day Mark checks his email and finds the Bblis link that Rob had sent. (“Thanks Rob”). Clicking on the link takes Mark to the Bblis site, where he is presented with a simple sign in. Once signed in Mark is able to enter his first question, “What is your impression of the class so far?” In order to send this out to the class Mark needs to enter email addresses for all the students, but fortunately the class isn’t too large. He selects the “public – anyone in this class can read this” radio button, and hits enter, sending the question out to the students. “That was fairly painless”.

It is now several weeks into the term, and Mark has been using Bblis for the last 4 weeks to sample his students on a variety of topics related to the course. He likes the ease with which new survey questions can be created, and the way in which the questions remain “open” giving a continuous style of feedback over the term, rather than the more familiar “snap shot”.

Overall, Mark is impressed with Bblis, and is now even considering accepting assignments electronically!