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Daily Quizzes: the...Bad and the Ugly

by Sarah Salmon

Quite some time ago,¹ I tried to convince you that giving your students a one- or two-question quiz every single day had a myriad of good aspects. ...Now, we're going to discuss the bad (easily fixable) and ugly (not so easily fixable) issues which I ran into that semester....

The Bad:

- Keeping track of the papers was a nightmare....
- ...The weeks when I got behind on grading were horrible....

The Ugly:

- ...My students felt unnecessarily pressured to master material quickly....
- Giving a quiz every day took class time....

In trying to hold on to the benefits of daily quizzes while addressing some of the issues, I tried something different last spring. Instead of a quiz at the start of each day, I would write the same question that I would have given as a quiz on the board for the students to work on as they came to class, and we would discuss paths to solutions together. On Friday, I would give a quiz consisting of questions nearly identical to those we had worked on for the past week. There was incentive to arrive on time since the students got a preview for the quiz, but I didn't have to keep track of so many papers. The students didn't have a strong reason to study ahead of time (since no part of this was graded) but we struggled through the problems together, resulting in some really good conversations about the previous material....

Photo Credit

Photo of Sarah K. Salmon courtesy of Devin Fox.

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¹"Daily Quizzes: the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly—Part 1," blogs.ams.org/mathgradblog/2016/05/30/daily-quizzes-good-bad-ugly-part-1/