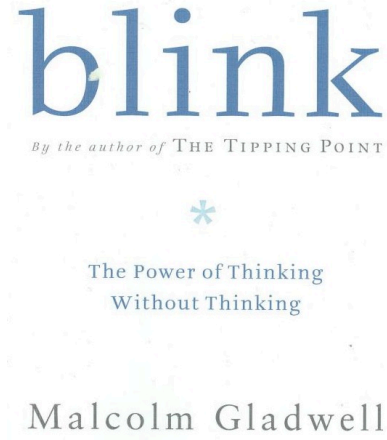


Thin-Slicing & prEmailing

Thin-slicing - Recently popularized in Gladwell's book *Blink: The Power of Thinking without Thinking* (2005), the term "thin-slicing" refers to the ability of individuals to make rapid, yet reliable judgments or decisions based on relatively modest amounts of information; such an ability, Gladwell argues, testifies to the substantial amount of unconscious, instinctive knowledge that many people have acquired over the course of their lives and professional careers. A wonderful teaching example of this comes from the work of Ambady & Rosenthal (1993) On the basis of thirty second observations (three compiled ten second observations from the beginning, middle, and end of a class, 30 seconds total) complete strangers were found to be able to quite accurately predict the ratings of teachers by students who had interacted with them for an entire semester. When students judge us on the first day of class, what impressions do we leave, and can we positively preempt prejudgment?



prE-mailing students is something that can be done to engage students early in a semester, even before meeting them. Teachers can send a prE-mail anytime before the beginning of a course, but it is good to send one a week or so before a class is scheduled to begin. prE-mails can be used to:

- Introduce Yourself (a video can add a personal touch in online and hybrid environments, but this can also be used in face-to-face classes)
- Introduce the Course (Screencasts point out critical components of a course, even how to log-in)
- Build Excitement for the Course (Sharing your excitement often builds student interest)
- Spark Curiosity in the Course (The Answer Is ____! It can be fun to give students the answer [and only the answer] to a question that will be asked on the first day. This helps to build curiosity for the first day.
- Showcase the Course Texts and Syllabus (Some students get lost in the books store; pictures help) It is also good to give students the opportunity to read the syllabus before class starts.
- Include an Introductory Survey (Learn key information about your students before day 1 so that you can Start Right.)
- The Sky Is Really the Limit....There is no Lid