# Quick Guide to Teaching Condensed-Format Courses

Courses taught in less than 15 weeks can be successful and highly rewarding. To ensure your students are achieving course-learning outcomes and not consumed with “busy-work,” consult the Wake Forest Enhanced Course Workload Estimator (<https://bit.ly/workload2>) for estimating course workload. The table below may be helpful in rethinking your course design.

| **Less time or more condensed time for students to . . .** | **Which I can address if I . . .** | **Rethink or redesign this aspect of my course** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Read content | * Select most pertinent readings * Give individual students or small groups a choice of readings and have them share the key findings (e.g., jigsaw, discussion forum) * Turn in a reflection of guided reading questions |  |
| Process new information | * Reduce new information * Simplify the presentation of new information * Provide advanced organizers, diagrams * Provide skeleton notes before class session * Provide study guide after class session |  |
| Reflect on their experience | * Provide reflection questions * In the middle of class, pause, and ask students to reflect on learning to date |  |
| Study for exams | * Place more emphasis on application and synthesis in exams; less on remembering * Replace exams with other types of assessments (pre-assessment quizzes, weekly quizzes instead of 2 exams a semester) |  |
| Redo or resubmit work | * Clarify assignment expectations * Provide a detailed rubric * Show an excellent and unsatisfactory a poor example * Allow students to drop a lowest score |  |
| Ask for help on course-related components | * Be very clear in communicating expectations (e.g., length, format, grading criteria) * Prepare student questions and address them * Provide examples of what projects look like in real-world practice |  |
| Seek support (e.g., tutoring, academic coach, wellness, etc.) | * Include in the syllabus and mention in class available student resources |  |
| Review foundational knowledge (pre-requisites) | * Provide these resources at the outset * Ask students to review the most relevant resources and explain what they discovered |  |
| Obtain new resources | * Provide more resources upfront (e.g., curated set of useful articles or websites) |  |
| Complete long, multi-stage research projects | * Replace with several smaller assessments that are not dependent on each other * Merge two things into one to speed a process up (e.g., student introductions and their topic of most significant interest in the course, which students can later use as a basis for a research assignment) * Reduce length expectations |  |
| Workgroup projects | * Provide time-saving aids (e.g., templates) * Make the groupwork process more public:   + Initiate their use of useful collaboration tools (<https://bit.ly/isu-inst-tools>)   + Assign them to complete plans for how/when they will accomplish work (e.g., expectations, group contracts, peer assessments) |  |
| Receive feedback before the next assignment | * Use rubrics and comment palettes or the Tiered approach (<https://bit.ly/3205D8b>) * Give initial feedback to the whole class while preparing individual feedback |  |
| Communicate with instructors | * Verify email, notification, and discussion subscription settings in Canvas * Communicate your availability with students * Request students to post questions to a discussion board, allowing students to help respond and seeing my answer (if needed) |  |

**References**

Kops, William J. (2014). Teaching compressed-format courses: Teacher-based best practices. *Canadian Journal of University Continuing Education, 40*(1):1-18.

Swenson, C. (2003). Accelerated and traditional formats: Using learning as a criterion for quality. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, 97*, 83–92.

A close up of a sign

Description automatically generated

Quick Guide to Teaching Compressed Courses, by the [Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT)](http://www.celt.iastate.edu) at [Iowa State University](http://www.iastate.edu), is licensed under [Creative Commons BY-NC-SA 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/). This work, Quick Guide to Teaching Compressed Courses, is a derivative of Quick Guide to Teaching Compressed Courses developed by Center for the Advancement of Faculty Excellence, Queen’s University of Charlotte (retrieved on October29, 2020) from https://my.queens.edu/cafe/Best%20Practices%20Documents/Quick%20Guide%20to%20Teaching%20Compressed%20Courses.pdf