A Flexible Late Day Policy Reduces Stress and Improves Learning

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Abstract

We present a novel grade-penalty late day policy used in many of the large lecture, required courses in our computer science curriculum. We study the effectiveness of this late day policy in reducing student stress, diminishing demand for teaching assistant evaluations to push before the homework deadline, and in maintaining or improving student understanding and homework grades. A complete late day policy can be efficiently implemented and managed within our open-source homework submission system, Submitty. Hauten et al. (2017) observed evaluating grading and grading, allowing students to submit and resubmit homework as they need them to submit a homework on time. Students may use these late days as they need them to submit a homework with an acceptable score penalty per day after the original deadline.

A Typical Late Day Policy: Accept penalty-free late days. Apply a small percent score penalty for days late beyond the original deadline.

Due-Non Penalty: "Late Day" Policy: Each student is given a fixed number of "late days" at the start of the term. Students may use these late days as they need them to submit a homework assignment after the deadline for no score penalty.

With our penalty-free late day policy we believe students are more likely to complete the assignment after the deadline for no score penalty. A complex late day policy can be efficiently implemented and managed before the homework deadline, and in maintaining or improving student understanding and homework grades. A complete late day policy can be efficiently implemented and managed within our open-source homework submission system, Submitty. Hauten et al. (2017) observed evaluating grading and grading, allowing students to submit and resubmit homework as they need them to submit a homework on time. Students may use these late days as they need them to submit a homework with an acceptable score penalty per day after the original deadline.

We present a non-grade-penalty late day policy used in many of the large lecture, required courses in our computer science department. We study the effectiveness of this late day policy in reducing student stress, diminishing demand for teaching assistant evaluations to push before the homework deadline, and in maintaining or improving student understanding and homework grades. A complete late day policy can be efficiently implemented and managed within our open-source homework submission system, Submitty. Hauten et al. (2017) observed evaluating grading and grading, allowing students to submit and resubmit homework as they need them to submit a homework on time. Students may use these late days as they need them to submit a homework with an acceptable score penalty per day after the original deadline.

Submission Data

We present a study of a sampling score vs. submission timestamp of nearly 45,000 submissions over 2 semesters. All submissions for assignments with a final submission one day or more late were reviewed, all others were left.

Survey Responses

When, where, why they used late days:

• 71% said they used late days because they needed to
• 54% said they used late days to fix bugs in their assignments
• 35% said they used late days to do minor revisions
• 31% said they used late days to combine over revisions
• 14% said they were due to a course or professor

Advantages to having late days:

• "They allow me to debug my homework before the deadline." (26%)
• "They give me a chance to fix bugs before the deadline." (26%)
• "They give me the chance to fix bugs before the deadline." (26%)

Late days reduce stress:

"I used [late days] when I was going through a stressful week." (29%)

Common reasons for using late days:

• 48% said they saved them for the busy weeks or difficult assignments
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How, when, and why they used their late days:

• 48% used one due to confusion over instructions
• 29% used them to try to get more points
• 48% used them to try to get more points
• 48% used them to try to get more points

Other Submitty Research

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Acknowledgments

• Rensselaer Center for Open Source (RCOS)
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Extension: Early Submission Incentive

In Fall 2016, of the 193 students on the final registration list:

• 47% thought it was a great idea and should be available on more or all homeworks
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Other Submitty Research

• User Experience and Feedback on the RPI Homework Submission Server
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Extension: Electronic Clickers Incentive

In our Data Structures course, we ran our short multiple choice electronic clickers during lectures. Rather than to grant permission of the owner and to participate in the course, we required regular participation in clicker sessions with additional late days.

We, of the 111 students in the final registration list:

• 16 earned an additional late day
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Submitty

Submitty is an open-source programming assignment submission system from the Rensselaer Center for Open Source Software (RCOS), launched by the Department of Computer Science at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.