

BLOCK SCHEDULING – TRIMESTER – SEMESTER COURSES

What is Needed for Successful Collection & Re-Distribution of Textbooks And How *TIP* May Help

A Report of a Company-Sponsored Discussion with Customers
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The purpose of the meeting included the following:

- Identify features and capabilities within TIP that can be enhanced or added to improve the process of distributing and collecting books at the end of the semester
- Identify “best practices” that can be shared with others
- Describe, operationally, efficient means of collecting and distributing textbooks at the end of the semester

The following TIP-users participated in the meeting:

Marie Varner, Textbook Clerk, Alvin High School (Alvin I.S.D.)
Eric Haugeberg, Assistant Principal, Smithson Valley High School (Comal I.S.D.)
Philip Baker, Assistant Principal, McMath Middle School, Denton I. S. D.
Leo Leslie, Assistant Principal, W E Boswell High School, Eagle Mountain-Saginaw ISD
Jenny Mueting, Textbook Coordinator, Georgetown I. S. D.
Deanna Kimbro, Textbook Coordinator, Hays C. I. S. D.

Their willingness to share how they do things, what they’d like to be able to do, and what they see as necessary to ensure an effective end-of-term textbook turnaround is much appreciated. Hopefully, the results of their efforts will save others time and worry as well as guard against unnecessary mistakes. With one exception, none of the participants actually had undergone closing out a semester/trimester as yet using nothing but TIP (even the one participant using TIP combined it with manual procedures). At least one, on the other hand, was preparing to do so at the end of the semester.

The basic concerns identified in the discussion covered a wide-range of items. Most of these can be grouped into a few areas:

- The role of teachers in the textbook management process and the accuracy and completeness of records
- The logistics involved in turning around the textbooks over a very short time span (i.e., 3-4 days)
- The use and limitations of bar code reading technology

- How to prevent students who don't return books or who aren't available to pick up books at the end of the term from getting books they aren't eligible for

The purpose of this report is to take each of the above areas of concern and present what can be done to resolve the issues involved. In the case of some items the group noted that changes in the ways schools operate were more important than anything a computer or bar code technology could do to help. In other cases there were specific recommendations made to enhance TIP so that it better contributes to the solution of end-of-term textbook management issues. Finally, there were several instances where newer technologies would probably be the better solution.

The Role of Teachers in the Process

There was unanimous agreement that any approaches to end-of-term textbook turnaround which rely on the teacher to provide record keeping and/or data entry are bound to fail or work very poorly. Several participants indicated that their school's Principal was insisting that teachers remain involved with record keeping. Participants cited the following as reasons to work toward reducing the involvement of teachers:

- The teachers' attitude toward textbook records is indifference at best.
- The inaccuracy and/or incompleteness of teacher-records is compounded at the end of the term.

Rather than trying to change teachers' behavior, the best approaches leave the teacher out of the data entry and record keeping areas as much as possible.

The "How To" of Turning Books Around -- Practices (and the use of TIP):

- In those schools where books for students are initially given to teachers and then re-distributed to the students by the teachers with the expectation that the teacher will bear primary responsibility for ensuring that students take care of their books (normally small schools); no bar coding available:
 1. Complete the "Relationships" for Teachers, Courses and Books
 2. Assign the books to teachers including Accession Numbers.
 3. Produce the Teacher Distributions Report with Accession Numbers.
 4. Teachers have students sign their name on the line provided beside the Accession Number of the book they receive.
 5. Collect all books not issued (except for a very small number of books to be available to the teacher for use by students in the classroom only).
 6. Collect the lists and manually transfer the books assigned to the students from each teacher and transfer to Storage those copies returned by the teacher.
 7. Issue the Student Distributions by Teacher Assignment Report to each teacher as a confirmation and as a Book Check List. Re-issue the Teacher Distributions Report with Accession Numbers (to reflect the few books still in the teacher's classroom/control).
 8. Require that only the Office record issues of books to new students or as a result of a change of schedule during the term.
 9. At the end of the term, re-issue the Student Distributions by Teacher Assignment and Teacher Distributions Report with Accession Numbers to each teacher. Any student not returning the book issued to him/her is marked on the list.

10. The Book Check List is returned to the Office for records updating purposes, compiling a Lost Book Report, issuing Lost Book Letters.
- In those schools where books are temporarily given to teachers and then given to the students by the teachers:
 1. Complete the “Relationships” for Teachers, Courses and Books; import student schedules
 2. Require all students to bring all their books to a particular class (i.e., English) until a textbook bar code reader user scans the books and the students’ IDs in the classroom (can take several days)
 3. Scan those books to be retained by the teacher for use in the classroom (Distribution to Teachers With Accession Numbers)
 4. Return all remaining books to the Book Room.
 5. Provide each teacher with Book Check lists of students, by class, containing the student’s name, and Accession Number of book(s) distributed to each student (see NOTE, below).
 6. At the end of the term each semester-ending course’s class is visited and books being returned by students are scanned (Accession Number, only).
 7. Lost Book Lists and Lost Book Letters are produced.

Best Practice:

1. Complete the “Relationships” for Teachers, Courses and Books
2. Provide students with a copy of their class schedule in advance of distributing books
3. Arrange for at least one central book distribution center (book room, library, cafeteria, gym, other large space)
4. Distribute books directly to students at the beginning of each term using bar code technology from one or more central distribution spaces.
 - a. Arrange books in stacks by title
 - b. Provide work tables (at least one 6’ table per two bar code readers)
 - c. Train a group of workers to read student schedules and retrieve the appropriate books from the stacks. Train another group of workers to use bar code readers.
 - d. Students give schedule to worker. Worker gets books and gives them and the schedule to the bar code reader users.
 - e. Bar code readers scan books.
 - f. Student takes books and schedule and leaves the area.
 - g. Print receipts for all students at the end of the day ready for distribution to students the next day.
5. Scan books distributed to teachers (few for in-classroom use) with accession numbers
6. Provide each teacher with Book Check lists of students, by class, containing the student’s name, and Accession Number of book(s) distributed to each student. (See NOTE, below)
7. At the end of the term each semester-ending course’s class is visited and books being returned by students are scanned (Accession Number, only) and collected.

NOTE: TIP software has the capability to tie a student to a book, to a particular class and to a particular teacher. It requires importing student and teacher schedules into TIP and entering the student’s ID Number, ISBN and Accession Number for a book distributed to the student directly into TIP (usually via bar code reading technology). TIP then “knows” which teacher’s class each student is in and the user can print a Book Check List for each teacher, class-by-class.

8. Lost Book Lists and Lost Book Letters are produced immediately after downloading scanned data.

Dealing with Students Who Are Ineligible for Books

- A key consideration is knowledge of which students are involved! (This is an area where teacher-kept records seem to fail the most.) The key to gaining this knowledge is the ability TIP has to help administrators turn the data around:
 1. Scan the books returned
 2. Download the scanned data from the reader into TIP and update the database
 3. Print the Student Distribution Report (filtering by Transaction – Distributions)
 4. Highlight names of students taking semester courses who still have not returned their semester course books
 5. Make the list available to people distributing next semester’s books for check as students come in for their new books
 6. Deny books to any student who has not returned books (send the student to another location to deal with this issue)
- The State Law in Texas indicates that students who still owe for books should not be given additional books (to take home) until their obligations are taken care of. The law does provide that the local school board must decide how to enforce this regulation. Similar legal provisions are available to administrators in every other state. The operative term is “to take home”. As long as the student has access to a textbook in the classroom the student may be denied a book to take home for personal use. (See www.tea.state.tx.us for a complete copy of the Texas Education Code. Chapter 31 deals specifically with textbooks.)

NOTE: In other states the law may be less specific (if specified at all). However, in most states the local school board has the legal authority to establish a policy covering the denial of additional books to students who have lost the book(s) originally distributed to them.