Sierra Nevada College

How to Ensure That Students Prepare for Class So That Class Time Can Be Used For Deep Learning

Presentation by
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Sierra Nevada College

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Reference Materials:
- Excerpt from Effective Grading, A Tool for Learning and Assessment, by Barbara E. Walvoord and Virginia Johnson Anderson
- Syllabus, ECON 102, Principles of Microeconomics, Spring 2001, by Dr. Lynn G. Gillette
- CPA 2, ECON 102, Principles of Microeconomics, by Dr. Lynn G. Gillette
- CPA 16, ECON 102, Principles of Microeconomics, by Dr. Lynn G. Gillette

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Model 3: Definitional System

Example

To get a particular course grade, you must meet or exceed the standards for each category of work. The following table illustrates a course where there are two distinct categories of work: graded work and pass-fail work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course grade</th>
<th>Graded work</th>
<th>Pass-fail work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>A average</td>
<td>Pass for 90 percent or more of assignments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>B average</td>
<td>Pass for 83 percent or more of assignments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>C average</td>
<td>Pass for 75 percent or more of assignments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>D average</td>
<td>Pass for 65 percent or more of assignments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If a student gets an A average on her graded work but earns a pass for only 65 percent of the pass-fail work, she receives a D for her course grade, because D is the highest level at which she meets or exceeds the standards for both graded and pass-fail work.

Characteristics

A. The underlying pedagogical assumption is that different categories of work are each important, and the teacher does not want to allow one to compensate for the other in any way. For example, Walvoord uses this system in a literature class where students are required to bring to class, nearly every day, writing assignments based on their readings. Walvoord uses these writing assignments as the basis of class discussion, much as Breihan the historian does. Walvoord does not grade these assignments, other than pass-fail. However, being prepared for class most of the time is a non-negotiable and very important value to Walvoord. Thus her definition of an A student is one who not only does well on tests and exams but who also is prepared for class at least 90 percent of the time. If a student is habitually unprepared for class, in Walvoord’s system, no brilliance on tests and papers can raise that student to an A grade, because the student has not conformed to Walvoord’s definition of an A student. On the other hand, Walvoord also does not want to let students’ class participation raise their grade beyond what they are able to achieve in their formal tests and papers.
B. The definitional system is possible also when you give grades, rather than pass-fail to every category. For example, a science teacher may want to require that for an A grade in the course, the student score at least an A-minus average on the tests and exams, and at least B-minus average on the lab reports:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course grade</th>
<th>Tests and exams</th>
<th>Lab reports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>A average</td>
<td>B average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>B average</td>
<td>C average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>C average</td>
<td>D average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>D average</td>
<td>D average</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Again, there are two distinct categories of work, and the teacher values both. Performance in one is in no way a substitute for performance in another.

C. A definitional grading system must be carefully and thoroughly explained to students because it is not as common as the other models. Put your policy clearly in writing in the syllabus and on the assignment sheets, and explain it several times in class. Students will tend to assume that you will combine or average their grades in the various categories. It may appear to them that you are awarding them the grade determined by their lowest performance. Students may complain that they were knocked down to the lowest grade. Walvoord patiently explains, in answer, that they were not knocked down to their lowest grade; the system is not conceived that way. What they did was to fail to meet her definition of the higher grade. A basketball player must both drop the ball into the basket and follow the dribbling and traveling rules. If any of these conditions is not met, the basket doesn’t count.
Text

There is one required text for the course:
*Macroeconomics*, 3rd edition, by Hubbard, Glenn R. and O'Brien, Anthony P.

Course Description

Basic principles of economics at the national level. Topics include: causes and effects of unemployment, inflation, balance of payments, deficits, economic development, influence of monetary, fiscal and other policies. Economic activity, in relation to the level, stability and growth of national income, is emphasized.

Student Learning Outcomes

This course is designed for you to learn the fundamental tools and knowledge of macroeconomics and to help you learn how to use those tools to understand, explain, and solve real-world events and problems.

Specifically, we have the following eleven student learning outcomes for this course:

1. Students will use the aggregate demand and aggregate supply model to explain and predict the effect of aggregate demand and aggregate supply shocks on real GDP, the unemployment rate, and inflation.

2. Students will be able to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate articles and news reports related to a nation’s macroeconomy.

3. Students will be able to compare and contrast monetary and fiscal policy.

4. Students will be able to compare and contrast nominal and real GDP, nominal and real interest rates, and the CPI and core CPI.

5. Students will be able to describe in detail the structure, functions, and goals of the U.S. Federal Reserve System.

6. Students will be able to discuss the role of central banks in any macroeconomy.

7. Students will be able to compare and contrast the Fed, the ECB, and the Bank of England.

8. Students will be able to summarize the current macroeconomic situation in the world with special emphasis on the United States, Europe, England, the BRIC nations, and Japan.

9. Students will identify each recession that has occurred in the U.S. since 1970 and the cause(s) of each of those recessions.
10. Students will apply demand and supply analysis to describe how exchange rates move in the very short run, short run, and long run.

11. What a great time to be studying macroeconomics. The U.S. and much of the world are in a rather serious recession and central banks and governments are using monetary and fiscal policy in every way possible to try to weaken the recession and bring about a quick recovery. You will be able to describe in depth the current economic situation and how and why monetary and fiscal policy has been used.

Grading System

Your grade will be determined by two categories of work: (1) class preparation assignments and (2) quizzes, class participation, attendance at approved events, and exams.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Grade</th>
<th>CPAs</th>
<th>Quizzes, Journal, Portfolio, Exams &amp; Class Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Credit for 21 of the 25 assignments</td>
<td>477 - 530 points (90% - 100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Credit for 18 - 20 of the assignments</td>
<td>424 - 476 points (80% - 89%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Credit for 15 - 17 of the assignments</td>
<td>371 - 423 points (70% - 79%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Credit for 13 or 14 of the assignments</td>
<td>318 - 370 points (60% - 69%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Credit for &lt; 13 of the assignments</td>
<td>Below 318 points (&lt; 60%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you earn 90% on the quizzes, class participation, attendance at approved events, and exams, but earn credit for only 14 of the CPAs, you will receive a D in the course, because the D is the highest level at which you met or exceeded the standards for both categories of work. **You must meet the standards in both categories separately; the two categories of work are not added together.**

Class Preparation Assignments (CPAs)

There will be 25 class preparation assignments (CPAs). For each assignment you will have to answer questions over the assigned reading and bring to class two copies of your answers – one to hand to us at the beginning of class and one to use and expand on during class. To earn credit for a CPA you must:

1. Give a good faith effort on each and every question.
2. Bring two copies of your answers to class, and give me one copy before class starts.
3. Attend class to modify and expand your answers and add value to the discussion.

If you do not show a good faith effort on all of the assignment's questions, or you do not bring two copies of your answers, or you do not give me one copy before class starts, or you miss class (even if you have answered all of the assignment questions), you will not earn credit for that CPA.

Before class starts, place one copy of your CPA answers on the table in front of the class. If you come to class more than five minutes late, then you will be counted as tardy. Two tardies will equal one absence, meaning that you will not receive credit for the CPA on the second tardy. If you miss class, be sure to get the CPA for the next class.

Quizzes

There are four quizzes worth a total of 100 points. Each quiz will be worth 25 points. The quiz questions will be multiple choice, true/false, fill in the blank, short answer, and/or essay. If you miss a quiz and do not receive an excused absence, you will receive a zero on that quiz. If you have an excused absence for a quiz, the makeup will be the next exam. For example, suppose you miss quiz 1 and you have no excuse. In that case, you will receive a zero on quiz 1. However, if you have a sufficient excuse, the makeup will be exam 1. If you make 80 out of 100 on exam 1, your quiz 1 grade will be 80% of 25 – i.e., 20. The quiz dates are as follows:
Quiz 1 (25 points)  February 2
Quiz 2 (25 points)  February 16
Quiz 3 (25 points)  March 23
Quiz 4 (25 points)  April 27

Exams
There are three exams worth a total of 300 points. The exam questions will be multiple choice, true/false, fill in the blank, short answer, and/or essay. The final exam will be cumulative. If you miss an exam, you will receive a zero if you do not have an excused absence. If you have an excused absence, the final exam will serve as the makeup.

Exam 1 (100 points)  March 2
Exam 2 (100 points)  April 13
Final Exam (100 points)  2:30 class – Final at 11:30 on May 9
                      4:00 class – Final at 6:30 pm on May 5

Class Participation
80 total points will be based on class participation. We learn by being actively involved and engaged, and therefore expect you to come to class prepared. I will ask many questions. Class participation is designed to engage you in the learning process, and to maximize what you learn in this class.

Class participation grades will be assigned based on the following criteria:

A: 72 – 80  Student is actively engaged in every class. Answers multiple questions each class. Excels at answering the harder questions. Always prepared.
B: 64 – 71  Student frequently participates in class, but does not excel every class. Answers many questions; sometimes answers the harder questions. Prepared most of the time, but not always. Performance is good, but not consistently excellent.
C: 56 – 63  Student attends class and answers some questions, but performance is not consistent. Student is engaged in some classes and disengaged in others. Student answers correctly most questions I ask, but does little beyond that. Student knows the basics from the CPAs, but cannot go beyond that.
D: 48 – 55  Student attends class. Only answers questions that I ask. Student pays attention in class, but reluctantly participates. Student seldom volunteers to answer questions. Student is present in class, but rather passive.
F: < 48    Student does not attend all classes. Seldom answers questions correctly even when asked. Comes to class unprepared to answer the basic questions from the CPAs. Seldom volunteers for anything, very passive, sometimes disruptive behavior. Usually seems to be present only in body, but not in mind and spirit. Takes notes and hopes that he/she will not have to speak.
Answer each of the following questions based on pages 235–250 in Chapter 8 in your text. CPA 2 is due at the start of class on Wednesday, January 26. You can type or handwrite your answers—whatever works best for you.

1. In the U.S., what government agency measures and reports the unemployment rate? How often is the unemployment rate reported?

2. Define: labor force, unemployment rate, and discouraged worker. Give examples of groups of people who are not in the labor force.

3. What does Figure 8-1 show? Be prepared to discuss.

4. Besides not having a job and being available for work, what is the third condition to be counted as unemployed?

5. Calculate the unemployment rate for December 2007 using the following values: unemployed 7.7 million and employed 146.2 million.

6. Summarize briefly the two reasons why the unemployment rate as measured by the BLS understates the true degree of unemployment and the two other reasons why it overstates the true degree of unemployment.

7. Since 1948, how have the labor force participation rates of adult men and adult women changed? Next, which demographic groups tend to have above-average unemployment rates?

8. See Making the Connection on page 240. State the major points.

9. See “How Long Are People Typically Unemployed?” In April 2007 what percentage of the unemployed had been unemployed for less than 15 weeks? In July 2009 what percentage of the unemployed had been unemployed for less than 15 weeks?

10. Briefly, what is the difference between the household survey and the establishment (payroll) survey? Which survey do many economists prefer for measuring changes in employment? Why? What is the major logical advantage of the household survey?

11. In 2008, how many jobs were created in the U.S. economy and how many were destroyed? What causes the creation and destruction of jobs? Why is the net change in jobs a misleading indicator of how dynamic the U.S. job market really is?

12. Define the three types of unemployment. What causes each type?

13. Define the natural rate of unemployment, also referred to as the full-employment rate of unemployment. Using this definition, at full employment does everyone have a job that wants a job? Currently, in the United States most economists estimate the natural rate of unemployment to be ______. In December of 2009, the actual unemployment rate in the United States was ______.

14. See Figure 8-5 on page 248. State the major points that this figure illustrates.
Answer each of the following questions based on pages 477 – 482 in Chapter 14 and the Handout 17. CPA 17 is due at the start of class on Wednesday, April 13.

It would be impossible to overstate just how important all of this material is to understanding the 2007-2009 recession and the current economic situation in the U.S.

1. See Handout 16, “Navigating the Turbulent Housing Market.” This was written in September 2007. It is a wonderful article that lays out so many of the problems with the housing “crisis.” Read this carefully. State all the key points. I want you to really focus on understanding the subprime problem.


3. See page 477, “The Inflation and Deflation of the Housing Market ‘Bubble’.” State the key points. Make sure you address what the Fed did in 2001 and how that affected housing market. Also, what is a stock market bubble? Next, the section gives two reasons for why someone would get caught in the bubble. Give each reason. Tell me about subprime loans. What has happened to housing sales since 2006?

4. See page 479, “The Changing Mortgage Market.” State all the key points. How has the mortgage market changed over the last 40 years? What did Congress do?

5. See page 479, “The Role of Investment Banks.” A very important section that you need to understand. State the key points.


7. See page 480, “The Wonderful World of Leverage.” State the key points. Make sure you define leveraged investment, equity, negative equity, and “upside down.” Be able to discuss the section.
2) Weekly Reading Notes - Each week you will be asked to turn in a set of reading notes at the beginning of class. Your notes should include three sections:

- A summary of key points and your reflection on, and reactions to, the assigned reading.

- A list of terms/concepts/words that were unknown to you in the readings and that you had to look up definitions for, or that you remain unclear about.

- A paragraph outlining a strength, and a paragraph outlining a weakness that you identified in one of the assigned readings complete with your reasoning about why the point/argument is a strength or weakness. And finally a question (or two) prompted by the reading. This last section will be used to aide our class discussion. (NB. This section of your notes is to be posted on the course discussion board by Sunday evening before Monday's class. You are encouraged to review and comment on your peers postings.)

Your notes can be typed or handwritten (turn in copies not originals). I will not be grading them for grammar/sentence structure/spelling etc., nor will I provide point by point feedback. I will however review your notes and assess the quality of your summary, questions and reflections. You will receive a grade of either "check" (assignment completed competently), "check plus" (assignment completed with commendable care and insight) or "check minus" (assignment completed). If I feel you have turned in notes that indicate that you have not read and prepared for class, but that you have merely gone through the motions of writing something to fulfill the assignment, I will return the notes to you ungraded. To determine your overall grade for your notes I will average your weekly grades dropping the lowest two. That means that if you have a particularly busy week, or have a personal issue that prevents you from preparing one week, your overall grade will not suffer.

3) Class Participation - In many respects the success of this course will depend upon your willingness to participate. That means that you will have to come to class having completed the readings and prepared to share your thoughts and ideas with your colleagues. As an added incentive you will receive a portion of your grade for your participation in class above the formal requirements outlined above. This class is about democracy, and a large component of many conceptions of democracy is sharing of ideas and discussion and deliberation about their consequences. Hence I hope you will be willing to be actively democratic in this course. Please know that there is no "party line" in this course. Students should feel free to voice their well reasoned positions and be willing to listen and respond to those of others with an open mind. I will try to make everyone feel as comfortable as possible sharing their thoughts and ideas, but please let me know if for any reason you feel inhibited in doing so.

Please Note: your participation grade is not based on your attendance, nor is it based solely on the quantity of your comments/contributions to class discussion. Your grade will reflect both the quantity and, perhaps most importantly, the quality of the insights you share with the group. Finally, responses to questions and comments posted on the course discussion board will factor into participation grades.
HST 201  
World History  

Class Preparation Assignment #1  

Based on your reading of the excerpt from the “Epic of Gilgamesh” in your text, answer the following:  

1. Did Mesopotamians believe in an afterlife? If so, what was it like?  

2. How did Siduri respond to Gilgamesh’s request for eternal life? What is the underlying message?  

3. In the poem what are the respective responsibilities of the gods and humans?  

4. For Mesopotamians, what was the meaning of life?