

Ensure Students Are Learning: Faculty Descriptions of Innovative Teaching Practices

Improving Content Understanding Through Online Exams and Retakes

Innovative Teaching Practice Description:

This innovative teaching practice includes class discussions, online exams, and retake opportunities. After covering two to three chapters of content in class, the instructor requires students to take an online exam that covers the material from the preceding chapters. Prior to each exam, the instructor uses class time for chapter discussion questions, allowing students to ask clarifying questions. The review session questions are used only to guide discussion as the exam questions are different. The online exams are administered through a learning management system, or LMS, using a large pool of questions created by the instructor. The instructor permits students to retake the exam as many times as they want, but they cannot see which questions they answered correctly or incorrectly and they only have seven calendar days to complete the exam, including any retakes. Therefore, the earlier students begin the exam, the more time they have for studying and retakes.

After the seventh day and the exam closes, students can access the results from their highest-scoring exam to see which questions they answered correctly. Using the LMS, the instructor identifies the questions that were answered incorrectly most often and reviews these in class. The final exam is an in-class paper exam because the college has a policy that at least one exam should be proctored. The final contains several of the questions from the online exams.

Notes From the Instructor About This Innovative Teaching Practice:

The instructor noted that test scores on the final exam have improved by an average of 20% since implementing this method.