

Ensure Students Are Learning: Faculty Descriptions of Innovative Teaching Practices

Graphing Economic Concepts

Innovative Teaching Practice Description:

This innovative teaching practice can be done in both in-class and online settings. In this short-term activity, students read a journal article, summarize it, and relate it to content covered in the textbook. The instructor finds 10 to 20 articles about aspects of economics pertinent to topics covered in class. Each student selects one article for the project. The instructor asks students to read the article and then write the following: a paragraph that identifies the article's main idea, an article summary, and a description of the article's strengths and weaknesses.

Students then find the chapter in their textbook that best aligns with the article they read. They cite the page numbers of the chapter and relevant tables or figures. The instructor also asks students to incorporate related lecture content.

For an additional project component, students hand draw a graph of numeric article content. For example, if a student reads an article about a pesticide problem that destroys an apple crop, the student draws a graph that illustrates a supply and demand model that shifts the supply line to the left. The instructor notes that drawing graphs in economics is important—students are taught to draw and interpret correct graphs, including correct labeling.

An alternative in-class option for this assignment involves breaking students into groups and having them select one article. Group members take turns presenting the article and their findings to the class in 2 to 4 minute presentations. Online students complete the project individually.

Notes From the Instructor About This Innovative Teaching Practice:

The instructor learned about activities such as this attending academic conferences, such as the On-Course conference, the Teaching Technology conference, and the American Economic Association conference. The instructor has also attended college faculty-led workshops to learn about innovative teaching practices.