

Ensure Students Are Learning: Faculty Descriptions of Innovative Teaching Practices

Discussion Boards and Group Discussions to Improve Economic Reasoning Skills

Innovative Teaching Practice Description:

The instructor uses quizzes and discussion boards to encourage interaction among students in online courses. Students take quizzes that are mostly multiple choice, and each quiz question has four or five answer choices. These quizzes are not for a grade but are designed to prepare students for the exams they will take later in the semester. Students take 13 to 14 practice quizzes throughout the semester. After students complete a quiz, they can instantly see what questions they answered correctly through the online course management system. The instructor writes a post asking all students to pick an incorrect answer on their quiz and use class content and economic reasoning to determine why the answer is incorrect. The instructor asks students to also write what they would do to change the question so that their incorrect answer would then be correct. Students post their responses to the discussion board, providing them an opportunity to practice their writing and allowing all students to see the posted comments. The instructor does not require students to respond to their peers' posts, but encourages responses to stimulate interaction.

For in-person classes, the instructor uses a modified version of the online activity. After completing the quiz, students form groups of two or three and select an incorrect answer to review. Student groups discuss the question and determine the correct answer for the selected item. They then explain how they would change the question so that the original incorrect answer would be correct.

Notes From the Instructor About This Innovative Teaching Practice:

The instructor learned about these activities attending academic conferences, such as the On-Course conference, the Teaching Technology conference, and the American Economic Association conference. The instructor also attended college faculty-led workshops and teaches both in-person and online courses.