

Ensure Students Are Learning: Faculty Descriptions of Innovative Teaching Practices

Learning Research Concepts Through Scavenger Hunts

Innovative Teaching Practice Description:

In this class, students must complete a research paper over the course of the semester. To help students learn how to construct a research paper, the instructor breaks the process into separate components. First, the instructor teaches students how to identify a topic by supplying them with a set of guided questions. Another component of the project is a scavenger hunt that students follow to find research sources for their papers. During this process, some students reach out to the instructor with questions. The goal of the scavenger hunt is for all students to identify a research process that works best for them.

How to Encourage Participation in This Innovative Teaching Practice:

While the final research paper is completed independently, students work in groups on different activities that focus on learning how to conduct different aspects of writing a research paper (e.g., students must find quotes that relate to a thesis statement). During these assignments, the instructor periodically draws connections between groups in the classroom in order to facilitate participation. The instructor does this by commenting on similarities in findings or approaches across groups and by encouraging students to speak with students in other groups. Students are rarely allowed to select their own groups; this is strategic, as the instructor often pairs students who may struggle with those who will do well.