

Ensure Students Are Learning: Faculty Descriptions of Innovative Teaching Practices

Research Projects as Group Presentations

Innovative Teaching Practice Description:

Students work in groups of approximately three to four to research a disease or biological abnormality, and then they deliver a comprehensive presentation outlining the key biological elements of the chosen topic including development, epidemiology, and possible treatment. Each group has approximately two weeks to become experts on their topic and share what they have learned with the rest of the class. Students are expected to work collaboratively outside of class to navigate the research process and decide what types of resources they use. Students may use any resources shared in class or any articles and supplemental information they find through their own efforts.

Each group is responsible for two presentations: one at the beginning of the semester and one at the end of the semester. Each presentation covers a different topic and should be approximately 15 minutes in length. The presentations can be in slide format or any other format the students choose. Each member of the group must take part in the presentation and must demonstrate responsibility for one aspect of the overall project.

Students choose their own groups at the beginning of the semester and may request to change groups for the second presentation. Students do not evaluate each other within their own group, but the rest of the class provides feedback to the instructor about the presentations. Class feedback is taken into consideration when assigning grades for the work.

How to Ensure Participation in This Innovative Teaching Practice:

Students are responsible for motivating each other and holding each other accountable.

Notes from the Instructor About This Innovative Teaching Practice:

“The goal is to place the ownership of learning on the student.”