

Ensure Students Are Learning: Faculty Descriptions of Innovative Teaching Practices

Bringing Fun and Games to History Exam Prep

Innovative Teaching Practice Description:

A history instructor found that conducting exam reviews in the form of games, particularly ones modeled after popular game shows, leads to higher levels of engagement in the classroom. Depending on the class size, the instructor randomly divides the students into two, three, or four teams. Students first receive a study guide resembling an exam—with a variety of question formats (true-false, fill in the blank, multiple choice, and short-answer)—that they can complete during the game.

If playing a game based on *Jeopardy!*, the short-answer items (usually two) serve as the “Double Jeopardy!” questions. All team members have to concur on the answer but only one team member can answer the question. Additional information on this game can be found at jeopardylabs.com.

In the instructor’s version of *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?*, teams take turns drawing question cards at random, moving up the “money pyramid” with each correct response. The first team continues to draw questions until they answer a question incorrectly, at which point the next team will answer questions until they give an incorrect answer; this continues until all teams have played.

For these two game show exercises, the instructor awards prizes in the form of bonus points on the exam. The members of the third place team receive three points, second place team members are awarded six points, and the members of the team that accumulates the most points in the game receive nine bonus points.

The instructor has also used scavenger hunts as an engaging way to help students prepare for an exam. Prior to this activity, the instructor identifies existing objects or places objects related to the course content around campus. Each object is the site of an answer to a study question. To play, students pair up and take with them a clipboard with relevant questions and hints that guide them to the objects where the answers are located. This is also a good way to create a sense of community and for the students to learn where the various departments are while also learning about specific subject matter.