

Ensure Students Are Learning: Faculty Descriptions of Innovative Teaching Practices

Engaging Students Through Business Plan Creation and Stock Analysis

Innovative Teaching Practice Description:

For these two innovative teaching practices, the instructor designs group projects to provide students with a holistic view of business while increasing their accountability for coming to class prepared to contribute.

The instructor places students in groups of four or five and students work in the same group for both projects. For the first project, each group creates one product. For the second project, students work individually and use their group as a resource.

For the first project, the instructor asks students to create a fictitious business plan that aligns with the textbook content. Each class period, student groups meet to review the assigned reading and to complete the associated portion of their business plan. For example, after reading about marketing for a small business, groups generate a hypothetical marketing analysis for their fictional business. The marketing analysis addresses business concerns such as “How are you marketing your small business? Who is your ideal customer? What are you doing to reach your customer base?” Groups with members who come unprepared to contribute must complete any unfinished portion of the project outside of class. At the end of the semester, students who have engaged with every portion of the project have helped complete a model business plan, including sections on marketing, human resources, and finances.

For the second project, the instructor asks students to follow a major company on the stock exchange and create a stock summary for that company. At the beginning of the semester, students hypothetically buy one hundred shares of stock from their chosen company. Each week students analyze and record their stocks’ movements, synthesizing the information into a stock report that they turn in at the next class. In class, students meet with their group to discuss the stock reports while supporting and advising their peers. At the end of the semester, students write a three-part report that provides a holistic stock evaluation. The first part of the report focuses on the fundamental perspective and analysis of the sales, revenue, and company management of the stock. For the second part, students evaluate the technical perspective, which details the stocks’ price movements and other comparative analytics. For the final part, students synthesize their fundamental and technical analyses to create a buy, sell, or hold recommendation.

Notes from the Instructor About This Innovative Teaching Practice:

After incorporating these projects into his syllabus, the instructor noted that he saw an increase in regular student attendance, in-class participation, assignment completion, key term usage, critical thinking, and personal connections to the content—all indicating an increase in student engagement.