

# Ensure Students Are Learning: Faculty Descriptions of Innovative Teaching Practices

## Teaching Grit and Growth Mindset to Support Student Learning

### Innovative Teaching Practice Description:

The goal of this practice is to help students become more familiar and at ease with vocabulary and problem-solving. Students must have a composition notebook for this practice.

On the first day of class, the students observe and discuss videos on growth mindset and grit to help set a foundation that will support student learning throughout the course. Students are then required to outline the sections of their textbook in a composition book, using colors and section tabs. Students choose their own colors and tabs to help them create a learning tool that will provide easy access to finding answers from section to section throughout the textbook and the student's own notebook outline. The outline composition books serve as a roadmap for each section of the textbook and are collected and reviewed for a grade during exams.

Each section outlined will consist of the following tabs:

- A summary of the overall idea for the section, written in the student's own words for his/her own understanding
- All vocabulary from the chapter/section listed and defined
- Any specific steps for solutions to problems

The day before every exam, students receive sample questions using textbook and homework examples that cover the same material that will be given on the actual exam. Students complete this practice exam in groups, allowing the instructor to walk around and listen to each group, which helps to evaluate student learning from another standpoint rather than just by an exam.

The group test is intended to help students become more familiar and at ease with vocabulary and problem-solving within the textbook. Teams are randomly assigned at the beginning of the semester. During the rest of the semester, group test teams are re-assembled by skill level, with a mix of high- and low-skilled students forming each team. Grading is based on participation.

The instructor administers a second practice exam to provide students with an opportunity for a group study session before the actual test. This test covers additional questions that will be on the actual test. Students are able to work in groups of four or five, giving them an opportunity to help each other with areas that are still unclear. Grading for this test is based on participation as well.

## Notes From the Instructor About This Innovative Teaching Practice:

The instructor suggests the following books as resources for other instructors interested in using this approach: *Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance* (Duckworth, 2016); *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success* (Dweck, 2007); and *Educating a Diverse Nation: Lessons from Minority-Serving Institutions* (Conrad & Gasman, 2017).