



Using In-Class Journals to Promote Learning Objectives

SHSU Teaching and Learning Conference
August 17, 2017

John Newbold

Stan Solomon



AGENDA



- Background
- Literature Review
- Implementation
- Results
- Next Steps



Background



- High tech/Internet-based activities vs. “old school”/low-tech activities.
- Improve course management: too many hand-outs.
- Primary goal: Turn the classroom from a more passive environment to a more active environment.
- Frustration with students not completing required reading and other out of class assignments.



Literature Review

- Mostly: Interactive Notebooks in K-12 environment.
- Teacher's Curriculum Institute, 2006.
 - To enhance learning of social studies.



Basic Advantages of Interactive Notebooks

- ▶ Accommodates various teaching methods and learning styles.
- ▶ Provides structure and support for differentiated learning.
 - ▶ Outline helps student know what to expect.
- ▶ Students take ownership of their learning.
- ▶ Provides a basis for formative assessment of learning.
- ▶ Provides a basis of dialogue between teacher and student.



Processing Info at a Higher Level

- Students must process information at a higher level:
 - Pay attention
 - Take notes, purposeful note-taking
 - Organize notes
 - Relate notes to previous lessons
 - Relate notes to real-world situations
 - Challenges students to provide their own perspectives
- Enhances students' self-reflection and meta-cognition skills.
 - They have a better idea of what they know well and what they need to work on.



Implementation

- Newbold: MKTG 4340, International Marketing and Management
 - Has been using for past 4 semesters.
 - Using a full-blown notebook: 58 pages.
- Solomon: MGMT 4360, Supply Chain Management
 - Just began using Spring 2017.
 - Using selective in-class journal assignments.
 - Expanding use.




Implementation - 2

- Each class, students can see the 3 – 4 learning objectives for the class.
- Related to each class, there are 3 – 9 short-answer essay questions which must be answered in order to receive “credit” for completing the workbook.
 - Classes are often begun by reviewing the answers to the questions related to the previous day’s lecture.
 - Students will often prompt the instructor if they do not think I have covered one of the questions, or if they do not have any idea how to answer a question.
 - Exam questions, both multiple choice and essay, are directly related to the journal/workbook.
 - Thus, the workbook is an effective study tool for preparing for exams---if you did a conscientious job of filling it out!
 - Student missed a class? They simply have to copy the notes from a study buddy’s journal.
 - Journals are taken up and reviewed 4 times during the semester in lieu of an attendance grade.

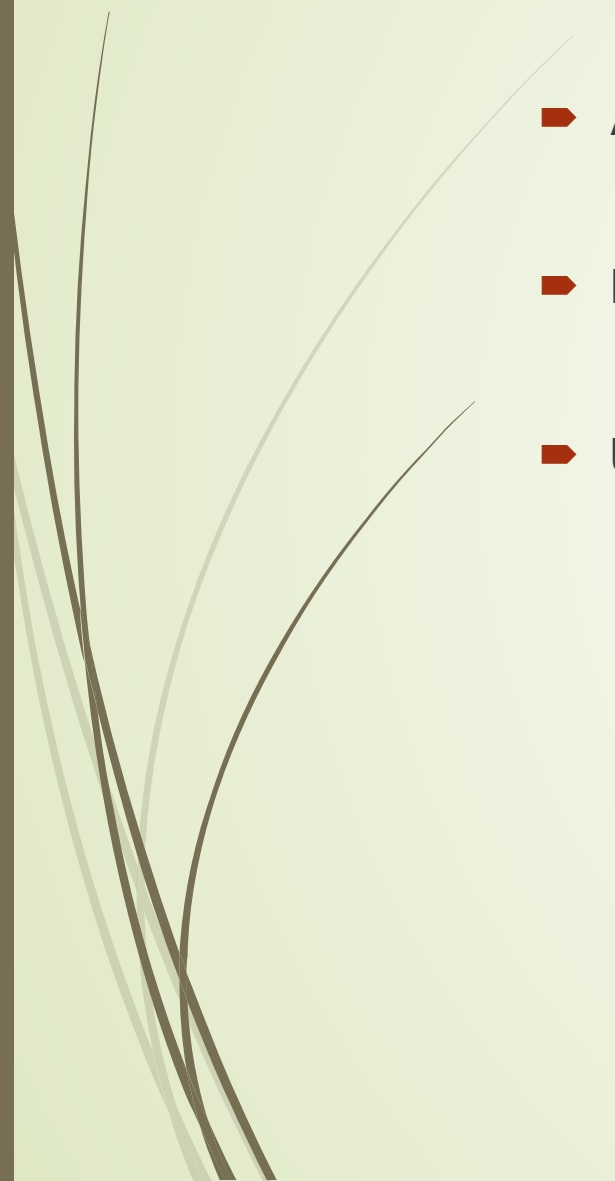


Implementation - 3

- In addition to Learning Objectives and Short-Answer Essay Questions, other in-class activities are included in the Journal:
 - Skill Mastery Exercises
 - Cartoons
 - Learning Games
 - Video Study Guides
 - Exam Study Guides



Results

- Assessment: Student Mastery of Key Concepts
 - IDEA scores
 - Unsolicited Student Comments
- 

Assessment: Student Mastery of Key Concepts

	Fall 2015 N = 28	Fall 2016 N = 28	Change
Overall Score Across 12 Concepts	83	83	-
Overview of International Business	96	83	(-13)
Adaptation vs. Standardization	89	93	+4
Basic Global Geo-Political Concepts	86	86	-
Trade Barriers and Forms of Economic Cooperation	64	81	+17
Historical Context of Global Trade Since WWII	75	74	(-1)
Economic Development and Its Implications	96	91	(-5)
Market Entry Strategies	82	88	+6
International Legal Issues	96	76	(-20)
Ethical Issues Related to International Trade	64	74	+10
Distribution Issues	75	81	+6
International Staffing and Expatriates	89	88	(-1)
Current Trends in International Business	79	84	+5

In terms of performance on formal exams, the overall results are a bit mixed: Improvement in 6 areas, but overall performance about the same.

IDEA Scores

IDEA Scores for Spring, 2016 (No Workbook) and Fall, 2016 (Workbook)

	Spring 2016 (n = 33) 5 pt. scale	Fall 2016 (n = 66) 5 pt. scale
Excellent Course	4.8	4.9
Made it clear how each topic fit into the course.	4.6	4.9
Explained course material clearly and concisely.	4.8	4.9
Inspired students to set and achieve goals that really challenged them.	4.5	4.5




Unsolicited Student Comments

- "He is very clear on what he expects and his workbooks help greatly in understanding the course. More professors should use workbooks, it helps students pay attention from class to class."
- "He created a workbook for the class to take notes in which was an extremely useful tool."
- "I think the format of this course was really effective. More specifically, I think the workbook served as a really great study tool. I didn't realize how helpful it was until I began studying for exams and found that I actually retained the information learned weeks in advance of exams due to keeping up with the in-class notes. Don't change a thing!"
- "The way his course is set up with a workbook allows you to truly focus on what is important and what we should take away from the class. It keeps you engaged all class long. I have never had a professor lecture the full hour and twenty minutes and not be counting down until we are allowed to leave. I did not even need to study for his exams hardly because the lecture was so easy to follow."
- "The workbooks make it easy to prepare for the test while still allowing you to pay attention to the bigger picture in the course."
- "It is very clear what is expected and the workbook helps greatly in understanding the course. More professors should use workbooks, it helps students pay attention from class to class."



Next Steps

- Continue to Augment the Journal
 - Internet-based Activities
 - Online games
 - Interactive assignments (McGraw-Hill)
 - Team exercises
 - Snap Quizzes
 - More Creative/ Critical Thinking Exercises
 - Tie Journal activity to longer term projects (term papers)
- Research Related to Time on Task
 - Compare journal activity to other potential pedagogical devices that promote engagement and time on task.



How Incorporating a Journal Makes You a Better Teacher

- Forces you to *identify* key learning objectives.
- Must *organize lectures* around those key objectives.
- Must *augment lectures* with value-added activities:
 - Experiential
 - Collaborative
 - Critical thinking
- Provides basis for *formative assessment*.
- Must *link formal assessments to journal activities*.
- Provides *summative assessment tools*
 - *Knowledge mastery*
 - *Application and skills mastery*



Questions?