Using In-Class Journals to Promote Learning Objectives

SHSU Teaching and Learning Conference
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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: MGMT4360, 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 form a study buddy’s journal.

- Journals are taken up and reviewed 4 times during the semester in lieu of an attendance grade.
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

### Overall Score Across 12 Concepts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall 2015</th>
<th>Fall 2016</th>
<th>Change</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N = 28</td>
<td>N = 28</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overall Score Across 12 Concepts</td>
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### Overview of International Business

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<tr>
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### Adaptation vs. Standardization

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### Basic Global Geo-Political Concepts

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### Trade Barriers and Forms of Economic Cooperation

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### Historical Context of Global Trade Since WWII

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### Economic Development and Its Implications

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### Market Entry Strategies

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### International Legal Issues

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<td>76</td>
<td>(-20)</td>
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### Ethical Issues Related to International Trade

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### Distribution Issues

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<td>75</td>
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### International Staffing and Expatriates

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### Current Trends in International Business

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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)

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