Participation Resources
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The Reasons for Participation

--If you need to be persuaded of the value of student interaction, this article makes a convincing case for it. It also lists the barriers that prevent many faculty from using interaction and offers an array of strategies for overcoming them. Never mind that it’s written about biology students, the contents are relevant in every discipline.

--Offers a good overview of the intentions behind the use of participation and suggests new ways of thinking about its use.

Research on Participation

Auster, C. J. and MacRone, M. “The Classroom as a Negotiated Social Setting: An Empirical Student of the Effects of Faculty Members’ Behaviors on Students’ Participation.” Teaching Sociology, 1994, 22, 289-300.
--In a study that compared classes with the most and least participation, there was significantly more participation when faculty asked analytical rather than factual questions and when they called on students by name, provided positive reinforcement and asked for student’s opinions even when they didn’t volunteer.

--Over half the students in this study did not participate in any of the 10 session of each class observed.

--Assigned students to write questions prior to labs. Analysis of the questions revealed students did not write many higher order questions and that this practice of writing questions did not dramatically improve the quality of the questions. Researchers conclude that in order to write better questions, students need direct instruction of the types and quality of questions.

--Empirically investigated a method of having students record and describe their discussion contributions which showed that student did not over-report their participation.

--The results of this study answer the question yes. In a large biology course taught using a variety of active learning strategies that emphasized questioning, the quality of student questions improved significantly compared with a course taught using a lecture approach.

--Half the students surveyed in this study said they participated infrequently or never in their classes.


--“The more students perceive the professor as an authority of knowledge, the less likely it is they will participate in class.” (p. 586)

**Policy Options and Issues**


--Findings that support the use of cold calling.


--Identifies key issues relative to the learning experiences of international students.


--Clickers had a positive impact on “reluctant participants.” It was more positive when clickers were used formatively and not for grades or other evaluative measures, like attendance.


--A participation policy that gives students a choice as whether they want to be called on or volunteer.


--A personal reflection from an introverted teacher who realizes that she uses instructional strategies that appeal to extroverts and what she did about it.

**Grading Participation**


--Gave “tokens” to students who answered a teacher question correctly. Students submitted tokens at the end of the period for bonus points on the exam.


--An innovative system that rewards students with “cash” for good comments and questions and uses the “cash” as a vehicle for recording contributions.


--Contains a rubric that can be used to assess participation.


--An interesting system that involves students in the assessment of participation.
--An excellent article that explores the pros and cons of grading participation, issues that make it challenging to grade and offers some alternative strategies.

--Analyzed 50 rubrics which identified 153 performance criteria for online discussions. Organized these criteria into four major categories: cognitive, mechanical, procedural/managerial and interactive. Lots of items included in the article.

Rogers, S. L. “Calling the Question: Do College Instructors Actually Grade Participation?” *College Teaching*, 2013, 61 (1), 11-22.
--In a survey of 352 instructors, 82% indicated on the course syllabus that participation was a student responsibility. 75% of them grade it.

--I describe the process I use to let students set the participation policy in the class (pp. 101-104) and how I use self- and peer assessment in grading participation (pp. 189-191).

--Reports on a method that allows students to establish the grading criteria for participation.