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What Makes the Biggest Impact on Student Learning?

STUDENT COMMENTS

1. Rank the most important factors that impact your learning in the classroom.

Other answers

- Homework, personality, difficulty
- Being able to reach out to the students.
- Having your grade come from a combination of different factors. Ex. papers, presentations, class participation, quizzes and tests.
- Class Size
- Extensive, detailed notes.

3. In a class of 20-30 students, which classroom environment do you learn best in? For those that chose student-centered classroom, I asked, how, or in what ways, does an interactive/engaging classroom impact your learning? OR Does it just make the class more interesting/fun to attend?

Student comments

- It does make class interesting but it helps me understand the topic at hand when it is discussed with my other classmates
- It helps to retain information longer, true learning and assimilation of information rather than memorization
- I remember information better if I can talk about it and discuss it with the teacher or class. It also helps make the class more interesting.
- It really just makes the class more interesting. Getting me involved makes me want to come to class, makes me want to participate.
- Discussions, group chats, games

- An interactive and engaging classroom encourages me to voice my opinion about topics discussed in the classroom setting. The ability to engage in this environment encourages me to not only learn but also do well in classes. I am able to hear what others have to say as well as how my opinions relate/differ from my peers. It also makes the classroom setting fun and interesting to the millionth power as opposed to being lectured and taking notes every day.
- As long as it's not a question and answer session. I prefer an atmosphere where there are videos, and communication, and involvement with a goal in mind. I have taken classes where there has been a lot of interaction but the assignments were meaningless, in terms of how, I never saw a connection between what I was learning and how I could apply it to the real world or how I could apply it or how it was related to the goal of the entire class. We, as in students, have a short attention span, so it has to be fun and interesting for us to want to attend.
- When the class is interesting then it keeps students awake and makes them want to learn.
- Makes the class more interesting and fun to attend which in return makes me more engaged and wanting to come to class.
- It makes it so that questions are more easily asked and material can be repeated more frequently if necessary.
- Incorporating activities, and making the class fun.
- When they talk to us on a personal level.
- It makes me think and apply the information I know to create knowledge and really understand.
- You get the chance to express yourself and it tends to help grasp the concepts if other people get to add in.
- It makes the class more interesting. Also, it kind of forces you to do your homework so that you have something to contribute if called upon.
- More interesting/fun, and also can relate better
- Solidifies my understanding of the material so that I am sure that I am correctly learning it
- Just makes class more interesting/fun to attend
- It forcibly makes you pay more attention to interact and passively helps you retain info
- It makes it easier to follow and learn the material.
- It makes the class more interesting to attend
- It makes it more bearable and forces me to learn because I must interact. If a professor is talking at me instead of to me, I will quickly lose interest and zone out. If I know that I will be held responsible for answering questions or doing activities I will be encouraged to work harder.
- It allows you to think about a question or solve a problem in a way you haven't thought of. An interactive classroom also makes class interesting and a more comfortable learning environment.

- You feel more involved in the class, gives you a sense of responsibility and belonging
- It makes you pay attention and learn through tasks like talking to classmates and activities. It also makes for a more comfortable learning environment because you know your classmates and professor.
- When a professor shows they care and aren't there because of the money it makes the class much better.
- It makes the class more interesting and helps the material to stick in my head.
- Motivates me to come to class if the information is interesting
- It does both. I learn best by being prompted and guided from my instructor AND hearing my classmates' opinions. So in a smaller classroom setting, it makes class more enjoyable, I learn more about different perspectives (which feeds the future social psychologist in me), and I feel as though my opinion matters.
- In a small class you get to know your classmates and feel more comfortable contributing to discussions
- It makes it more fun to attend class
- Makes it more interesting and helps me to remember the material, but only in a smaller class.
- It makes the class more fun, but it also allows for other perspectives to be heard. Also, if the professor wants to hear your opinion, it makes it seem like they care which will make students want to well in that class.
- Being able to ask questions makes class much easier.
- It makes the class more interesting and the collaborated learning with other students helps to grasp concepts on different levels
- It forces me to pay attention and helps me learn more by requiring more involvement.
- Discussions encourage critical thought. I also enjoy taking several personality quizzes in class and comparing my results to the rest of the class
- I like interacting with my class mates on things so we can collaborate and share our ideas; it is always good to hear other people's opinions.
- It's more hands on and you can learn from the other students rather than a boring lecture hall where I'm more likely to space out.
- When the student can have open dialogue with the professor, the class can be more interesting and more learning can take place.
- Makes class more interesting
- Being engaged makes the class more interested and it captures my attention for a longer period of time. Being attentive and engaged thus helps me stay focused and improves my ability to absorb what is being taught.
- Engaging in classroom activities makes it easier for me to remember things for exams

- I think that the more that the student is involved and engaged in the learning process we are more likely to retain the information. At the same time there has to be some level of interest in what we are learning.
- It clear things that may be unclear and also yes it makes class more interesting and exciting
- It makes me want to pay attention because I want to hear what the teacher has to say beyond the lecture slides and also what other information or questions students want to contribute.
- Helps emphasize the point
- It makes it easier to pay attention the entire time, and more fun to attend
- In group activities and small debates
- It makes class more fun to attend. Also, interacting with others during the class can help make certain topics more understandable
- It impacts learning because it involves the students and somewhat forces them to be engage and whether they like it or not they will learn something.

4. What type of assignments do you find most beneficial to your learning?

Other answers

- Classroom discussion
- Anything hands-on
- Assignments where there is a one on one assessment after.
- As a student of Math and Computer Science I prefer problems - practice problems and computer programming assignments.
- HATE group presentations
- Homework assignments on paper that are graded by hand, weekly
- NO GROUP PROJECTS! HATE THEM!
- Essays let you get your point across while multiple choice you're either right or wrong
- Slideshows
- Reading the book because it may explain material in a different or better manner than the professor, or have more details.
- Homework assignments such as Aplia and Blackboard assignments
- No multiple choice!
- Reviewing work weekly basis, to refresh memory.

6. Do you expect professors to use Blackboard or technology to some extent in the classroom?

Student comments

- I feel like blackboard brings it all together, and allows for the professor to provide different forms of study aids to the student.
- It's not enough for professors to just use it in class. They have to actually KNOW how to use it. I'm currently in a class where the professor does not know how to use it and it has made life very difficult and boring. There is absolutely little incentive for me to go. I attribute some of that to being a graduating senior in May.
- In general, I do not go into a class (as an upperclassmen, at least) expecting the use of Blackboard
- I think it is a great way for professors to communicate with us students and keep us informed about upcoming assignments or grades.
- It makes it easy to keep things organized
- makes teaching larger classrooms easier
- I expect my professors to teach me, regardless of technology.
- I don't believe it has any beneficial ramifications for students other than supplemental readings.
- I like seeing the assignments and grades on blackboard, however, quizzes are pointless and do not help you learn on blackboard.
- Yes because the use of technology is more engaging
- Helps organize the work and keep track of things and also for material to study like class slides

7. Does the professor's use of technology in general (e.g. Blackboard, PowerPoint, video, clickers, other) improve your learning?

Student comments

- The professor just needs to organize his/her blackboard page correctly. When it is not organized it is difficult to find certain assignments.
- It is important but the professor cannot simply just read from the slides, there must be discussion questions and student participation to ensure that the material is being comprehended.
- If you are just reading from the slides, I won't listen and will get bored very easily. You need to engage and entertain me with your slides. Make me want to learn from you.
- It's not enough for professors to just use it in class. They have to actually KNOW how to use it. I'm currently in a class where the professor does not know how to use it and it has made life very difficult and boring. There is absolutely little incentive for me to go. I attribute some of that to being a graduating senior in May.

- Need be, my professors have their own website for course content.
- It is usually how the professor teaches. PowerPoint's don't necessarily make the lectures better just makes it easier to take notes. I think clickers are great however to engage students.
- When teachers don't know how to properly use the Blackboard system or emails it frustrates me. I pay for a college professor to be certified to teach me, when the students often need to teach them to use the technology in class.
- Yes, videos can be an excellent tool to describe the material and show how it connects to the real world. PowerPoint presentations can really help students to follow the professor's train of thought. Clickers force me to apply my knowledge or the reading.
- Blackboard is great and a very helpful. It that makes it easy to communicate with the professor and have access to all course materials. However I find the clickers to be pointless. Seriously what's the point? it wastes class time, and it causes mass confusion I feel it isn't a very effective way of polling the class because we all just ask each other for the answers or ask a friend to clicker in for us. serious waste of my money.
- Visuals are always helpful towards my learning; Blackboard helps my organization
- Yes I love the iclicker questions because it gives us a good idea oh how you could possible test us on the class material
- only power points/slides
- Just because there is a new technology does not mean it will help. It helps when slides are placed online so that students can go back and study them, but I do not see how it would improve learning. It is helpful and convenient for some things, but does not "improve learning."
- The use of clickers is helpful, to see how you rank with the class, however, it is a learning tool. When you take off points for getting a clicker question wrong you are penalizing a student for participating. The point of going into class is to learn, do not hinder that by taking away points. It takes a lot of effort to go to class when the professor teaches you like you are high school.
- It usually helps in general, I've never had it be unhelpful
- Blackboard makes it easier to check assignments and keep up to date with any course changes but overall, the Professors teaching style improves my learning. The iclickers are fun on occasion but I just see them as extra points to boost my average.
- Goes through slides way too quickly, no one ever has time to write it down. always says well come back to it, it gets confusing
- It is most helpful if the professor posts the slides or notes used on a PowerPoint presentation to where the students can access them again (e.g. on blackboard).

9. What are the biggest weaknesses or disadvantages to using Blackboard?

Other answers

- If the professor uses Blackboard and Electronic Reserve or too many other websites it becomes overbearing.
- Depends on the professor
- The programming of Blackboard needs a lot of work; it's not the course structure that is the problem
- I don't like Blackboard
- I have rarely ever had a problem using blackboard for this class but in my other classes I was mostly annoyed when a teacher had a blackboard page that they did not use.

11. How does participating in a required online discussion impact your learning?

Student Comments

- I took two online courses in which Blackboard was the main tool for learning. Discussions helped a lot and forced me to come up with an opinion.
- Depends on the interest level of the class and discussion. There are some posts I take the time to really think out and there's other posts that don't require effort so I bullshit my way through them and still do well.
- To elaborate on the above: for required online discussions you have to actually care to make a personal post, more times than not posts are just summaries of what other people said or the reading...in that case it does not benefit.
- I struggled between "B" and "C."
B) Makes little to no difference on learning; just viewed as a requirement or busy work.
C) Depends on the class and the discussion topic being discussed
I think overusing Blackboard is annoying. I have one class that uses it for EVERYTHING with odd times for submission (i.e. by 5pm) and if you have class all day, it's hard to actually meet those deadlines. I think if discussion is an occasional thing it can be cool.
- I am not really one for online blogging, I would prefer to talk in person about stuff.
- I understand why professors use that tool, but it does not teach me anything, it's me regurgitating what the professor wants to hear without my actual thought or input.
- For some classes online discussion is not necessary helpful especially if you don't have much interest in a specific topic.