

The Office of  
**Adjunct Faculty &  
 Academic Support  
 Programs**

## Class Discussion

### Adjunct Faculty Academic Calendar

#### September:

- 2 Last Day to Withdrawal with a 100% Refund
- 5-6 Labor Day Recess, No Classes
- 7-13 Late Course Adds, only if already registered
- 13 Last Day to Withdrawal with a 75% Refund

#### Workshops:

- 7 Canvas Open Session  
2:00 PM, C 150
- 9 New Adjunct Faculty Seminar  
4:30 PM, SE 201
- 13 Canvas-Gradebook, Assignments and Rubrics  
10:00 AM, C 150
- 16 Design a "Learning" and Motivating Syllabus  
12:30 PM, B 205

For a complete list of workshops offered for the Spring/Summer Semesters please visit [svsu.edu/workshops](http://svsu.edu/workshops)

Register for these workshops and more at: [svsu.edu/workshops](http://svsu.edu/workshops)

If you want your students to engage and actively participate in your class, it is necessary for them to understand that participation involves their willingness to contribute to class discussions. It is also important that your students understand the connection between active participation, their learning, and their grades because there is a connection!

Early in the semester faculty should discuss the importance of class discussions and back that up discussion up by providing participation points toward the students' grades. Faculty should make their students aware that participation in discussions helps them test their new found ideas and opinions. As well, their participation creates collaborative bonds between students and discussion allows them to practice the concepts connected to the discipline. Interestingly, discussion promotes more student preparation for class.

The following are some ideas you might try, to increase class discussions:

- Open the class by distributing a discussion question and allowing your students to write out some of their ideas related to the question. After they have had time to think and write, open the floor for discussion.
- If the material calls for lecturing, pepper your lecture with questions and allow the students to ask you questions.
- Create a safe classroom where students feel supported. This will help your students feel comfortable to speak up, and answer and ask questions.
- After you ask a question, give the students time to gather their thoughts...silence, however long, means they are thinking!
- Respect students when they do answer questions by providing a careful and reassuring response to their comments.
- A 2012 study indicated that if your class is not participating in discussion, you should try cold calling (Dallimore et al, 2012). The study found that the more cold calls a faculty member makes the more voluntary participation increases.

In the end, it is through regular participation that your students will learn leading to better grades and more enjoyment in your class!

Reference:

Dallimore, E., Hertenstein, J., & Platt M. (2012). Impact of Cold Calling on Student Voluntary Participation. *Journal of Management Education*, 37(3) 305-341

# Formative Assessment and Three Important Questions

The purpose of formative assessment is to monitor student learning. It is assessment *for* learning and it is a very useful practice for a few reasons. The first, is that formative assessment helps students learn what material they need to know and, in doing so, it helps them recognize their strengths and weaknesses. It also allows students to focus on what they need to do to be successful in the class. This is called student self-monitoring. The second good use of formative assessment is that it helps the faculty member learn where their students are struggling so that she can adjust or readjust the material immediately to address the problem areas. Formative assessment is usually in the form of a low-stake assessment. According to Atkin, Black and Coffey (2001), one of the primary purpose of formative assessment is often overlooked. They contend that formative assessment should help students answer three important questions.

The first question is, "*Where am I going?*" Students need to know what it is they are expected to learn in a course. Course Learning Goals should provide this information but are often not articulated in such a way that the students understand their importance. Therefore, to help students answer this question, faculty should provide their students with a list of the learning targets they are responsible for mastering. These targets can work to provide the students with a roadmap for learning.

The second question is, "*Where am I now?*" By answering this question, students can demonstrate what they know and what they don't know. It helps them learn about mastery and learn to understand what shortfalls they have in their understanding of the material. This question also helps the faculty member learn where they need to adjust their course material. Ways to answer this question include, administering a non-graded quiz half way through a lesson, or, with their learning targets in hand, asking students to check off those targets they feel they have mastered. Another good method to answer this question includes utilizing "the muddiest point." In this assessment the faculty member asks the students to anonymously answer a question like, "What was the main point of today's class material?" This is typically done a few minutes before the end of class. Later, the faculty member can read through the responses and tailor the start of the next class by addressing any deficiencies or problems found in the assessment.

The final question is, "*How can I close the gap?*" Students are aware they sometimes have gaps in their understanding of the material but they aren't always sure how to mend these. By helping students see where they are and where they need to be, they can work toward the course goals. To help students answer this question, a faculty member might give the students feedback on their progress and help them set goals for themselves. Students can also graph or describe their progress on specific learning goals. As well, they can reflect upon any changes they have noticed in their knowledge or discuss those ideas which are now easy and were once perceived to be difficult.

In a learner-centered classroom, it is important for students to self-assess, set goals, and monitor their own progress with the help of their faculty member. By students and faculty working together, using formative assessment strategies, students are able to own their successes.

## Reference:

Atkin, J. M., Black, P., & Coffey, J. (2001). *Classroom assessment and the national science standards*. Washington, DC: National Academies Press.

## Career Services in Your Classroom

If you find that you have a scheduling conflict or an emergency and you can't make your class, consider contacting Career Services as they offer top-notch quality presentations customized to the fit the needs of your students. You can reach them at 989-964-4954 or [www.svsu.edu/careerservices/meetthestaff](http://www.svsu.edu/careerservices/meetthestaff)