

How Can We Motivate Students To Prepare For Class?
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Research on motivation focuses more on general academic motivation rather than preparation for class. For example, investigating the relationship between three broad categories of academic motivation (engagement, avoidance, and achievement) and students' perceptions of the value of instructional techniques (course websites, active learning, and traditional lecture), Komarraju and Karau (2008) found that only engagement was positively correlated with perceptions of all three techniques. Exploring students' motivation for majoring in psychology, Jacobs and Newstead (2000) concluded that whereas some students were motivated primarily by gaining disciplinary knowledge, others were motivated by more general experiences and skills. Regarding motivation in specific classes, Rodriguez-Keyes, Schneider, and Keenan (2013) suggested that motivation in social work courses was heightened when students felt that they were "known" by instructors, which encompassed recognition of students, responses to questions, and general caring.

Although we often ask students to read relevant textbook material prior to class, we find that our students often do not do so, relying instead on classroom lectures and discussions as sources of knowledge. We found only one study that addressed how to encourage students to read material prior to class coverage. Using exam grades as a dependent measure, Ryan (2006) explored three routes for encouraging student reading. Findings indicated that focused homework assignments with extensive feedback resulted in higher exam grades than did similar assignments with minimal feedback or general assignments with planned quizzes. We aim to gather ideas for additional techniques to encourage students to read relevant material before class.

Questions for Discussion

1. What do you do to encourage students to prepare for class? How effective have you been in getting students to prepare for class meetings?
2. What alternatives, besides reading, do you have students to do to prepare for class?
3. How have you assessed the effectiveness of your efforts to get students to prepare for class?

References

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