Administering Low Stake Quizzes at the Start of Each Class

Dr. Tracy Hammond (Professor, Computer Science & Engineering) has seen increased student learning and performance on exams by incorporating Low Stake Quizzes at the Start of Each Class. These quizzes cover any material that has been learned in the class and prerequisite materials that the students were expected to have mastered before the class. For example, quizzes in a computer science capstone class could cover lecture material and also fundamentals from algorithms or programming classes.

KICK START CLASS WITH A DAILY QUIZ

WHY USE IT?

- Greater Teacher Awareness of How Students are Doing
  Misconceptions can be identified and addressed quickly.

- Close to Perfect On-Time Attendance
  Even though the quizzes are a small portion of their grade, students do not want to miss them.

- Provide Structure in the Classroom
  Many students find value in an organized and structured environment.

WHAT IS IT?

STUDENT BENEFITS:

- Increased Knowledge Capture
  Quizzes help learners identify what they do and do not know.

- Reduced Motivation for Cheating
  Regular, low-stakes assessment decreases stress around exams, so it greatly reduces motives to cheat.

- Better Prepared for Exams
  Students have performed better on their final examinations and final project presentations.

INSTRUCTOR BENEFITS:

- The goal is for these quizzes to be a clear channel of feedback to the students on what they are expected to know or understand while not significantly penalize them for misunderstanding something.

- One of the main learning outcomes is mastery of the material. These quizzes function as a formative assessment tool to give students a clear path to mastery.

"Many students found quizzes to be a good refresher on the material they hadn’t thought about in a while, helping them in their interviews for jobs."

- Dr. Tracy Hammond

INSTRUCTOR TIPS TO KEEP IN MIND

- Write the quizzes in conjunction with the course material. The quizzes are meant to reinforce the material covered in class and refresh the material from prerequisites.

- When possible, utilize online quizzing tools like Google Forms, to make it easier to grade the quizzes at scale.

- Short answer questions should be used whenever possible so that students are required to produce the answer themselves and not simply recognize the correct answer from a set of options.

- The workload of developing these quizzes can be shared with your teaching cohort (e.g., other instructors, teaching assistants) since they will also be knowledgeable in the course material.

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