

# Student Participation Workshop Extension

*This document contains insights gained from the discussions between workshop participants that significantly added to the content of the workshop. If you are running the workshop in your own institution, I strongly encourage incorporating these points into the main workshop. If you are reading this for your own use, I strongly encourage you to take these points into consideration.*

## 1. Teach Students what Participation is and why it's important

Many students come to their first year of college or university unprepared to perform as a student of the academy. Just telling them to participate and giving a brief list of modes of participation may not be sufficient to get them on the same page as the instructor. As part of the introduction to an assignment that involves self-assessment of participation (or an explanation of any kind of participation grade) it would be valuable to spend a portion of lecture listing different modes of participation (see Modes of Participation and Assessment for some), and explaining how participation can improve their learning outcomes (and thus, their grades). This is especially important if you are allowing students to participate to extend beyond the classroom. Most students may consider participation to be equivalent to an 'attendance' grade or 'if the professor remembers them' so introducing to them the concept of course participation as described in the workshop and providing examples will be important for helping them to understand how to achieve a good participation grade under the proposed model. As put eloquently by a workshop participant, "give them the keys to the castle".

## 2. Student Ownership

The proposed method of assessing participation lets students take ownership of their own involvement in the course. *They* get to choose how *they* participate. Not only does this help address unfairness that comes from the usual methods of assessing participation (ie, attendance), but it helps foster a more inclusive and welcoming *course* environment and gives students some authority over how they are to be evaluated.

## 3. Distinguishing between High and Low level Participation

Modes of participation can be (roughly) categorized into "high" and "low" levels. Low level participation is any engagement with the course, material and/or participants that satisfies the bare minimum requirements of being a successful member of the class. Examples of low level participation are attending lecture, paying attention, taking notes and doing the assigned readings before class. High level participation are modes of participation that are above and beyond the explicit and implicit requirements of the class. Examples of high level participation is synthesizing material across multiple courses, taking the initiative to organize and facilitate discussion groups outside of class time and seeking out and reading additional material related to the course but not indicated on the course syllabi. This distinction can be helpful in designing your self-assessment rubric and tailoring it more closely to your expectations of the students in your class.

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#### 4. Evaluating Self-Assessments

The workshop doesn't spend much time on the evaluation of self-assessment and the development of a rubric for a self-assessment. The rubric and assignment provided is a good starting point for developing your own. When developing a rubric for self-assessment keep in mind that the assessments are going to be evaluated *relative* to the criteria you set out. Ensure that the criteria for getting an "A" on participation via the self-assessment matches with your expectations of what kinds of things a student who got an "A" on participation would have done during the term with respect to your course, it's material and participants.