

What works: KIN 111 Foundations of Kinesiology and Sports

1. I give frequent quizzes on reading and lecture materials. Students may use reading and lecture notes but not original readings. This encourages and rewards them for staying current in class, taking clear notes and they find taking the tests less threatening.
2. Before tests, I spend time with the class looking at past tests and discussing how to answer short essay questions and multiple choice questions. I provide them with potential questions, ask them to write an answer and then share with 2-3 other students for evaluation. I host study sessions before tests. To be allowed to come to these sessions, students must write 3-4 short essay questions with appropriately written answers and write 5-6 multiple choice questions. Small groups then answer the questions, compare answers and receive feedback from the individual who wrote the questions. I move from group to group to provide feedback on questions and answers and to clarify class materials.
3. I utilize pair-share discussions in class. Periodically, throughout a lecture or discussion, I post a question to the class and ask one person of a pair to provide a full and detailed explanation to the other. This helps students retrieve, organize and verbalize information. The partner provided feedback, asks for clarification and provides additional information when needed. Additionally, this provides me with a quick check of who is paying attention and who is grasping the ideas and concepts. I find it helpful to change the "pairs" combinations.
4. One of my assignments is a small book reading/discussion group that culminates into a final in class presentation similar to a symposium. Because this may be a very new and different situation for first year students, I solicit "reading mentors" to be part of each small groups. I have used retired faculty members, coaches, student affairs staff, other staff members, and a community member. The reading mentor leads the first discussion and talks with the group about how to design questions, find themes, important and sometime controversial things to discuss. In subsequent meetings the mentor is part of the group but tries to participate less each time. Yet they can redirect questions, expand questions and challenge students thinking. I found the mentors really loved the experience and students came to see other people, outside of faculty, participating in a learning community. Mentors have no responsibility for the final presentation but have been known to brain storm with the students and attend the symposium.