19th Annual Advocacy Summit

equipping and empowering advocates for public health

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Active learning approaches to teaching health policy to first-generation college students

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Agenda

Background
First-generation college students
Active learning approaches
Transparency in assignments
Course design
Assessments
Best practices
Resources
What makes first-generation college students unique?
Session learning objectives

- Identify active learning approaches that allow students to apply classroom learning to local health policy issues
- Identify approaches to incorporating current state and federal health policy issues in classroom advocacy projects
- Organize assignments so that students gradually progress towards group project milestones
Reflection

What is one thing you know about one of the following:
- Active learning approaches
- Teaching first-generation college students?

What is one thing that you want to learn about either topic?

What would help you learn about this topic?
California State University, Los Angeles

Comprehensive state university and designated minority-serving institution (MSI)

- 60.9% Hispanic/Latino
- 14.2% Asian American
- 7.8% White
- 4.1% African American

64% first-generation college students
First-generation college students

Compared to their counterparts, these students are more likely to be:

- Underrepresented racial/ethnic minorities
- Financially independent
- Have families of their own
- Low-income background
- Attend school part-time
- Work in excess of 40 hours per week
- Less prepared for the academic rigors of a college education

First-gen students are less likely to graduate from a 4 year institution within 6 years than their counterparts, and more likely to leave without returning.
How do we operationalize student characteristics with classroom teaching techniques?

- Tired: Active learning
- Cultural capital: Incorporate community into content
- Family and work responsibilities: Asynchronous learning opportunities
- Less prepared for academic rigor: Transparent assignments
Effective learning practices for first-generation college students

Structure
- Syllabus
- Learning management system

Introducing concepts
- Assess and activate prior knowledge
- Use prior lectures, videos to expose students to concepts prior to reading about them
Effective learning practices for first-generation college students

**Active Learning**
- Mini lectures (10-15 minutes)
- Discussion, activities, and group interaction allow students to engage with and apply material

**Transparency**
- Be clear about what is expected of students, show them how to approach the work

**Practice & Feedback**
- Create low-stakes opportunities for students to practice applying concepts and receive ongoing feedback
Course design: PH 4150 Health Policy

Resources

- **Learning management system**: Readings, videos, assignments, FAQ forum
- **Textbook, articles, videos**: Introduce students to policymaking process and key health policy issues
- **Kaiser Health News**: Students receive daily briefings via email, report weekly on a health policy issue of their choosing

Classes

- **Mini-lectures**: unpack concepts from assigned readings
- **Discussions and activities**: Engage students in explaining and applying concepts
Course design: PH 4150 Health Policy

Individual Assessments

- **Timed online quizzes (weekly):** Test comprehension of assigned concepts from weekly readings, given in advance of class
- **Kaiser Health News (weekly):** Students report on current health policy issues
- **Homework (periodic):** Discussion boards, reflections, learning assessments
- **Midterm exams (two):** Multiple choice exams are given in Weeks 6 and 12
- **Participation:** In-class engagement and group performance
Course design: PH 4150 Health Policy

Group Work

◦ **Legislative updates (periodic):** Students provide updates on a member of U.S. Congress or State Senate/Assembly. This assignment exposes students to different levels of policymaking

◦ **Group wikis (Weeks 1-5):** Through structured written assignments, students explore local representation, and research state/federal policy issues

◦ **Group midpoint review (Week 8):** Students use wikis to develop an executive summary on a congressional district, and select a policy issue to focus on

◦ **Creative presentation (Week 15):** Students create a video to educate constituents on a health policy issue, and provide resources and action steps

◦ **Final guide (Finals week):** Students submit video script with references and revised executive summary
Course page

Top of page (always present)

- Course announcements
- Forums: FAQ, News
- Attendance
- Wiki (group work)
- Extra Credit
- Getting Started
  - Welcome message, syllabus, course materials, contact information and office hours, student resources
Course page

Week 2

Prepare for Class
- Assignments due
- Readings
- Quiz

In class
- Slides
- Discussion Forum
- Wiki Instructions

Week 2: Policy and the Policymaking Process

Start Here ↓

Prepare for Class
1. Meet and Greet Forum due by 11:59 AM Monday
2. Read Chapter 2 of Textbook for context (refer to Week 1 slides for overview)
3. Review Chapter 2 concepts to be covered on the reading quiz (see updated slides from Week 1).
4. Take quiz. Reading quiz is accessible from 3:00pm Friday-9:59pm Monday, 8/26. You may only access the quiz once, for a 10 minute period. Take the quiz early: there will be no makeups, even for technical errors.
5. Read Article: 6 tactics for dealing with political stress: how to manage being informed without undue anxiety.
6. Come to class prepared to discuss one article from the Kaiser Health News Monday Morning Briefing (should arrive in your inbox Monday morning).

Quiz #1: Chapter 2
You will have 10 minutes to complete the quiz before it is submitted. Refer to the updated slides for Week 1, which let you know which concepts will be covered by this quiz. Read the entire chapter for context, then review the concepts to be covered on the quiz. Make sure you understand these concepts prior to taking the quiz.

You can re-attempt questions that are incorrect, although they are worth less credit each time you attempt them. If you are still taking the quiz at the cutoff time, it will submit “as is”.

Huffington Post: 6 tactics for dealing with political stress: how to manage being informed without undue anxiety.

As mentioned in class, I encourage you to become informed and educated on the issues from a desire to empower you as public health professionals. These tips will help you to do so without becoming inundated and overwhelmed.

In Class
- Week 2 Slides (UPDATED 8/26)
- PDF document
- Available from August 28, 2017, 10:00 PM
- Discussion Forum #1: Single Payer Bill (due by 9:59pm Wednesday, 8/30)
- Week 2 Wiki: Local Representation
- Health Care Laws Enacted in CA as of January 1, 2017
Clear grading criteria

Grading Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points Possible (by Percentage):</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework &amp; Course Engagement</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm #1</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm #2</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Project</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grading Scale (grades will not be rounded up)

- A: 93+  
- B+: 87-88.99  
- B: 80-82.99  
- B-: 69-89.99  
- C+: 77-79.99  
- C: 73-76.99  
- D+: 63-68.99  
- D: 58-62.99  
- F: 0-57.99

Grades

Click on GRADES in Moodle to monitor your progress. Fill out this table to keep track of your points. Meet with me early on if you are concerned about your grades (I will not discuss grades over email).

Assignments and Grading Policy

Class participation and in-class assignments and activities are intended to help students apply the concepts covered in weekly reading. Students are expected to come to class having read the material, and ready to engage in activities and discussion. Activities are designed to enhance student understanding and provide practical application of course concepts in the broader context of public health.

1. Homework & Course Engagement (20%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage of Grade</th>
<th>More Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality of content posted in discussion forums, reflections, assignments</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Total category points will be weighted to equal 15% of grade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of participation in class discussions, contribution to in-class activities (informed by group evaluation, professor’s assessment)</td>
<td>5% (subject to attendance deduction)</td>
<td>Your final percentage is subject to deduction based on total number of absences: 0% for 0-2 absences, 1% for 3-4 absences, 3% for 5-6 absences, 5% for 7+ absences.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No makeups will be given for in-class activities or online assignments.
Transparency

Clearly communicate expectations

- Purpose
- Skills
- Knowledge
- Tasks
- Submission format
- Time frame
- Criteria for success

Moodle Assignment: Template for Student Instructions

Purpose

Start with a statement describing the purpose of this assignment. In a short narrative, define the learning objectives, in language and terms that help students recognize how this assignment will benefit their learning. Ideally, indicate how these are connected with institutional learning outcomes, and how the specific knowledge and skills involved in this assignment will be important in students' lives beyond the contexts of this assignment, this course, and this university.

Skills

The purpose of this assignment is to help you practice the following skills that are essential to your success in this course / in school / in this field / in professional life beyond school:

- Module objective 1
- Module objective 2
- Module objective 3

Ensure each objective features a measurable action students will perform that can be observed and evaluated through the completion of this assignment.

Knowledge

This assignment will also help you to become familiar with the following important content knowledge in this discipline:

- Content knowledge item 1
- Content knowledge item 2

Tasks

Define what activities the student should do/perform. List the steps students need to take in order to successfully complete the in class activity. List any common mistakes students should avoid. Be sure to list any tasks students should complete before coming to class.

1. Step 1
2. Step 2
3. Click Add Submission below to upload your assignment to Moodle, then click Save changes to submit.

Submission Format

Give students specifics on what they should submit, for instance:

- Please submit your assignment by uploading a Microsoft Word Document or a PDF file.
- Please type your assignment directly into Moodle using the online text option.

Time Frame

Indicate when the assignment is due and a time estimate of how long it should take to complete the assignment.

Criteria for Success

Define the characteristics of the finished product. Explain how excellent work differs from adequate work. Provide students a checklist of characteristics of successful work. This enables students to evaluate the effectiveness of their own efforts while they are working, and to judge the quality of their completed work.

Indicate how many points this in class activity is worth, whether this activity will be graded and/or how it factors into the student's overall grade for the course. Provide a rubric or other grading criteria.
Midpoint Review

Sections 1-6 represent Wiki assignments

1. Congressional district
2. Local representation
3. District demographics
4. State health policy
5. Federal health policy
6. Health reform
7. Proposed issue & creative idea

Grading Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5% (Excellent)</th>
<th>4% (Good)</th>
<th>1-3% (Poor)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completely answered questions in sections 1-7</td>
<td>Missing some information in 1-2 sections</td>
<td>Missing information in 3+ sections, or a great deal of information in one section</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answers are supported with in-text citations and bibliography at end (APA)</td>
<td>Some references are missing, or not properly cited</td>
<td>Many references are missing, and are not correctly cited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written in a clear, easy to understand format targeting constituents</td>
<td>Overall clear, some minor issues with clarity</td>
<td>Writing is not clear, document lacks flow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well formatted according to guidelines, no grammatical errors or spelling issues</td>
<td>Some issues with formatting, a few grammatical errors or spelling issues</td>
<td>Not correctly formatted or proofread (many grammatical errors and spelling issues)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group completed each Wiki in a timely manner</td>
<td>At least one Wiki was submitted late, missing information, or did not use complete sentences</td>
<td>Several Wikis were submitted late, missing information, or did not use complete sentences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Final project: Creative presentation
Other formats include talk shows, podcasts, infographics, puppet skits, webinars with infographics

Note: Students who did not sign audio/video release were edited out
Engaging outside of the classroom

Student with CA Assemblywoman

Student meeting industry leaders at local conference

Students attending on-campus policy conference
California State University (CSU) Health Policy conference

Over 3 days, students:
◦ Tour the California State Capitol
◦ Visit the State Assembly and Senate floors
◦ Attend committee hearings
◦ Meet with policymakers, journalists, lobbyists, and the Secretary of State of California
◦ Network with students and professors throughout the CSU system
◦ Create action steps for advocacy and staying informed
Bringing health policy to life

Photo taken by student during the Health Policy conference

AP photo taken on the same day
Learning assessments

Week 1
- Meet & greet forum (assess prior knowledge, learning goals)

Weeks 6-7
- Critical incident questionnaire
- Mid-semester assessment (individual evaluation & exam wrapper)

Weeks 14-15
- Reflection on course experience
- Individual and group evaluation
Critical incident questionnaire

1. At what moment in this presentation did you feel most engaged in what was happening?

2. At what moment in this presentation were you most distanced from what was happening?

3. What one thing did you find most affirming or helpful?

4. What one thing did you find most puzzling or confusing?

5. What about this presentation surprised you the most? This could be about your own reactions to what went on, something that someone did, or anything else that occurred.
Mid-semester assessment

Students receive 1% credit for reviewing their performance to date in the following areas:

- Attendance
- Class discussions
- Exams
- Group work
Reflection on course experience

1. What is the most important thing you learned in health policy?
2. What topic are you interested in learning more about?
3. What do you feel prepared to do as a result of taking this class?
4. What was your opinion of the group project (the topic itself, what was required of you, how your group worked together)?
5. What is one good way to challenge students to participate in the learning process in this class?
### Evaluation: Group work

Adapted from a peer evaluation form developed at Johns Hopkins University (2006)

Write the name of each of your group members (e.g. Jude F.) across the top. For each person, indicate the extent to which you agree with the statement on the left, using a scale of 1-4 (1=strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3=agree; 4=strongly agree). Total the numbers in each column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Criteria</th>
<th>Group member:</th>
<th>Group member:</th>
<th>Group member:</th>
<th>Group member:</th>
<th>Group member:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participates in group discussions regularly and arrives on time.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributes meaningfully to group discussions.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completes work on time.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Prepares work in a quality manner.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrates a cooperative and supportive attitude.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributes significantly to the success of group work.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTALS**

Adapted from a peer evaluation form developed at Johns Hopkins University (2006)
Evaluation: Individual work

1. With 1 being the lowest, and 5 being the highest, tell me what grade you would give yourself on your **quality of participation in class discussions**. Explain why you deserve this grade.

2. With 1 being the lowest, and 5 being the highest, tell me what grade you would give yourself on your **contribution to in-class activities**. Explain why you deserve this grade.

3. With 1 being the lowest, and 5 being the highest, tell me what grade you would give yourself on your **contribution to the group project**. Explain why you deserve this grade.

4. If you have had **more than two absences or late arrivals**, this is your opportunity to explain anything you would want me to know in deciding your grade. If you have had fewer than two absences or late arrivals, you can just state that. Check the Attendance tab at the top of Moodle for your report (P for present, L for late).
## Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>PRE DFW</th>
<th>SP 17 Post DFW</th>
<th>Percent change</th>
<th>Raw change</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>Pre GPA</th>
<th>Post GPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PH 4150</td>
<td>10.17%</td>
<td>1.25%</td>
<td>-87.71%</td>
<td>8.92%</td>
<td>Jackson-Preston</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>3.46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Testimonial from a past student, now enrolled in a Masters in Health Administration program:**
This econ class I am taking now is so fast, and intense. Without the previous information, I think I would be lost. Professors don’t take much class time to make sure all students are understood like you did...Your videos definitely helped me a lot. For problems and issues in the health field, Kaiser Health News prepared me sooooooo much. Half of class are discussion time based on our readings (about 100 pages per week). Knowing current issues are very important. Plus, study[ing] before the lecture is not an option as you trained us to read [the] book and take a quiz before the class. There is no way I can understand what professors lecture without study[ing] and read[ing] lecture materials before the class. For all classes, I already had reading assignments before starting the school year... knowing terms and [the] history of healthcare policies helped me to understand lectures.
Next steps

2017-2018 Faculty Fellow for the Public Good

◦ Develop into Service Learning Course with the help of our Center for Engagement, Service and the Public Good
◦ Work with a local district office for a U.S. Congress, State Senate, or State Assembly member
◦ Former policy students will conduct needs assessments with local district office staff
◦ Current students will develop videos to educate constituents on key policy issues, resources, and action steps

Intersession, Hybrid format
The (first-gen) teaching practice checklist

Below are small actions every instructor can take in the classroom to achieve lasting learning. How many of these do you regularly practice? Such techniques have been shown to improve learning conditions for first-generation students, but are really useful for all learners—and teaching best practice.

**FOR ANY CLASS SESSION**
- Quickly review the previous week
- Outline your lecture
- Check for understanding (one-minute papers, pair and share, cold calling, clickers)
- Recap each class session

**PRACTICE MATTERS**
- Have students read aloud, write, or ask better questions in the class on a regular basis if you want to build critical thinking
- Have students practice hard stuff in front of you in class: they can get better at the thing you want them to learn—and you will see if they are learning
- Structure all group and practice activities; unfocused group work does not help learning

**BE CRYSTAL CLEAR**
- Student learning outcomes (GLOs) should be written for students—not experts
- The syllabus should connect all course activities to the course goals
- Use simple, friendly language in your instructions. Assignments should use language that makes tasks crystal clear and avoids “hidden” or “implicit” curriculum
- Teach students to ask clarifying questions; first-gen students struggle with asking questions and do not want to appear ignorant
- Show students how knowledge is organized in your discipline and what yours values
- Show students how to read writing from your discipline

**GIVE PROMPT FEEDBACK**
- Practice two-way feedback in class using ungraded reflection—e.g. one minute papers, exam wrappers, clickers or polling. Students will tell you what they have learned and you can adjust teaching if they have not
- Give students timely feedback at least once before any important test or assignment

- Always specify your criteria for grading—rubrics work and they save time
- Use a variety of examples from past student work so students can see there are different ways to complete an assignment
- Do not wait to the end of the semester to give feedback on a major paper or project
- Prase student work and effort, not intelligence. Students who believe they can get better with hard work, perform better

**FOSTER SELF-AWARENESS**
- Encourage students to set a learning goal for the course
- Get students to think about how they approach assignments and tests using reflection, self-monitoring, verbalizing or tracking performance
- Incorporate peer mentoring, a high-impact practice for any learner
- Learning study skills really, really works for struggling students: time management, note taking, mnemonic methods of studying (HE 101); you can even give students your notes to model

**PROMOTE ENGAGEMENT OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM**
- Your first-gen students are independent and may delay asking for help. They should be encouraged—or required—to get regular advising
- Make help-seeking a part of class assignments; reward through extra credit
- Require at least one office-hours visit
- Include all university support services in the syllabus: Writing Center, OSD, Tutoring, Annex labs
- Strongly encourage internships and networking with faculty

**EXPERIENCE IS POWERFUL**
- Relate course material to the rich, lived experiences of first-gen students
- Use personal anecdotes from your past; this makes your assignment relevant
- Use a course metaphor to represent difficult content
- Establish tone: Use music or visual aids to stimulate the senses and build a unique environment

**PRACTICE PRESENCE**
- Move around the classroom; proximity also works
- Do not talk and write at the same time
- Learn your students’ names; this one technique has been shown to increase student connection

Need more assistance? Contact CETL at cetl@calstate.edu or check our calendar for regular programming. We can help!
Tips to enhance student interaction

**Classroom**
- Randomize students into groups, have them sit together
- Request a classroom with group seating and technology, if possible

**Student communication**
- Students establish group values and goals
- Students decide communication: text, email, google docs
- Use Zoom if available (record presentations, hold meetings)
Tips to enhance student interaction

Office hours
- Encourage students to schedule slots (LMS, signup.com or wejoinin.com)
- Hold a weekly virtual office hour via Zoom
- Engage students performing below the mean on first midterm via email

Learning Management System
- Randomize students into groups
- Post readings, assignments, and wikis in advance
- Encourage use of forum to troubleshoot, provide resources, discuss topics, and ask questions
References


Center for Effective Teaching and Learning. California State University, Los Angeles. www.calstatela.edu/cetl
What is one technique you learned today that you will apply to your course next semester?
Questions?

Portia A. Jackson Preston
California State University, Los Angeles
pjacks06@calstatela.edu

Graduating Health Policy students at awards celebration
Thank you to our sponsors