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Faculty and Student Perceptions of Post-Exam Attendance

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Presenters
Trent W. Maurer, Laura Frost, Diana Sturges, Simone Charles, Debbie Allen, Michelle Cawthorn, and Cherry C. Brewton
Faculty and Student Perceptions of Post-Exam Attendance

Trent W. Maurer, Laura Frost, Diana Sturges, Simone Charles, Debbie Allen, Michelle Cawthorn, & Cherry C. Brewton
Questions to Consider

• When you think of “post-exam attendance,” what comes to mind?

• How is your classroom attendance the day after you give an exam?
Background

“When substantial numbers of students do not attend, classroom learning is depreciated, student and teacher morale suffer, and academic standards are compromised” (Brown, 2002, p. 101).
Background

• Student attendance correlates with learning and grades
• Multiple factors influence student attendance, both structural and motivational
• Day after exam is disproportionately influential on student learning in many courses
• Anecdotal evidence suggests that this particular day has excessively high absenteeism
Method

• Students (N=377) and Faculty (N=109) were invited to take a survey on class attendance through Survey Monkey

• 22 questions total
  • 2 questions for faculty only
  • 1 question for students only

• Quantitative and Qualitative questions were asked
The bar chart represents the distribution of ethnicities among the survey respondents and the university-wide population. The x-axis categories are Caucasian, African-American, Hispanic, Asian, and Other. The y-axis represents the percentage (%). The chart shows a significant difference between the survey and university-wide data, with African-Americans being the most represented in the survey compared to the university-wide population.
Results

• Roughly, half of the combined sample perceived a drop in attendance and half perceived no change.
• Both faculty and students thought the largest classes have more decline than the smaller classes.
• Students who thought absenteeism was related to grades were less likely to report being absent.
Faculty vs. Student Perceptions

Faculty (N=109) vs. Students (N=377)

Important
Effort
Grades
Course Learning
Exam
Less Learning
Class Size
What comes to mind when you hear “post-exam attendance?”
Student Comments

- Student comments

- “I want to see my test and find out what I got wrong so I can learn it.”

- “Low attendance because most students think that only an exam review will be done in class and that isn't influential in learning.”

- “I think of it as any other day it doesn't matter if it is pre-exam attendance or post-exam attendance they are the same days to me.”
What factors influence post-exam attendance?

- Tiredness
  - Students: 14%
  - Faculty: 20%

- Importance of the material to be covered
  - Students: 12%
  - Faculty: 10%

- Test results/review
  - Students: 12%
  - Faculty: 9%
Comparison Comments

Student comments

• “They will have plenty of time to get the missed material before the next exam.”
• “If a student thinks they put a lot of effort into studying for the exam they might think they are entitled to a period of rest before putting more effort into that class again.”

Faculty comments

• “They think nothing important will happen. It is an excuse to cut class.”
• “Lack of motivation and interest in course material. [There is an] inability to take responsibility for their own education.”
• “[Students assume] they accomplished something and can take a breather.”
How does it make you feel?

- I don't care - students: 53%
- I don't care - faculty: 14%
Faculty - What do you do in your course to encourage attendance for the class period immediately following an exam?

- 29% - do not implement actions to specifically encourage post-exam attendance

- 20% - implement action through an attendance policy
  * Only 6% of students considered attendance policies to be an influencing factor on post-exam attendance

- 17% - of faculty reported reviewing and returning the exam
  * 16% of students associated assignments, finding out grades, and reviewing the exam as relevant to attendance
Comparison Comments

Student comments

• Deserve points for attending - “Like I should get something for being there.”
• Focusing on self - I'm there to learn for myself, not others.”
• Loss to those who don’t attend - I am not missing out on learning anything, those skipping out on class are.”
• Wish they did not come - “Wish I hadn't come.”

Faculty comments

• Negative feelings – disappointment, frustration, irritation - “Irritated! This is actually one of the more important days to attend because it's the intro to a new topic.”
• Students are not interested in learning.
How can we increase attendance?
Questions?