



# SoTL

## Snapshot

A synopsis of a scholarship of teaching and learning journal article

### A Transparent Reading Assignment Encourages Reading for Flipped Courses

#### What is this Research About?

In a 'flipped classroom' model, students read or view materials before class, work on practical problems in class, and check their understanding after class. However, research shows that one problem with the flipped classes is that many students do not complete assigned pre-class readings. A transparent reading assignment can be used to encourage students to complete assigned readings. For a transparent reading assignment, students are asked to take brief notes while they complete a reading. The notes summarize the content of the readings and include the students' reflections about the reading (e.g., "What seemed really important in the chapter?") If they submit notes on time, the notes are returned to them for use on exams. The notes are also graded for completeness. In this study, the researcher tested how a transparent reading assignment affected completion of assigned readings and students' understanding of course material.

#### What did the Researchers Do?

The researchers surveyed students from three different years of a soil science course. These students had all completed transparent reading assignments as part of their course work. The researcher surveyed students about whether the reading assignment encouraged them to complete readings, how helpful the notes were for tests and understanding material, and if they would recommend the assignment to other professors. Additionally, the researcher examined whether the note-taking assignment quality and completion status was correlated with final exam grade.

#### What did the Researchers Find?

The researcher found that the reading assignment resulted in students completing 80-90% of the assigned readings. Students reported almost unanimously that the assignment was valuable in helping them learn the material. A majority of students reported that other professors should adopt a similar reading assignment strategy. Achievement on the assignment positively correlated with achievement on the comprehensive final exam.

#### ➔ How to Implement this Research in Your Classroom

In a transparent reading assignment, students create content-based and reflective notes about pre-class readings. They receive grades for completing the reading assignment, and they can use their notes on the exam. The assignment encourages students to complete pre-class readings and reflect on the learning outcomes of the course. This assignment helps students develop a deeper understanding of the material and ensures students are prepared for class in flipped courses. A transparent reading assignment can be used in face-to-face or online courses to increase student's engagement with asynchronous material. Instructors can adapt this transparent reading assignment for their own flipped courses. Interested instructors can access the assignment description in Bhavsar's (2020) article.

#### ➔ Citation

Bhavsar, V. (2020). A transparent assignment to encourage reading for a flipped course. *College Teaching*, 68 (1), <https://doi.org/10.1080/87567555.2019.1696740>

#### ➔ Keywords

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