



# Supporting Class Participation Through Formative Self-Assessment



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## The Context

### UNIV 101 Grade Breakdown

- Class Participation: 40% of final grade
- Weekly Reflection Responses: 20% of final grade
- Four Gen Ed ePortfolio Assignments: 40% of final grade
  - About Me Page: 5%
  - The Wonderosity Project: 15%
  - Learning Artifact: 5%
  - Story of a Lifelong Learner: 15%

## Participation Rubric with Self-Assessment

Category	W1	W2	W3	W4	W5	W6	W7	W8	W9	W10	W11	W12	W13	W14	W15
<b>Being present in class and arriving on time:</b> Present, ready to participate, reducing distractions, and trying your best (2 pts).															
<b>Being prepared to participate in class:</b> Opened, read, watched, prepared, and brought necessary materials to engage in class today (2 pts).															
<b>Listening attentively:</b> Paying attention while others are speaking up, not starting other conversations, checking your phone, not interrupting, or pre-planning your response (2 pts.)															
<b>Sharing your ideas in small group settings:</b> Discussed with a neighbor and/or in a small group. Created space for others to share in these settings so as not to dominate the conversation (2 pts.)															
<b>Contributing to our learning in a whole-class discussion:</b> Demonstrated a willingness to share even if you weren't sure if you were right/wrong, or someone else recognized your contribution to the class. Made a quality comment (2 pts.) or a short answer (1 pt.) to the whole class.															
<b>Total out of 10 pts.</b>	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

\*Give yourself a score with your initials at the end of each class. Check the score the instructor gave you in the beginning of the next class. Reflect on your progress; feel free to ask your instructor for help.

\*\* The current rubric is based on UNIV 101 Instructional Materials with modifications made by A. Serratos for the purpose of use in UNIV classes.

- To earn 10 points for participation, you must make a quality whole-class comment.
- To earn 9 points, you can provide a short answer to the whole class or read from the slide.
- To earn 8 points, participate in group/pair discussions and/or activities
- If you are late, points are deducted for tardiness; you must actively participate to ensure you don't lose further points.
- Absences means zero for that day's participation grade.
- Remember 2 lowest grades get dropped from your final grade calculation.

## **A Note on Participation**

(shared with students during class via class slides)

## UNIV 101 Course Learning Outcomes

(relevant to participation)

- **Communicate** the purpose of your general education (so you know why you are taking these courses);
- **Explain** the structure of your general education (so you feel empowered to determine the direction of your coursework);
- **Reflect** on the interrelatedness of your general education, academic major(s) and minor(s), academic behaviors, and general well-being (so you can approach your Bachelor's degree holistically).

## Key Takeaways

### **Student Perspective**

"I like how we fill out our own participation sheets. I think this forces us to self-assess accurately and hold myself accountable. I am more motivated to participate this way!  
- UNIV 101 student, Spring 2024

### **Instructor Perspective**

- This approach allows us to leave specific feedback to acknowledge students' efforts ("Your contribution to the whole class added value to our discussion") and boost students' confidence ("The comment you made in your small group extended the discussion. Could you explain your point to the whole class?")
- Anecdotally, while other instructors report struggling with class discussions, our use of the participation rubric has increased engagement and made our class discussions more robust.

## The Literature

"Self-assessment is a process of formative assessment during which students reflect on the quality of their work, judge the degree to which it reflects explicitly stated goals or criteria, and revise accordingly." - - Andrade & Valtcheva (2009)

"Self-assessment is a key element in formative assessment because it involves students in thinking about the quality of their own work, rather than relying on their teacher as the sole source of evaluation judgements." - Andrade & Valtcheva (2009)

"Providing students with more specific guidelines would lead to more engagement and deeper level of conversations among students." - Rezaei (2023)

## Suggestions

Should you implement a participation rubric in your course?

First, identify what are the goals in the course. Is active participation an important component for the learning process? Is it connected to your course learning outcomes?

Then identify what is feasible and realistic for you as an instructor. With UNIV 101 class size of 25, utilizing the rubric helps instructors to evaluate students' participation and follow-up scores with feedback. For students who are not as active in their participation we encourage them to share their perspective – reminding them how important their voice is. For students who consistently actively engage in course discussions, we continue to encourage their engagement.

While large group discussions may not be possible in larger lecture-style courses due to time constraints, small group opportunities offer all students a way to actively engage in the course. Instead of using a participation rubric, consider building in small reflections throughout the course that allows students to reflect on their learning and engagement (participation in small group discussions) in the course.

## References

Andrade, H. & Valtcheva, A. (2009). Promoting Learning and Achievement Through Self-Assessment. *Theory Into Practice*. Vol. 48(1), 12-19.

Images. <https://quickstart.arizona.edu/person-categories/starter-content>

Rezaei, A. R. (2023). Comparing strategies for active participation of students in group discussions. *Active Learning in Higher Education*. Vol. 24(3), 337-351.

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General Education