

Daily Attendance Quizzes

I am a punctual person. The joke in my family is that I was born eight days late and have never been late since then. A few years ago, I was going crazy when almost half of my students were showing up five to ten minutes late to class every day. Their tardiness disrupted the flow of my classes, many students missed important announcements, and, worst of all, my reprimands did not change their behavior. Finally, I came to realize that my students needed something more motivating to show up on time—and so the Daily Attendance Quiz was born!

Format

I have given a Daily Attendance Quiz in each of my classes every day since the spring semester of 2014. The quizzes take place during the first five minutes of class; however, I pass them out starting five minutes before the official start to class. This incentivizes early arrival to class because I tell students they can get up to ten minutes to take what should really only be a five-minute quiz. Each quiz includes one question that is easy to grade—it should not take me much more than five minutes to grade the quizzes for an entire class.

Here is an example of a Daily Attendance Quiz from my Statistics class:

Name: _____

Probability

Suppose that you are playing a game where you roll a six-sided die and draw a card from a standard deck of playing cards.

What is the probability that you roll a four on the die AND select a four from the deck of cards? You must use correct probability notation to receive credit.

Grading

I grade the quizzes on a three-point scale: three points if the student's response is completely correct (or very close to fully correct); two points for an incorrect answer, but a good effort; one point for putting their name on the paper; and zero points for not being present for the quiz. Students who are too late to class or absent do not get to make up the Daily Attendance Quiz for that day. However, I allow for the occasional absence or tardy by dropping at least five of the lowest quiz scores at the end

of the semester. The average of all Daily Attendance Quiz scores during a semester is worth between 5 and 10% of each student's final course grade, depending on the course.

Results

Student response to my Daily Attendance Quiz initiative has been very positive. Although students do not realize how minor the quizzes are to their overall grade, they take them very seriously. Students also use the quizzes for feedback to see how well they understand a particular topic (which I also find useful for lesson planning) or to study for tests and exams. I frequently remind students that if something is important enough to be on a Daily Attendance Quiz, then it will likely also be on an exam. Other students say that the quizzes motivate them to go over their notes daily so that the material stays fresh in their head. Ultimately, including a Daily Attendance Quiz in each of my class meetings has solved all of my original problems with student tardiness!

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