



Beyond Checking the Box: From Participation to Engagement

Thoughts on Participation

- Why do we have participation grades?
- What do they mean to us as instructors?
- What do you use to measure participation?



Application

- How might you apply these ideas in your own context?
- How can these ideas be expanded to include more student agency?

Sources & Resources

- **Structuring and grading participation.** “Into Practice” communication highlighting Luke Miratrix’s individualized participation plans.
<https://www.vpal.harvard.edu/structuring-and-grading-participation>
- **10 benefits of getting students to participate in classroom discussions.** Article providing high-level benefits of having students participate in classroom discussions.
<https://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/teaching-and-learning/10-benefits-of-getting-students-to-participate-in-classroom-discussions>
- **Should we stop grading class participation?** Article outlining why James Lang stopped grading class participation, while still expecting all students to participate.
<https://www.chronicle.com/article/should-we-stop-grading-class-participation>
- **Students’ and instructors’ perception on graded class participation: a multidisciplinary perspective within a comprehensive research university.** Study on differences in graded class participation across a university.
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/2331186X.2025.2492691>
- **What does it take for students to value grades for oral participation? Transparency is key.** Study investigating how students perceive oral participation grades in relation to achievement.
<https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/education/articles/10.3389/feduc.2025.1522695/full>
- **To participate or not to participate? A qualitative investigation of students’ complex motivations for verbal classroom participation.** Qualitative interview study investigating how students in science classes decide whether to verbally participate in class.
<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10846701>
- **Participation marks: The good, the bad and the ugly.** Four student writers sharing when grading participation doesn’t work, and how to improve it.
<https://bullandbearmcgill.com/participation-marks-the-good-the-bad-and-the-ugly/>
- **The Paradox of the Participation Grade.** Blog article outlining how required, graded, verbal participation can become a paradox.
https://www.nas.org/blogs/article/the_paradox_of_the_participation_grade
- **Grading class participation.** Chapter describing models of participation and assessing participation, as well as problems with assessments and corresponding strategies.
https://academics.fresnostate.edu/documents/participation/grading_class_participation.pdf
- **Engagement and participation: Same same or different and why does it matter?** Paper distinguishing between engagement and participation using a case study and detailing of an engagement framework.
<https://unistars.org/papers/STARS2019/07A.pdf>