We do not have to settle for students coming to class unprepared. We will discuss the interactive teaching model I use—class preparation assignments along with a definitional grading system—to ensure that students prepare for class so that class time can be used for deep learning and skill development. We will explore ways to use student preparation with active-learning strategies that further engage students in deeper thinking about the material.

**Outcomes:**

Design a course using an interactive teaching model where students come to class prepared and class time is used for higher-level thinking and skill development.

Design a definitional grading system for any course with one of the categories being student preparation for class.

Write class preparation assignments to guide students in their reading assignments and to inform and stimulate class discussion.

Write class preparation assignments at the appropriate level of difficulty for their course.

Grade class preparation assignments easily while not dying under the paper load.

Describe how student preparation for class transforms the student learning experience and invigorates teaching.

**Category: Application**

Describe the theory, approach, and revision that you applied in your course, curriculum, or program. Describe what you saw in your students', colleagues', or institution's behavior that you wanted to change. Describe the learning objectives you wanted students or colleagues to better achieve as a result of your application.
I moved from a traditional teaching model to an interactive teaching model using class preparation assignments—reading assignments accompanied with informal writing assignments—to inform and stimulate class discussion, and a definitional grading system where to get a particular course grade a student must meet or exceed the standard for each category of work (Walvoord and Anderson 2010). One of the categories of work is class preparation assignments.

With the traditional teaching model, too much class time was devoted to students’ first exposure to the material, and too little class time was devoted to higher-order reasoning and skill development.

I wanted students to come to class prepared having done the class preparation assignment and then to leverage their preparation by using active learning techniques that further engage students in deeper thinking about the material. I wanted to create space and time for informed student voices (Walvoord and Anderson).

Describe the project's related course(s) or curriculum, its students, and its place in the curriculum or program.
My application was in every economics and statistics course I teach, other than the 400+ student lecture-hall classes, at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

How is your application different from ones that others have tried?
Other teaching models that flip the classroom do not use class preparation assignments and do not use a definitional grading system (Bowen 2012).

Assessment and baseline: Indicate how you determined the success and effectiveness of your application.
First, I evaluated from multiple courses (upper division and lower division) over multiple years student assessment data where students completed anonymous surveys asking them whether they thought they learned more using the interactive teaching model with class preparation assignments than they would have learned from the traditional lecture teaching model, and whether they enjoyed the interactive teaching model more than the traditional lecture model. The large majority of students reported that they felt that they learned more and enjoyed more the interactive teaching model with class preparation assignment.
Second, I observed students coming to class prepared. I observed the classroom experience change with higher-quality discussions and more time for active-learning activities.

**References:**


*Journal on Excellence in College Teaching*, Volume 25, Numbers 3 & 4, 2014 (Special Focus Issue: Small-Group Learning in Higher Education &ndash; Cooperative, Collaborative, Problem-Based, and Team-Based Learning).

**Organization:**

I will present the interactive teaching model in a lively, engaging fashion and address common pitfalls. I will periodically stop talking and ask participants to answer self-assessment questions and to discuss our Dos and Don'ts.

**Keywords:**

Cooperative Learning
Critical Thinking
Deep Learning
Flipped Classrooms