Extending the Impact of Assignments

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Materials needed: Dry Erase Board and Marker

Learning challenge addressed/predictable outcome:
- Active engagement for better learning
- Improving public speaking skills
- Moving from student to teacher
- Exploring critical thinking skills
- Increased synthesis of material
- Increase students’ comfort with each other
- Better learner outcomes.

Best used for: written assignments, experiential learning assignments and group projects.

Learning objectives/skills fostered: Encourages critical thinking, moves student from research to application, moves students from learner to teacher, fosters public speaking skills/confidence.

What to do / how to do it: After students submit an assignment, they tend to not think about it again, unless it is tied to future assignments. This strategy gives students an opportunity to engage with their assignments from a “what was gained” perspective so that they and their classmates can benefit from the reflection. Include a passage that speaks to this facet of the curriculum in your syllabus and remind students of the opportunity as each assignment comes due. Click here for sample syllabi language you can adapt.

Tips for implementing: Let students know that as the semester progresses, you might give priority to students who have not yet taken advantage of this opportunity. And encourage them to be “The Best Audience Ever” for their classmates. I jokingly offer the following, as a way to invite such participation:

I explain to the students that they are all going to be speaking in front of the class over the course of the semester and therefore they will want to provide a comfortable atmosphere for public speaking. I then write on the board that a positive atmosphere includes students who are Attentive, Supportive and Smiling. I write the words on the board in such a way that the first letter stands out and then suggest that doing anything other than being Attentive, Supportive and Smiling would leave them being what the initials spell out (A-S-S). It usually gets a laugh and they usually get the point.