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Developing Self-Directed Learners

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For this module I chose to provide a checklist and rubric to facilitate self and peer reviewed assessments.

The final project for my fitness and testing course is to have students act as a strength and conditioning coach and teach a client how to safely perform an exercise. There are two parts to the presentation. Content, where students need to provide accurate information regarding the exercise. And delivery, making sure they convey their information clearly and in a professional manner.

In the past I provided a sheet with directions for the assignment. I also performed mock presentation as an example, so they could see what I was looking for. One good example, where I covered all the important information. And one poor example, where a skipped through material. At first I thought that was adequate, but after reviewing the ACUE module I learned there is more I could be doing to better prepare the students.

New rubrics and assessments

This quarter I provided more content to help students prepare for the presentation. I provided a checklist for students to gauge their progress in preparation. The checklist included key aspects of the presentation. Target muscles, muscle actions, equipment necessary, safety etc. I instructed the students to make sure each of those boxes were checked off by the end of the presentation.

A rubric was also provided. This let students know exactly how I will be grading. It was 5 sections each with a 5 point scale. It included details on what constitutes a 5/5, a 4/5, a 3/5 and so on.

A peer reviewed presentation checklist, where they rehearse with a partner and receive feedback on their verbal delivery. In the past students prepared for the project on their own. This quarter I offered one day specifically for rehearsal of the presentation. In class students paired up with another student and practiced their presentation. They then fill out a peer reviewed checklist to see what they did well and what they could improve on. From the time allotted in class, it looks like each student can practice their presentation 2 - 3 times with other classmates.

What challenges did you face during this activity?

One challenge I faced with this activity is that some students did not take it seriously. Some students used it as an opportunity to skip class or scroll through their phones. While some students were 100% serious, doing what they could to get as much practice in. This caused some problems as some serious students were paired with non serious. Students felt they were losing an opportunity to improve because of partners not paying attention.

The way I handled it was to send students out of the class. In this course time is split between a classroom and a weight room. Time is limited in the weight room, equipment is limited in the weight room. Because time and equipment are limited, students need to maximize opportunities there. If a student is spending time messaging on their phones, they are wasting their time as well as their classmates. There is also a safety concern when phone use occurs in the weight room. Mobile phone use while exercising can alter exercise technique, that may lead to injury. To limit the wasted time and maximize safety I have a "no phone" policy when in the weightroom. They are introduced to that policy on day one of the course. Students messaging on their phones were removed from class. This minimized phone use, and the activity preceded smoothly.

How do you plan to modify in the future?

To modify I plan to pair students ahead of time. Have student work with classmates who are performing similar exercises. This will allow them to exchange ideas. My hope is that the shared ideas results in better quality presentations for both parties.

Another modification to make is to add a second day in the weight room for rehearsal. The presentation is important for students grade. Providing them with more time to prepare, more opportunities to get feedback, will help them improve on their presentation skills.