

Active Participation

Part of my responsibility as your Math 300 instructor is the assessment of your achievement in Math 300. This semester, the Math 300 instructors have agreed to include an assessment of our students' participation in class (25 points for the first half of the semester and 25 points for the second half). We believe that you will benefit as a learner by participating actively. This includes attending class on time, doing your fair share to present material in class, asking questions both of your instructor and your peers, and staying on task and contributing to small group discussions. Because this is an assessment of your engagement in class and because one cannot learn mathematics without making mistakes some of the time, you will receive credit for participating, even if the mathematics you present is incorrect. The rubric below explains how we expect to assign your active participation scores.

Grade Range Expectations and typical characteristics of participation that merits the grade

24 – 25	Student attends all classes (on time), regularly presents solutions in class, asks or answers questions in class, participates actively in small group discussions, and supports her/his peers in the development of a positive learning environment.
20 - 23	Participation is similar to that of students earning a higher assessment. In particular, student has presented their solution to a problem in class at least 4 times during the period being assessed. Student may have an unexcused absence, occasionally may be late to class or off task, or in some other way may not contribute as much as the students who receive the highest mark.
15 - 19	Student participates actively some of the time, but not at the level of students earning a mark of 20 or higher. Evidence that a mark in this range may be appropriate would include 2 unexcused absences during the period, several excused absences that limit the student's opportunity to contribute in class, arriving late on several occasions, fewer than 4 presentations during the period, limited class participation with respect to asking or answering questions, supporting the learning of others, etc.
14 or lower	A grade of 14 or below indicates that the instructor does not believe that the student has made a reasonable effort to participate actively in class. Evidence may include one or more of the following traits: attendance problems, minimal class participation, uncooperative behavior, etc.

Regular attendance is important, both because our class meets for 75 minutes and because class discussions are an essential part of the learning process. It may be useful to provide a discussion about attendance and the concept of an "excused" absence. Your syllabus says, "Attendance is mandatory across this block of courses," but the statement is immediately followed by a statement about "legitimate reasons for absences." Think of yourself as a professional and the work you want to do after you graduate. Your school must be able to depend on you to report to class on time every day. We want you to have a similar attitude about your learning as a future teacher and to exhibit the traits of a good teacher. Thus, for example, suppose you spend the weekend in Omaha and the weather is bad or your ride back to Lincoln arrives too late for you to attend class. I would consider that an understandable reason for being absent, after all, life happens. At the same time, it would not constitute as an "excused" absence. However, one certainly would be excused if illness makes it inappropriate to attend class (e.g., a student's doctor provides documentation that the student cannot attend class because she/he has the H1N1 virus).

Participant Expectations

Professionalism is expected. You are expected to attend all class meetings, be curious, ask questions, seek opportunities to learn, and be open and responsive to feedback. Complete assignments on time and:

- attend class, be punctual
- be committed, take your work seriously
- display a positive attitude
- be/become a “risk taker”
- be an active participant – mathematics should not be a spectator sport
- be a team player – mathematics need not be a competitive sport
- help others – if you know the mathematics being studied, practice your mentoring skills
- celebrate your colleagues’ learning
- complete assigned readings
- work diligently on homework assignments
- complete all assignments to the best of your ability
- improve yourself as a mathematician and a mathematics teacher
- be patient with yourself – there is a time delay between exposure to new ideas and the ownership of those ideas, and that time will vary from person to person