Does the Assignment of Student-Generated Reading Questions Improve Student Learning Outcomes?

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How Does it Work?
- Students are given weekly reading assignments.
- For each assignment they must submit two questions related to the reading.
- Questions can be about something they did not understand or something they are curious about.

Methodology
- Experimental design
- Randomly selected one of two sections of Global Macroeconomics to submit weekly reading questions while other section was only given a weekly reading assignment
- Used individual exam scores and overall course grades as measures of student learning
- Administered an online survey to capture self-reported reading behavior and to measure student engagement

Examples of Student Questions
- GDP helps to put into perspective the total size of the economy but how does our GDP stand relative to the size of our national debt?
- Can you expand on the difference between nominal and real GDP?
- Is the GDP per capita based on the total population of a country including children and retired persons or is it only based on the number of working people?
- Why do we have the best GDP but seem to be the worst country in debt?

Known Benefits
- Reveals what students are thinking
- Creates an opportunity to adjust the classroom experience to address learning difficulties
- Provides opportunities for in-class discussion
- Provides opportunities to interact with students on a one-on-one basis

Main Findings

Does the assignment of reading questions increase the number of students reading the textbook?
Finding: Students who were assigned reading questions were statistically more likely to complete the assigned readings than those who were not.

Does the assignment of student-generated reading questions improve student performance on exams and overall course grades?
Finding: Statistically there were no differences between the two groups in terms of both individual exam grades and overall course grades.

Do students find the textbook to be useful in terms of increasing their understanding of course material?
Finding: There was no difference between the two groups with regards to their perception of the usefulness of the textbook. Approximately half of the students found it useful in terms of increasing their understanding.

Acknowledgements
A very special thanks to the Office of Professional and Instructional Development (OPID) and the Provost Office at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse for funding this research.