



Extra Credit

A tale of two searches ...

I was curious about the history of extra credit, so I did some Googling. For brevity I used site and type search terms; to find research papers, I used Google Scholar:

- at <http://scholar.google.com>: pedagogy “extra credit”
- at <http://google.com>: **SITE:**uaf.edu “extra credit”
TYPE:pdf

Some faculty are opposed to the use of extra credit. “The question of giving students an extra chance is, like most pedagogical issues, less cut and dried [...]. If the second chance is designed so that it represents a robust learning opportunity, if its completion means that a student who hasn’t mastered the material finally does and if learning is our ultimate goal, then complete opposition to second chances or extra credit seems less defensible.” ¹

Two methods to use extra credit are ‘up-front for everyone’ and ‘on request.’ In the first method, students receive clear options (handed out at semester start) in line with course outcomes, to delve deeper into a topic. The second method, depending on execution, may not encourage all students to “benefit from the learning experience.” ²

IMPACTING STUDENT SUCCESS

“The Impact of Daily Extra Credit Quizzes on Exam Performance”^{*} is what I was hoping to find: pedagogy and best practices. Recommendations included using optional quizzes to increase attendance and learning. A small group of students were studied, and “extra credit performance accounted for a statistically significant amount [of overall performance] with college GPA positively predicting extra credit performance.”

**Find something useful but can’t see the whole text? The UAF library through <http://web.ebscohost.com> may have access to the full documents for the article you discovered.*

DEPLOYING EXTRA CREDIT

Use extra credit across assessments. Show students how to achieve extra points by going beyond the required assignment scope. Be explicit. Use examples. Perhaps quizzes are not for you; have students build a portfolio of the extras detailed in your assignments. This portfolio could be submitted with each assignment or as one item near the end of the semester. For business or science courses (or any topic covering original ideas) consider recommending students participate in the Arctic Innovation Competition. ³

Concerned about the student seeing extra credit as a reason to not do an assignment or turn things in on time? Set up extra credit in your syllabus or rubric before the semester begins. “One advantage of semester-long, optional extra credit, available to all students, is that it makes it more difficult for the last minute student to ask, ‘Is there something extra I can do?’ ([The response being] ‘No,’ [because the student has] not taken advantage of such opportunities all semester).” ¹

Regardless of your choice, remember to model student contribution. Treat extra credit similarly to how you treat required assignments.

CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION

How are you using extra credit? Discuss this topic on idesign.uaf.edu via the “Leave a Reply” comment box. We’re listening and we encourage others to share ideas & tips too!

RESOURCES

- ¹ “Revisiting Extra Credit Policies”
<http://elearning.uaf.edu/go/revisiting-ec>
- ² “The Impact of Daily Extra Credit Quizzes on Exam Performance”
<http://elearning.uaf.edu/go/impact-daily-ec>
- ³ Arctic Innovation Competition
<http://www.arcticinno.com/about>

