

Professor Corner

November 2020 Faculty Highlight: Ronald Unger, Professor of Accounting

Department: Accounting



Ronald Unger – Online Engagement Tools – ACCT 3531

Ron's Tools for Online Engagement

Griffin Questions posed at the beginning of each session. These questions test students on their understanding of terms and concepts from the previous session and can count towards their participation grade.

- An in-person tool that translates successfully to the online environment.
- Generates participation at the start of class, by the entire class.
- Can be used to gauge how prepared or unprepared students are for class.
- For added student interest, a points system can be incorporated for each week's questions, bringing a friendly competitive nature to the exercise.

ONLINE ENGAGEMENT TOOL EXPLAINED

Griffin questions (named after my “grand dog”) were originally introduced in my face-to-face Financial Accounting and Taxation classes as a means to encourage “shy” students to participate in class. I would show about 12 questions based on previous lecture’s materials and first student to raise a hand and answer correctly gets a “Griffin Point”.

Students then collect points over the semester and at the end of the semester, I take the total points each student earned divided by maximum points anyone in the class earned – and they get that percentage of points towards their participation grade – usually 5 points.

So, if they get 10 points and the maximum in the class for the semester is 12 points, they will receive 4.2 points ($10/12 \times 5$). I used it in my Zoom class as well – again seeing it as a way to encourage class participation in a non-threatening way. I tried to use the Chat function for the answers – but that became a little confusing for me – so I just resorted to visual indications from the students as to who wanted to answer.

The polling feature of Zoom is another format to pose the questions in multiple-choice format – which I think will be good for the students since the exams they have are also multiple-choice and this would give them extra practice in those types of questions.

I felt that the students enjoyed the friendly competitive aspect of the exercise and the whimsical nature of the name (I would always show pictures of Griffin while asking the questions). It also serves as a break from lecturing and problem-solving, which is especially important for virtual classes. Sitting in front of a computer screen for 2+ hours can be quite tiresome.