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Does Lecture Attendance Matter: Using Clicker Data to Assess the Role of Lecture Attendance on Student Performance

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A common mantra from university level instructors focuses around the concept that lecture attendance is necessary and results in greater student performance. I address whether attendance had an impact on student success by analyzing the relationship between percent lecture attendance and final course grade. Clickers are shown to improve student performance through active learning, but also act as mechanism to collect useful data. Attendance data was collected using clickers in an introductory environmental science course, a general biology course for non-majors, and an introductory biology course for majors. The relationship between percent lecture attendance and final course grade was analyzed. Preliminary results suggest that attendance levels below 70 percent results in a reduction in performance by one letter grade. I will examine the effect of degree program (i.e., declared major) on the relationship between attendance and student success. The outcome of this work can be used to show students the importance of attending lecture and an easy mechanism to improve student success.

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