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ECONOMICS, APPLIED STATISTICS, AND INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS



## Writing to Learn (2014-2017)

### CHALLENGES

I teach a Viewing a Wider World course on economic development (ECON 324V). The class is required for economic majors, but also serves as an upper-division GE course for non-majors. The main goal of my project was to bridge the learning gap between majors and non-majors in this course. On the one hand, I want students who have never taken an economics course to see how their majors relate to issues in economic development. On the other hand, I want to help students majoring in Economics and International Business see the broader connections that economic development theory makes with the real world.

### MY PROJECT

I incorporated in-class writing assignments of varying lengths to give my students intellectual space to reflect on and connect to the ideas we discuss in class. Most assignments are completed in a few sentences on a 3x5 inch note card, though a few require a half page or more of writing. In total, there are 17 writing opportunities.

### RESULTS

The feedback I received from my students was consistent with my own observations - the in-class writing activities both deepened their understanding of the material and helped them improve their writing. Many faculty believe the time it takes to grade writing assignments is too difficult to overcome, so they avoid assigning writing. As I learned from the Writing to Learn program, incorporating short in-class writing assignments can lead to deeper student learning without significantly increasing grading time.

***"I learned through this project that I do not have to read everything my students write. The process of writing itself is important for their self-discovery process. Having a space for them to think and write is just as important for their development as quizzes and exams."***