

Homework Completion and Exam Performance

By Don Sutherland

In spite of repeated reminders and notices concerning homework, my fall 2017 BBA 407-Strategic Management class had the lowest homework completion rate for any of my classes. By the end of the semester, the class had completed just 61% of its assignments. For five of the eight assignments (63%), fewer than 60% of students submitted their assignments. Further, one-in-five (20%) students completed none of their eight assignments and 32% missed more than half of their assignments.

Failure to complete assignments leads to a modest deduction from the course grade, up to a total of five points. Completion of assignments makes a modest contribution toward the course grade, up to a total of five points. More importantly, assignments are instruments of learning. A failure to invest time and effort in completing assignments undermines the learning process.

Following the final exam, I examined how students who had completed half or more of their assignments (“completers”) fared vs. those who missed more than half of their assignments (“non-completers”) on the mid-term exam and final exam. The final exam is cumulative and is somewhat more challenging overall than the mid-term.

The data were as follows:

Category	Mid-Term Exam	Final Exam	Change
Completers	76.9	73.9	-3.1
Non-Completers	72.7	63.2	-9.5
Difference (Completers over Non-Completers)	+4.2	+10.6	+6.4

In addition, students who completed 75% or more of their homework assignments had an 11.3 point advantage over “non-completers” on the final exam. Further, the decline in their final exam score from the mid-term outcome was just 1.9 points.