Course Level Assessment: Monitoring vs. Evaluating Student Learning

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Course Level Assessment: Monitoring vs. Evaluating Student Learning

This workshop will discuss the different strategies to create a syllabus and course plan of work with the goal of monitoring (formative) and evaluating (summative) student learning that will guide your instructional efforts and activities.

Learning Outcomes: Participants will develop new strategies to identify and improve on the use of current evaluation methods for career and general education courses.
Pre-Presentation Survey

Who is familiar with the term classroom assessment?

How does assessment differ from evaluation?

What forms of assessment do you use in the classroom?
  – Assignments and quizzes
  – A little informal, un-graded assessment

How do you monitor and evaluate effectiveness?

Are there benefits?
  – Improve learning and assess knowledge level
Assessment vs. Evaluating

**Assessment**
Assessment is the process of gathering information on student learning.

**Evaluation**
Evaluation is the process of analyzing, reflecting upon, and summarizing assessment information, and making judgments and/or decisions based on the information collected.
Choosing The Right Assessment

Considerations:

- Time & Energy
  - Preparation
  - Front End vs. Back End
- Student Response
- Teaching Goals

I can teach anybody how to get what they want out of life. The problem is that I can't find anybody who can tell me what they want.

-Mark Twain
Your Syllabus and the Classroom Climate

- Some syllabi convey a sense of excitement about the course.
- Other syllabi haven’t been updated for many semesters except for the date changes or are hard to read.
- Examine your syllabus from the student perspective.
- Ask current for former students to critique your syllabus and make suggestions for improvement.
What assumptions do we make about student learning?


We must change “the question from ‘What students know and can do’ to ‘What students know and can do as a result of their educational experiences.’”

(Burstei & Winters, 1994, quoted from Anderson, 2002, p. 255 [emphasis added])
Habits of Highly Effective Assessment Systems

- Shared, measurable learning goals and outcomes communicated to students
- Multiple assessment designs, approaches, and measures
- Organized feedback system
- Broad based involvement & Open sharing of data
- Dialogue with spirit of inquiry not culture of fear
- Improvements resulting from assessment

(adapted from Jackson & Johnson, 2007)
Teaching with the end in mind

Lessons and activities follow Learning Goals

1. Learning Goals
2. Assessments & Feedback
3. Activities & Assignments
4. Lesson Plans
Traditional Process: Backward Design

Stages of the Backward Design Process

1. Identify Desired Results
2. Determine Acceptable Evidence
3. Plan Learning Experiences
Course Plan of Study: What Do They Assess?

- **Concept Maps:**
  - *Synthesis & Creative Thinking*

- **One-Minute Paper:**
  - *Prior Knowledge, Recall & Understanding*

- **Reading Rating Sheets:**
  - *Reactions to Class Activities, Assignments and Materials*

- **Pre- & Post Survey:**
  - *Prior Knowledge, Recall & Understanding*

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- **Course Related Knowledge and Skills**
  - Prior Knowledge, Recall & Understanding
  - Analysis & Critical Thinking
  - Synthesis & Creative Thinking
  - Problem Solving
  - Application & Performance

- **Learner Attitudes, Values & Self-Awareness**
  - Awareness of Attitudes & Values
  - Self-Awareness as Learners
  - Course Related Learning & Study Skills

- **Learner Reactions to Instruction**
  - Learner Reactions to Teaching & Teaching
  - Reactions to Class Activities, Assignments and Materials
How do faculty directly benefit from classroom assessment?

- Benefits to students = benefit to teachers
- Develop a culture of openness and consistent feedback
- Constantly *monitor* student views on process and understanding of content
- Answer difficult questions such as:
  - “How can I find out whether my students are learning the essential skills and knowledge I am trying to teach”
  - “How can I help students learn better?”
- Reduce uncertainty of student learning between exams
- Improve teaching skills and gain new insights
- Increase overall learning
Can a Syllabus aide in Assessment?

Plan of Action

The syllabus should represent the overall plan of action for the semester:
- Course Outcomes
- Course strategy
- Course Goals
- Course calendar

Course Expectations

State policies explicitly & precisely:
- Attendance & participation
- Evaluation Standards and Methods
  - Grading Scale
- Late and Make-up exams
SAMPLES OF SOME SYLLABUS COMPONENTS


- Checklist for syllabus preparation (Grunert p. 81)
- Purpose of the Course (Grunert: pp. 30-31)
- Course and unit objectives (Grunert: pp. 33-39)
- Detailed course calendar (Grunert: pp. 46-48)
- Course requirements (Grunert: pp. 48-55)
- Evaluation (Grunert: pp. 56-62)
- Grading criteria (Grunert: pp. 67-69)
- How to study for this course (Grunert: pp. 72-73)
COMPOSING AN OBJECTIVE-BASED SYLLABUS

1. What students want to know:
   ⇨ The purpose of the course
   ⇨ The nature of class sessions
   ⇨ Level of preparation or background necessary to succeed
   ⇨ Required textbooks and supplementary readings
   ⇨ Required supplies
   ⇨ Topics that will be covered
   ⇨ Number and type of tests and assignments
   ⇨ Grading system used
   ⇨ Policies pertaining to attendance, late and/or make-up work.
A few more generally applicable words of advice...

- Assignments and policies should be realistic.
- Policies should be worth the trouble to enforce.
- Policies and grading should give room for (fairly) exercising your discretion in unexpected situations.
Disruptive behavior includes, but is not limited to, the following (adapted from the Institute for Teaching and Learning website at CSU):

http://tilt.colostate.edu/mti/tips/tip.cfm?tipid=44:

- Arriving late and leaving early
- Chit-chat (verbal or written) during lecture or other meaningful classroom dialogue
- Ringing cell phones and cell phone conversations during class
- Interruptive questioning during classroom presentations
- Classroom discussions hijacked and monopolized by one student
- Disrespecting other student viewpoints
- Ridiculing the instructor's presentation
- Sleeping in class, reading newspapers, non-class related laptop use
- Harassment (“hostile” or “offensive” words and/or behavior) directed toward other students or the professor during class or outside class (creating a hostile “learning, living, or working environment”).
Course policies must be stated explicitly enforceable.

Interpret the following policy statement:

“Papers must be submitted in class on the day they are due; no late papers will be accepted.”

Set standards for proper classroom etiquette or online netiquette.
Evaluate the following attendance and grading policy:

“If you are 15-29 minutes late, you will receive half of the attendance grade for the day. If you are more than 30 minutes late, you will receive no credit for attendance for the day.”
A calendar should be more than dates and topics

Organization of Course, BLAH 300: “Something I Gotta Take to Graduate”

- Week 1: Overview of Course
- Week 2: From Compasses to GPS Technology
- Week 3: Equipment
- Week 4: Encountering wildlife
- Week 5: Bird-watching
- Week 7: Fur Rendezvous
- Week 7: Iditarod
- Week 8: How to Cure a Hangover and Prevent Pregnancy
- Week 9: Cabin Fever and S.A.D.
Grading system

- Indicate all assignments that will be graded.
- Indicate what individual assignments are worth.
- Specify "hidden" points or deductions (for lateness, extra credit, etc.).
- Specify the grading scale. (for example 90%-100%=A, 80%-89%=B, etc.)
Ensure that your grading system makes sense and adds up.

Interpret the following grading scale:

**Attendance**
- A in the class 1-3 absences
- B in the class 4-6 absences
- C in the class 7-9 absences
- D in the class 10-12 absences
- F in the class – more than 12 absences

**Paper #1** = 250 points
**Paper #2** = 250 points
**Paper #3** = 500 points
**Total points possible** = 1000
effective grading scales (2)

your final grade will be calculated according to the following process:

i will rescale all the scores on each assignment to a number on the 0-100 scale
i will drop the lowest homework score and the lowest paper analysis score
i will calculate the average of the remaining assignments according to the following weights:

• journal entries: 15%
• statistical hw: 20%
• paper analysis: 20%
• class participation (discussions + news): 15%
• presentation + paper: 30%

i will convert the final average to a letter grade according to the following scheme:

90-100 ⇒ a
80-89 ⇒ b
70-79 ⇒ c
60-69 ⇒ d
0-59 ⇒ r (failing grade)
Evaluating Your Grading Scale

A. Grading Scale
Grades are an evaluation of the student's learning. Your grade will reflect your level of competency. Your grade will be based on the following point system:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introductory Evaluation</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre Assessments</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five Lesson Project Assignments</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five Quizzes @ 15 points per quiz</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Assessments</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. Converting Points to a Grade
Your letter grade will be determined by the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Point Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>400 - 360 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>359 - 320 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>319 - 280 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>279 - 101 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>100 - 000 points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FINAL THOUGHTS?