



Grading and Evaluation

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Outline

- Why is grading and evaluation necessary and important?
- Learning objectives and grading/evaluation.
- Methods of assessing learning.
- Special notes on multiple-choice.
- Best practices for grading and evaluation.

Why is grading and evaluation necessary and important?

- **Assessing, testing, and evaluating: Grading is not the most important function...**
 - Learning is more important than grading!
 - Assessment provides feedback to students and teachers in order to facilitate learning.
 - Providing feedback is more important than assigning a grade.

Why is grading and evaluation necessary and important?

- **Assessing, testing, and evaluating: Grading is not the most important function...**
 - Evaluations are important in making the goals of a course concrete.
 - Assessment should reflect the learning
 - Begin with the learning objectives
 - What is it that you want your students to learn?
 - How will you know it has been learned?

Learning Objectives and Grading

- **The first step in assessing is to list your goals and objectives.**
- **Once you know what you want to accomplish, what you want students to learn; then you can identify appropriate assessment for each objective.**
 - If you state that critical thinking is important but grade students mostly on other matters (punctuality of their work, neatness, attendance etc...), then you redefined the learning objectives in the minds of students.
- **Try to assess the attainment of all the learning objectives, even if some of them won't lead to a grade (e.g. increased motivation for learning)**

Learning Objectives and Grading

- **Reflective exercises...**

1. Reflect on what you hope the students will learn from this course, unit, or class. How does your assignment/evaluation provide evidence to help you figure out whether the students are learning what you intend them to learn?
2. Write a reflective memo explaining why you structured the assignment/exam the way you did. How does the problems, questions, or applications reveal differences in students' understanding or interpretations of a critical concept you are teaching?

Learning Objectives and Grading

- **Reflective exercises...**

3. Reflect on what your assignment and the students' responses tell you about how the students are constructing the knowledge central to your teaching goals. How do you identify and address student errors and misinterpretations?
4. Reflect on what, in particular, do you hope your students to demonstrate in this assessment/evaluation? What kinds of questions will they learn to answer? What kinds of reasoning or abilities will they develop?

Methods of Assessing Learning

- **Traditional Tests**

- Emphasize the importance of knowledge development and that this is what you are trying to assess
 - Connect it back to the learning objectives
- Sometimes you just need to test recall of facts before moving on to another concept.
 - Traditional tests are good for that.
 - You can test higher levels of Bloom's taxonomy with traditional tests
 - <http://www.missouristate.edu/fctl/90018.htm>

Methods of Assessing Learning

- **Authentic Assessment**
 - Performance on case studies and real life problems
- **Journals, Research Papers, and Reports**
 - Close to authentic assessments
 - Use an evaluation rubric to grade journals, papers, and reports

Methods of Assessing Learning

- **Graphic Representation of Concepts**
 - Concept maps
 - Assess the relationships between concepts learned

- **Portfolios**
 - Evaluate progression of learning throughout the semester

Methods of Assessing Learning

- **Peer and Self Assessment**
 - After collecting tests, papers, or assignments, redistribute the papers randomly with an evaluation rubric
 - Encourage students to write helpful comments
 - Then pair with a neighbor and compare evaluation/feedback on papers
 - Collect papers and average feedback OR have students discuss the process of grading with the class

Methods of Assessing Learning

- **Group Work**

- The group must be an opportunity to help them learn
- Group should be heterogeneous. Diversity creates exchanges.
- Group Testing
- Grade is an average of individual and group grade

Methods of Assessing Learning

- **Embedded Assessment**
 - Class activities count for a grade
 - *Think Pair Share* activities
- **Classroom Assessment Techniques (CAT)**
 - Stop class 5 minutes early and do a “minute paper” exercise
 - What major conclusions have you drawn from this lecture?
 - What major questions remain in your mind?

Method of Assessing Learning

- **Problems**

- “Do” give points for setting up the problem and the correct answer
- “Don’t” give point just for the correct answer

- **Short-Answers**

- “Do” ask students to come up with an example
- “Do” ask students to solve case-studies like problems

- **Essays**

- “Do” present example questions a week before the test
- “Do” establish a grading rubric

Method of Assessing Learning

- **True-False Items**
 - “Don’t” use them extensively
 - “Do” ask students to explain their answers and give points for the explanations
- **Multiple-Choices**
 - “Don’t” build tests entirely with multiple-choices
 - “Do” use them to measure elements of problem solving
 - “Do” use them to measure simple knowledge and discrimination

More on Multiple-Choices...

- **“Don’t” rely solely on the items coming from the test bank accompanying your textbook**
 - You need to assess what students have learned in class
- **“Do” ask the students to write multiple-choice questions.**
 - Only a fraction will be useable, but students learn in the process of constructing them

More on Multiple-Choices...

- **If you have the answer but no good distractors, “do” write a short-answer or essay question instead**
 - “Do” use the answers the students provide as future distractors
- **“Do” use a sequence of multiple-choices to assess more complex thinking**
- **“Do” group items under headings to increase students’ recall and performance**

Best practices for grading and evaluation

- Minimize the use of evaluations tools that increase anxiety and competition.
- Make use of low stakes as well as high stakes testing.
- Give the opportunity to students to try, fail, receive feedback, and try again before receiving a grade for their work.



Best practices for grading and evaluation

- Test from the student perspective.
- Use the test as feedback.
- Remember that learning is more important than grading.

Best practices for grading and evaluation

When and How to Test?

- Conduct several assessments of learning
 - It lowers the importance of each assessment
- Use multiple ways of assessing learning
- Offer students the chance to earn back some of the points they missed
- Allow students to explain their answers for half the credit
 - Removes the pressure of uncertainty about a particular answer



Best practices for grading and evaluation

When and How to Test?

- Familiarize students with what the test will look like, the kinds of questions you will ask, and how you will grade the test
- Hand out the test/evaluation as students walk into the room
- Minimize interruptions while students take the test

References

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- Bain, K. (2004). What the Best College Teachers Do. Harvard University Press, MA.
- Angelo, T. A. & Cross, K. P. (1993). Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers (2nd Ed.). Jossey-Bass, CA.

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