Less Assessment, More Learning
Aligning Learning Outcomes and Grading Standards with Program and Course-level Assessment and Feedback

A Quick, Simple Opinion Poll
1. Do you ever feel you spend too much time on assessment and grading, considering the student learning outcomes you see?
2. If you could achieve the same or better learning outcomes and spend less time on assessment and grading, would that be advantageous for you?

Why Assess Learning? - 1
Summative purposes
- To compare learners against each other
- To compare learning outcomes against standards
- To certify competency
- To award qualifications
- To ration resources
- To provide accountability

Why Assess Learning? - 2
Formative purposes
- To focus learners’ attention
- To illuminate and undermine misconceptions
- To increase motivation to learn
- To provide learners with feedback
- To improve performance
- To promote self-monitoring & self-assessment
- To develop independent, lifelong learning

PowerPoint slides for the Keynote Session in MAKING PROGRAM ASSESSMENT WORK FOR YOU
The Ohio State University
9:30 to 10:45 AM, Friday 8 March 2013
Dr. Tom Angelo, Adjunct Professor of Higher Education
La Trobe University – Melbourne, Australia
To do assessment as if learning matters most, we must privilege the formative purposes.

"From the students' point of view, the assessment is the curriculum."


Handout Page 1 – Lower half
Some key terms/concepts that might be of use
- Surface and deep learning
- Intended Learning outcomes (ILOs)
- Backward Design
- Strategic alignment
- Bus Test, Parrot Test, Car Park Test
- Cognitive load
- Metacognition
- Formative and Summative assessment
- Novice-Expert differences
- The 80/20 Rule (aka, the Pareto Principle)

Handout Page 1 – Lower half
Terms/Concepts

Please mark each item on the list with a plus sign, minus sign, or question mark
- Use the plus ( + ) if you know what it means
- Use the minus ( – ) if you do not know
- Use the question mark (?) if you're unsure

A “Balcony” Question
If you followed directions:
Did you read and think about the list on page 1 any differently than you would have if you had simply been asked to “read it”?

If you answered “yes” . . .
You’ve demonstrated how a simple formative assessment can promote metacognition.
Students’ prior knowledge and beliefs are among the most powerful influences on their learning. Consequently, assessing that prior knowledge can provide powerful leverage.

Which of those five dimensions needs and deserves the most focus if we aim to foster:

- Critical thinking?
- Problem-solving?
- Professional practice?

**Five Dimensions of Higher Learning**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% Then?</th>
<th>% Now?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Declarative Learning</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Procedural Learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conditional Learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflective Learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Metacognitive Learning</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Applications Card – p. 12**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interesting IDEAS/TECHNIQUES</th>
<th>Possible APPLICATIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

*Backward Design – Page 3*

- Summative Assessments
- Formative Assessments
- Major Learning Assignments
- Diagnostic Assessments
- Intended Learning Outcomes

*“You can’t fix by analysis what you bungled by design.”*

Thinking Otherwise about Grading

Expect Mastery,
Ensure Competence, and
Promote Excellence.
B = Mastery
C = Competence, and
A = Excellence

What are common core program/graduate outcomes applicable to all disciplines which could actually be explicitly assessed?

- Writing
- Speaking
- Critical Thinking
- Problem-solving
- Teamwork
- Inquiry/research
- Ethical Practice/Awareness
- Social Responsibility
- Global Citizenship
- Sustainability
- Lifelong Learning

How can student’s best be assisted to meet those standards within existing curriculum?

The ‘Stairway to Success’ Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Cornerstone</th>
<th>Mid-point</th>
<th>Capstone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 2/3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 3/4</td>
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</table>

Evaluation Points at which students would be evaluated as Standard Keen/Good, Standard High, or Standard Outstanding.
An Example of Program Assessment Embedded in Course Assessment

Macroeconomics Essay Grading Grid (Avoiding Low Ceilings)

If we want to promote critical thinking . . .
What might be some implications for our assessment and feedback practices?

Critical Thinking appears to . . .
Require a great deal of time and effort
Cause discomfort and unhappiness
Generate conflicts and tension
Pose risks to relationships with family, friends, and work colleagues
Be relatively easy to avoid
Be strikingly rare in everyday life

Developing Critical Thinking
Approaches Well-Supported by Research

Step-by-step Guided Practice
Authentic Problem-solving
Structured Collaboration
Focused Communication
Formative Feedback
Impeding Critical Thinking
Approaches Contraindicated by Research

- Focus on rote learning
- Information overload
- One-shot assignments/assessments
- Personally meaningless assignments
- Norm-referenced (curved) marking
- Assessment fatigue

Impeding Critical Thinking
Could any of these factors be issues for students in your courses/programs?

- Focus on rote learning
- Information overload
- One-shot assignments/assessments
- Personally meaningless assignments
- Norm-referenced (curved) marking
- Assessment fatigue

Applications Card – p. 12

Interesting
IDEAS/TECHNIQUES

Possible
APPLICATIONS

The Parking Lot Test

Choose one of your possible applications. Prepare to answer the three questions below about that specific application:

- **What** is it?
- **Why** do you think it might be useful?
- **How** do you think you might use it?

“*It’s not what we do, but what students do that’s the important thing.*”


Questions? Comments?

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