Assessing student performance goes beyond just giving them a grade. It should help the student learn from both their successes and failures. By designing thoughtful and meaningful assignments, instructors can improve student performance based on evidence, not just hearsay. The following Assumptions of Classroom Assessment is just one of a series of articles to help improve classroom assessment.

Assumptions of Classroom Assessment

**Assumption ONE**
The quality of student learning is directly, although not exclusively, related to the quality of teaching. Therefore, one of the most promising ways to improve learning is to improve teaching.

**Assumption TWO**
To improve their effectiveness, teachers need first to make their goals and objectives explicit and then to get specific, comprehensible feedback on the extent to which they are achieving those goals and objectives.

Where are you going? Where do you want students to go? Articulate specific skills and competencies.

**Assumption THREE**
To improve their learning, students need to receive appropriate and focused feedback early and often; they also need to learn how to assess their own learning.

Is the role of assessment to give a final grade or to help students progress to the goal? Or BOTH?

**Assumption FOUR**
The type of assessment most likely to improve teaching and learning is that conducted by faculty to answer questions they themselves have formulated in response to issues or problems in their own teaching.

The results of institutional assessments may apply to the structure of the curriculum or to the organization of programs and departments, but not to teaching and learning.

**Assumption FIVE**
Systematic inquiry and intellectual challenge are powerful sources of motivation, growth, and renewal for college teachers, and classroom assessment can provide such challenge.

Assessment activities can assist faculty that are interested in becoming more knowledgeable, involved and successful as college teachers.

**Assumption SIX**
Classroom assessment does not require specialized training; it can be carried out by dedicated teachers from all disciplines.

**Assumption SEVEN**
By collaborating with colleagues and actively involving students in classroom assessment efforts, faculty (and students) enhance learning and personal satisfaction.

Classroom assessment is a very social activity. Students appreciate of faculty interest to improve teaching and learning.

Adapted from the Walker Center for Teaching and Learning, University of Tennessee, Chattanooga

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**D2L Did you know?**

ePortfolio Overview

D2L defines ePortfolio as a tool for students that they can use as:

"...a personal portfolio tool for storing, organizing, reflecting on, and sharing items that represent your learning. You can include documents, graphics, audio files, videos, presentations, course work, etc. that demonstrate your improvement or mastery in a certain area. You decide what items you want to include in your ePortfolio, how you want to organize them, and who you want to share them with."

For more information about how to use ePortfolio visit the student help pages, beginning at: http://help.d2l.arizona.edu/student/eportfolio-overview

As a course instructor you can control what Course Results students can import into their ePortfolio. See the following pages to see where this settings is within your course:

Quizzes: http://help.d2l.arizona.edu/QZAssess (bullet 7)

Assignments: http://help.d2l.arizona.edu/DBXNew (bullet 7)QZSubView.

please contact us via e-mail (D2L@email.arizona.edu) or phone (520.621.7788).
Faculty Learning Communities

The University of Arizona has made a renewed commitment to educational excellence. Faculty Learning Communities (FLCs), identified as high-impact practices by the AAC&U, are central to the UA commitment to quality education. FLC groups focus their discussions and projects on learning about and experimenting with evidence-based teaching pedagogy. Members practice implementing new strategies in their classes, conduct peer observations and engage in meaningful dialog about the effectiveness of the various approaches. Each semester has a different theme, so faculty members benefit from ongoing participation.

Nine FLCs are forming on different days/times for Spring 2018. The Spring 2018 FLC schedule (including names of facilitators) is available at: https://arizona.box.com/s/w7h8i5w948lmpazmngubmu2wt2m8s5y7. The FLCs will meet with the entire FLC community once at the beginning of the semester and once at the end of the semester and with their smaller groups (typically 6-10 members) seven times throughout the semester. Therefore, the time commitment is relatively small (~10 hours per semester). However, the most significant benefits are achieved when instructors invest time outside of their meetings to apply what they have learned.

To register for a Spring 2018 FLC, please visit https://uarizona.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9YUd2d95KwjQbop. Our goal is to assign members to their groups before the winter break so please register by Wednesday, December 20th.

To learn more, please visit: http://academicaffairs.arizona.edu/flc

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A BIT OF UA HISTORY

The U.S.S. Arizona bell is enshrined in the Student Union Memorial Center tower in memory of the 1,177 men who lost their lives when the battleship was destroyed in the raid on Pearl Harbor December 7, 1941. The bell is to be rung seven times on the third Wednesday of every month at 12:07 p.m. to honor the achievements of The University of Arizona and its community.

One of the Arizona's two bells salvaged, our bell was in the Puget Sound Navy Yard to be processed as salvage when then-U.S. Army Captain Wilber L. Bowers, Class of 1927, discovered it.

He took immediate measures to prevent its destruction and it was presented to the University in 1946. The privilege of being the first to ring the bell in its present location was properly reserved for "the man who saved the bell" and on September 11, 2002, Bill Bowers, at age 99, did his job.

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Wishing you and your family a warm and joyous Holiday Season!
Near the end of August, the 2014 Business Insider article “10 Things Every College Professor Hates” started circulating on Facebook again. I had just finished the syllabus for my introductory English linguistics class and was feeling excited to be headed back into the classroom. Yet here was this article, which felt so negative. It didn’t come across as entirely respectful of all that students bring to the table. And the piece, aimed at students about “interacting with your professor or teaching assistant,” seemed to give more attention to pleasing the professor than to real learning.

I wondered: What would happen if you asked undergraduate students not about how to please the professor but about what promotes good learning, for all of us, together, as participants in a learning community? I talked it over with the graduate-student instructor working with me, and we decided to do just that in the first discussion sections for the year. What better way to think together about what kind of learning community we wanted to build?

So that first Friday students read and discussed the Business Insider article, and then we asked them to create lists: (a) What students can do to promote good learning; and (b) What instructors can do to promote good learning. Here’s what students had to say, to each other and to me and my graduate assistant.

Ten things students can do to promote good learning:

1. Expect to learn every day. That’s on you. Don’t worry so much about whether you’re doing enough to get a good grade — focus instead on what you are learning and what you want to learn. If you’re doing that, the “good grade” will often follow. (Not always, but often — we want to be honest about that! But the same is true if you’re just focused on getting a good grade. ...)

2. Feel empowered to — and make the effort to — participate. Trust that other students and your instructor care about what you have to say. (And see No. 4 for how to help out here.) Be willing to be vulnerable and open in discussions, because that’s how learning happens.

3. Ask questions. Ask questions. Ask questions. (And while we’re on this topic, don’t disparage other people for asking their questions.)

4. Listen to one another. And please don’t distract other people. If for some reason you have decided not to pay attention, don’t make it a group thing!

5. Come prepared for class. This means leaving yourself time to get assignments done, which much of the time means getting started earlier than the night before, which means being organized, which means probably getting a planner.

6. Acknowledge when you’re falling behind or need help. And then get help immediately! It will just spiral if you wait. (If that hasn’t happened to you yet, trust us on this one.)

7. Go to office hours even if you don’t have questions or need help, just to make a connection with your professors. They sit in their office waiting to talk to students about the subject they’re so passionate about!

8. Know what you need, emotionally and physically, to succeed. Allow yourself to make mistakes. And remember that learning can be uncomfortable (and we’re not talking about the uncomfortable classroom chairs).

9. Talk to classmates you don’t know and try to support other students. That means sometimes just taking the time to introduce yourself to a student you don’t know who is sitting next to you.

10. Remember that your instructor is a human too.

Ten things instructors can do to promote good learning:

1. Know that it’s OK to humanize yourself (e.g., it’s OK if you’re having a rough day — we get it).

2. Know students’ names. We get that this is hard if it is a big class, but it matters.

3. Know who students are (e.g., Are some of us shy in class? Do we work or play sports or play in bands or lead extracurricular groups or sing or dance or juggle parenting and school or a hundred other things? Why did we decide to take this course? What do we hope to learn?).

4. Assume students want to be there and are prepared.

5. Create and foster mutual respect in the classroom. And really, doing No. 4 is a big part of No. 5. Well, actually most of this list supports this one.

6. Recognize that sometimes life can get in the way of learning for students, so take the time to diagnose the problem (e.g., if a student is having trouble staying awake in class, it could be because they had to work overtime last night, not because they were out partying).

7. Hold all students to the same rigorous expectations.

8. Refrain from interrupting students to get a point across. We know that sometimes one of us can get long-winded and you may need to redirect; but we try not to interrupt you and it’s really nice when you don’t interrupt us.

9. Please don’t feel you need to comment all the time in a full-class discussion. Sometimes we need you to guide the discussion, and sometimes we really don’t need you every turn.

10. Listen to what students have to say.

I am so glad we took this chance to listen to what students had to say. There are heaps of wisdom here. Of course, a different group of students would create a different list, and that’s great. The point is that by talking together, and listening, the students, the graduate-student instructor, and I now have this framework to think about and work to create the kind of learning community we want to be.