

# Assessment as Teaching: How to save time, effort, and money by doing assessment

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with

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Surprise! When done appropriately, assessment can save faculty time and effort even as it measurably improves student learning. This seminar/workshop begins with research-based assessment principles and methods that improve instruction and learning and generate data for external reporting. It turns them into devices that *simultaneously ease faculty burdens* of teaching, grading, and assessing. Assessment, as usually presented, is often perceived as something to be done with --- and even better, to be done *away* with. Not so in this workshop. Participants will emerge with assessment devices and approaches that collect data effectively, assist student learning, and do so while *saving* professors' time and effort.



Specific learning outcomes:

1. Review of assessment methods from the perspectives of assessing, teaching, and reporting by using 8-10 devices as specific examples.
2. Construction or adaptation of 8-10 assessment devices for classroom and campus uses.
3. Inclusion for future assessments the time- and effort saving properties of: (a) making standards visible to students, professors, and administrators, (b) showing students their roles and responsibilities for learning, and (c) providing assessment data for reporting externally.
4. Savings of personal time and effort while participating in and using assessment in courses and programs.

## AASCU Graduation Rate Outcomes Study

<http://cpe.ky.gov/nr/rdonlyres/45738498-2ab3-47c0-968f-c4decc5b1713/0/studentsuccess.pdf>

Higher graduation rates came not by specifically aspiring to a benchmark of higher graduation rates but, rather, from a context of:

- Culture
  - High expectations with scaffolding – “demography is not destiny”
  - Sense of belonging
  - Purpose and place
- Leadership
  - No silos, flat administrative structures
  - Servant-leaders
- Program focus
  - Intentional – supported, proactive, required
  - Integrated
  - Collaborative
  - Academically connected
- Policy and place
  - Selectivity [in the sense of enhancing the match between student and institution]
  - Homogeneity [in the sense of providing environments where group affinities grow]
  - Size [as in the Goldilocks Effect, that is, maintaining a size that is Just Right]
  - Isolation or configuration [to take advantage of unique geography or social resources]

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### Double Entry Journal

[--after Millis]

Direct response or observation	Thoughts and reflections on why I hold this view
<i>Assessment as benefit/cost -- ROI</i>	
Modified ideas, concepts, or perceptions	What caused changes or solidification of perceptions?

## Performance Dictionary

### Checklist for Editing Your Seven Paragraph Analytical Paper

**Two days before paper is due---near final draft form---reread your paper and examine it for the following points:**

1. ( ) An introductory paragraph clearly introduces the subject. A topic statement is evident within the paragraph. The position taken is clear. If the position is unclear, put a question mark in the margin.
2. ( ) The next two paragraphs each have a single or main claim. Note each claim in the margin in a 3-4 word phrase. If you can't identify the claim, put a question mark in the margin. If two or more claims exist and tend to diverge from a coherent thought, put a question mark in the margin.
3. ( ) The same thing holds for the next two paragraphs on the opposite side of the issue.
4. ( ) The four paragraphs above all focus on the issue at hand; they do not wander off into irrelevant territory. If any paragraph wanders, put a question mark in the margin.
5. ( ) The sixth paragraph weighs the conflicting claims from the four paragraphs above and arrives at a conclusion. *Why* some evidence is more convincing than other evidence is explained. The ensuing conclusion is clearly stated. Circle it. If you can't find the conclusion, put a question mark in the margin.
6. ( ) The final paragraph returns to what was stated in the first paragraph and, in light of the evidence presented and weighed above, convincingly rephrases the position statement. If the conclusion expected by the assignment is to be finessed, justifying statements for the variance must appear here and flow from the explanation in the sixth paragraph of your paper.

**Consider all question marks appearing in the margin and fix those that need fixing.**

**Next:**

7. ( ) Is each claim in paragraphs 2-5 supported by evidence? Are there any naked claims supported only by variations of "I believe..."? If so, put a big X in the margin beside that paragraph.
8. ( ) Is each claim backed up by a reference? If a claim stands naked of supporting evidence or argument, put a big X in the margin.

**Consider any X appearing in the margin and fix those that need fixing.**

**Another thing:**

9. ( ) Does the paper do more than simply but gloriously restate the question? Examine the case study and cross out all ideas that appear in *both* the case study and in your paper. What remains uncrossed out is your analysis. It should constitute the majority of your paper. If it doesn't, you haven't done an analysis.

**Rewrite as necessary. When you've finished, let it sit at least one night before doing the final step below.**

**Finally:**

Up to now, you've been working on substance and thinking. **Now, on the final morning over breakfast on the day the paper is due, check out the mechanics.** Sweep your paper with a spell checker and comb it for the common fatal errors in the list below. If you find such an error, put a check in the box.

10. ( ) A sentence lacks either a subject or a verb; a sentence does not begin with a capital letter or end with a period (citations in parentheses go ahead of periods, not behind them).
11. ( ) A sentence begins with a relative pronoun such as *Which, Who, That, Where, and When*.
12. ( ) A pronoun lacks a clear antecedent; that is, a word such as *it, he, she, or they* does not have an obvious link to a noun (especially noticeable if a sentence begins with *it, he, she, or they*).
13. ( ) A pronoun or verb fails to agree with its antecedent in number; that is, a single person or agency is referred to as *they*, or a plural subject is given a singular verb (such as, "members of the school board.... gives their vote...").
14. ( ) A sentence runs-on or uses a comma to splice independent ideas together; that is, complex ideas are not split into two sentences but are linked, often by a comma, into an overly long, wandering sentence.

**The five check boxes in the list above should be empty. If not, fix the errors.**

When you're done, hand in the paper and take in a day at the beach. You've done a good job!

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### **A Fatal Error List** [--from SIUE]

1. Each different word misspelled
2. Each sentence fragment
3. Each run-on sentence or comma splice
4. Each mistake in capitalization
5. Each serious mistake in punctuation that obscures meaning
6. Each error in verb tense or subject/verb agreement
7. Lack of conformity with assignment format
8. Each improper citation, or lack of citation, where one is needed

Papers with more than three fatal errors marked by an instructor on any one page, or more than a number specified by the instructor for the entire document, will be returned to the student subject to a grading penalty as prescribed by the instructor....

## Performance Dictionary -- Simultaneous assessment & evaluation

	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Very Good</b>	<b>Adequate</b>	<b>Weak</b>	<b>Poo</b>
1. Presents a manifest topic statement	Topic statement appeared within the first paragraph <b>and</b> manifestation was elegant	Topic statement appeared within the first paragraph	Topic statement was easy to locate, but not within first paragraph	Topic statement was lengthy <b>or</b> unfocused <b>or</b> was difficult to locate	Topic statement could not be located <b>or</b> was so garbled as to violate principles of the discipline
2. Offers a position or claim	Claim is evident <b>and</b> stated concisely and elegantly	Claim is evident <b>and</b> stated concisely	Claim is evident	Claim is evident <b>but</b> garbled or unclear	Claim is either not evident <b>or</b> so garbled as to violate disciplinary principles
3. Offers an alternative position or counterclaim	Counterclaim is evident <b>and</b> stated concisely and elegantly with no evidence of straw man	Counterclaim is evident <b>and</b> stated concisely with no evidence of straw man	Counterclaim is evident <b>and</b> presented fairly	Counterclaim is evident <b>but</b> offered as a straw man	Counterclaim offered wholly as straw man with obvious prejudice and unfairness
4. Provides adequate supporting arguments	Each claim backed by correct reasons or evidence <b>and</b> appropriate bibliographic support	Each claim backed by correct reasons or evidence	Each claim backed by reasons or evidence but some non fatal flaws appeared	Most, but not all, claims backed by reasons or evidence, with or without non-fatal flaws	Significant claims not backed by reasons or evidence <b>or</b> fatal flaw appeared
5. Exercises good critical thinking	Exhibited all 5 criteria: clarity, logic, breadth, depth, discrimination seamlessly	Exhibited all 5 criteria: clarity, logic, breadth, depth, discrimination	Exhibited all 5 criteria but some non-fatal flaws appeared	Exhibited fewer than all 5 criteria <b>or</b> displayed a fatal flaw	Exhibited fewer than all 5 criteria <b>and</b> displayed a fatal flaw
6. Arrives at appropriate conclusion	Conclusion eloquently stated <b>and</b> supported by evidence	Conclusion concisely stated <b>and</b> supported by evidence	Conclusion clear <b>and</b> supported by weight of evidence	Conclusion confused <b>or</b> evidence is weighted improperly	Conclusion is "because I say so"; evidence overruled
7. Correctly documents and cites sources	-----	-----	All citations arose appropriately from refereed sources <b>and</b> all presented in APA format	Most citations arose from appropriate sources <b>or</b> most presented in APA format	Citations absent <b>or</b> arise from inappropriate sources <b>or</b> violate APA formatting
8. Is free of mechanical errors	Publishable as is; "prose flows"	One or fewer non-distracting errors per page	No more than 2 non-distracting errors per page	Sufficient number and seriousness of errors to distract reader or change meaning	Fatal error: 3 errors on a page <b>or</b> 10 errors overall

# Grading Standards for Papers

[--after Angelo and Stratton]

## Writing Assignment Assessment/Evaluation Form

Abbreviated Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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		EXCELLENT	VERY GOOD	ADEQUATE	WEAK	POOR				
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*(1) Presents a manifest topic statement identifying history and context	100	95	90	85	80	75	70	65	60	→ 0
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(2) Offers a clear position or claim	100	95	90	85	80	75	70	65	60	→ 0
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(3) Recognizes alternative positions and counterclaim(s) fairly	100	95	90	85	80	75	70	65	60	→ 0
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(4) Provides adequate supporting arguments with correct disciplinary facts	100	95	90	85	80	75	70	65	60	→ 0
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<b>x2</b> → *(5) Exercises good critical thinking through deep or creative look at theory, example, prediction, or consequence	100	95	90	85	80	75	70	65	60	→ 0
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(6) Arrives at appropriate conclusion via rational pathway	100	95	90	85	80	75	70	65	60	→ 0
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*(7) Correctly documents and cites sources	100	95	90	85	80	75	70	65	60	→ 0
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<b>x2</b> → (8) Mechanics: Written neatly and professionally; is free of mechanical errors	100	95	90	85	80	75	70	65	60	→ 0
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<b>OVERALL EVALUATION</b>	<b>100</b>										<b>0</b>
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ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

### **Using a Performance Dictionary**

1. Emphasize traits that are primary to the assignment and core to the discipline.
2. No names, please. Count student performance level numbers for each trait. Adjust course appropriately.
3. If professors share, the power of this analysis multiplies and serves program needs.
4. The PD saves teaching time, makes students responsible for learning.
5. Keep track from semester to semester. Cite improvement for reaccreditation.

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### **The Muddiest Point**

What is the muddiest point in this topic/seminar/workshop? That is, what is least clear to you?

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### **Using the Muddiest Point**

1. Use it on occasion to solicit and consolidate students' important questions; save class time.
2. Alert teaching assistants; use CMS.
3. Adjust course accordingly next term.
4. If used by program, can help align curriculum (after Mosteller).
5. Emphasize student responsibility for learning.
6. Liberate faculty time; open options.

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### **Using a Fatal Error List**

1. Select errors that, when they appear in number, are annoying enough to be fatal.
2. Before implementing, count frequency of Fatales.
3. After implementing, count frequency of Fatales.
4. List it on syllabus. If professors share, the list becomes a policy. Announce policy to students.
5. A Fatal Error policy saves grading time, reduces frustration, puts responsibility visibly on students.
6. Keep track for several semesters. Cite improvement for reaccreditation.

## Assessment Background Knowledge Probe

[--after Angelo and Cross]

Please consider the following responses:

- a. I have not heard of this before now
- b. I've heard of this before but wouldn't want to describe it publicly
- c. I've heard of this before and can describe it publicly if asked
- d. I've heard this before and have used it my work

Please write the applicable letter from the list above in the space by each term below:

- |                                      |                                 |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| _____ Direct vs. indirect assessment | _____ Formative vs. summative   |
| _____ Goals vs. objective/indicators | _____ Grades vs. assessment     |
| _____ Criterion vs. value-added      | _____ Assessment vs. evaluation |
| _____ Authentic assessment           | _____ PechaKucha ペチャクチャ         |

### Using a Background Knowledge Probe

1. Emphasize threshold concepts...also called prerequisites...more than core concepts.
2. No names, please. After discussion, collect and count numbers of (a), (b), (c), (d). Adjust course appropriately.
3. If core course professors or whole school shares, assessment helps align curriculum.
4. BKP saves teaching time and puts responsibility for learning on students.
5. Keep track from semester to semester.

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### Annotated Word Journal

Read the designated text and write one word that captures the essence of what you've read and summarizes your response to it.

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#### One Word Summary

Explain why you chose that word and how it provides, in a capsule, your summary of the reading.

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"Why should students show up for class? What unique value is offered in your class that should compel a student to get up for it at 8 a.m. on a frozen winter morning? Or rush to it from work at 5:30 p.m., sacrificing a lovely evening at home watching Jeopardy reruns? What happens in your classroom that justifies the serious effort and rising expense involved in continual attendance? What are you providing in the classroom that cannot be obtained elsewhere—in the textbook, in the newspaper, on the Internet, on TV, or in the library—with far greater convenience and at less expense?

"Our main task as classroom teachers who seek to understand what we do and improve at it is thus twofold. First, we should identify our unique niche—the educational elements that can only (or most effectively) be delivered by a teacher in the classroom. Second, we should create a classroom experience that will facilitate the delivery of those elements.

"Unless you happen to be a gifted orator, when you lecture, you are in large measure competing with the textbook and the Internet on their turf: straight-up delivery of factual material. Moreover, when you lecture, you inevitably enact in your classroom a familiar and characteristically dismal “school schema.” By assuming the prototypical “teacher” role, you practically force the students to assume the concomitant “student” role. In my experience, students tend to perform more poorly and become bored—and boring—when they are forced to act “like students.” In other words, the “student-in-class” schema for most students includes behaviors such as sitting down, doodling, daydreaming, copying notes, and trying to remain silent and, in extreme cases, awake. These behaviors are not conducive to learning. What is conducive to learning is a live classroom, where students engage the material through dynamic interaction with each other and with the teacher.

“The classroom is unique in its ability to provide direct access to both expert and group processes, rather than merely delivering content. Interestingly, however, while an ongoing and lively debate over “the canon” and “core curriculum” is a staple of university life, one hears very little buzz regarding “core classroom processes,” as if process is somehow incidental or secondary to content. It is neither.

“In fact, the classroom experience distinguishes itself most from other teaching media not in its content delivery properties but rather in its unique processes. To the extent that we are selling a product ---to use a problematic but probably necessary metaphor--- the product we are selling is not just the knowledge base of our discipline but also the meta-skills that underlie knowledge acquisition and application *across* disciplines: immersion, curiosity, resilience, critical thinking, the embrace of complexity, the persistent quest for converging evidence. Students will have little memory of ---and little use for--- much of the specific course content, but they will remember the dominant class processes, because these processes apply across a broad range of circumstances and life paths. In the long run, internalizing the fundamental mechanics of the discovery process ---as well as its thrill and challenge--- is more important than any particular discovery.”

--from Noam Shpancer, 2004. *What makes classroom learning a worthwhile experience?*  
Thought & Action: The NEA Higher Education Journal 19 (2): 23-35.

### Thinking about classroom teaching

What three things are the most effortful?

[--after Walvoord]

**What do professors do?**

**With whom do they do it?**


### Thinking about classroom learning

**What do students do?**

**With whom do they do it?**

Encounter new material	
Solve problems, write papers, use knowledge, apply principles Analyze, integrate	
Get tested	

**Which of these is most effortful for students?**

### Rethinking classroom learning

Success, not simply Access:

Changes in pedagogy produce large gains in student learning  
and liberate faculty effort and time

**What would students do?**

**With whom would they do it?**

Encounter new material	Alone (or with partners) before class
Solve problems, write papers, use knowledge, apply principles [Complex thinking skills] Analyze, integrate	With students in class, with the professor present
Get tested	Depends

### Rethinking classroom teaching

**What would professors do?**

**With whom would they do it?**

Prepare	Alone; sometimes with colleagues
Teach by solving problems, examining papers, providing feedback, using knowledge, applying principles. [Foster deep learning] Do some grading!	With students in class. Guide disciplinary thinking about how to think and engage students in analysis of each others' problems and papers. Do not waste time on editing first attempts. Use groups, IE/PBL.
Some grading, reflecting	Alone

--after **Walvoord, B.E., 2004.** *Assessment clear and simple*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

## The 5 Rs

**Read** before class for about 20 minutes in order to acquire vocabulary, outline of topics, and major concepts from the text.

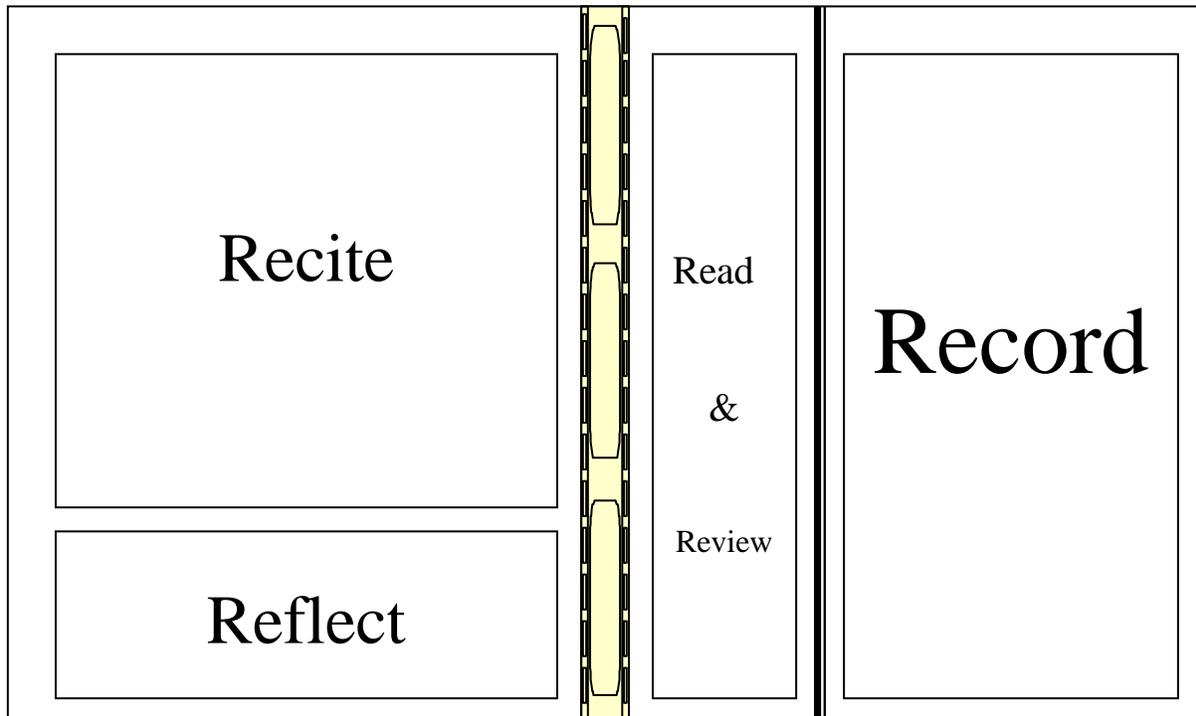
**Record** what happens during class. Don't edit or censor. Use the Cornell system of notetaking.

**Recite** for about 1½ hours as soon as you can after class. Fill in key words and connections with readings.

**Review** once a week (on the weekend?). Recognize and assemble themes. Ask questions.

**Reflect** once every three weeks or so, especially a day or so before an exam. Explore questions.

## The Cornell System of Notetaking



## **Manage the Group Work**

<http://www.utexas.edu/academic/ctl/largeclasses/#tbl>

1. Permanent balanced teams  
(Parasites can be fired)  
<http://www.foundationcoalition.org>
2. RAP = Readiness Assurance Process  
IS THE SAME AS
3. RAT = Readiness Assessment Test  
(Can be done beforehand by computer)
4. Scratch-offs are graded
5. Clarifying lecture as feedback
6. Use performance dictionary
7. Peer feedback is not rating or evaluating or grading or “liking”
8. Professors remain in charge

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## **Students learn what they're graded on**

This is what you'll learn	This is how you'll learn it	This is how you'll show you've learned it
Objective #1		
Objective #2		
Objective #3		
...and so on...		

--Suskie, 2012 Three things to put on every syllabus, Oakton Community College

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HHoG7bXRzm0>

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## **Some References on Learning and Assessment**

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**National Research Council, 2000.** *How people learn*. Washington DC: National Academy Press.

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### Memory Matrix

<b>Assessment Devices</b>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Example</i>	<i>Application</i>
1. Double entry journal			
2. Performance dictionary			
3. Muddiest point			
4. Background knowledge probe			
5. Walvoord maneuver			
6. Annotated word journal			
7. Fatal error list			
8. Cornell system of notetaking			
9. integrated assessment in large classes (scratch offs)			
10. Memory matrix			

