



ACUE

Student Success
Through Exceptional
Teaching

Using Practices That Ensure the Accuracy of Grades

Earle M. Crosswait III; Academic Specialist; Mathematics; Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College [00:00:15] All of my grading starts with the learning outcome. And then as I am building out what exercises we're going to do, what lessons we're going to cover that semester, I look at, does this align with those learning outcomes? Do they feed directly in a way that I can make apparent for my students? So, all of the grading is based on summative assessments in those summative assessments are on lessons that are all aligned with the learning outcomes.

Jennifer Whitley, PhD; Lecturer of Mathematics; Department of Mathematics; Park University [00:00:45] I teach math and, a lot of times, I teach the developmental math course online. I use more of a mastery-based grading system, or sometimes called a standard-based grading system. So, here I break down everything at the level of standards, and students know what standards they need to work on, what they need to master. And then they have different types of assignments to work towards our standards. So, they have online homework, which is already designed in a mastery-based way. So, it is adaptive and it recognizes when you have, based off of the system, based off of how many problems you've got incorrect, whether you've mastered each objective. And then they have discussion boards, which are more so just talking about the conceptual or the habits of mind. And then they have their self-reflective survey where they rate themselves on their own mastery of the objectives, essentially and their confidence levels. And then they have the quizzes, which I grade every problem based off of the objectives on a scale of one to four, whether they got it or they don't. And so, they're constantly seeing the same idea of your grade is based off of whether you understand the material. So, they know that a 90 percent means that you have mastered the content for each objective. Versus a 90 percent on a paper, what does that mean based off of your knowledge of the objectives?

Candice L Freeman, PhD; Department Chair; Medical Laboratory Technology Program; Fayetteville Technical Community College [00:02:22] So, we have a content map that says, relatively speaking, this question aligns to this instructional content and this instructional content aligns to this objective. But I typically list the course goals, move to the learning objectives and then basically plug and play everything else in there. But I also keep a legend at the bottom to remind myself: reflect, ask yourself these questions. And it's, you know, why did you do that? When are you going to use it? Where are they going to use it? How are they going to use it? Is this going to be effective for them? Is there something better? So, that content map and reflecting using those type of questions really helps me go through and say, you've got it as best you can get it right now until you get feedback from them to refine it again.

Adanna O. Alexander, MPH; Clinical Assistant Professor; Department of Population Health/College of Health Sciences; Sam Houston State University [00:03:18] So, I use anonymous grading, particularly at the beginning of the course, because I don't really, I know the students a little bit, but I don't know their writing enough to be like, oh, I recognize that's so-and-so. And I do the anonymous grading because it helps me to really focus on the actual writing or the assignment as opposed to the person. Because I, in reality, do sometimes, if you have a student, for example, that is very engaged in class and is doing well, you tend to be more lenient on that student. And maybe a student who is absent a lot or seems disengaged, you might try and grade a little harder. And I really do want to prevent that.

Katherine McCarthy, PhD, LCSW; Assistant Professor; Indiana University School of Social Work [00:04:02] I think anonymous grading can be really helpful when I first look at the papers of students and I'm going through them, I'm evaluating them, I'm using the rubric. And that way I'm trying to make sure that I'm just assessing based on the work, not my assumptions, ideas, conscious or unconscious, that I have about a student or student's name.

Earle M. Crosswait III [00:04:21] The student's grade is an accurate reflection of their mastery of the learning outcomes and nothing else, right? So their, their homework, their quizzes, any of the formative assessments that



ACUE

Student Success
Through Exceptional
Teaching

we've done along the way to help them focus their learning, those are not included in the final grade. The assessments that are, that are going into their final grade are purely summative assessments, exams.

Candice L Freeman, PhD [00:04:46] Attendance is not graded. It is monitored, but it's not graded. And the reason that I do that is because these are adult learners. They choose to be here, and I tell them that from day one. You have made the choice to voluntarily enroll in this program. You weren't forced to do it. So, I expect you to be accountable for your work. And if the lecture is posted, which all of the recordings after the live lectures recorded are posted within 30 minutes. That gives flexibility to those individuals who can't come to campus, can't log in live during the day. They work during the day, but they want, they have goals. They want to get into health care. They can watch it in the evening.

Earle M. Crosswait III [00:05:31] I'm not grading behavior, so my own personal biases are not included. I don't have participation as a learning outcome in mind, in my math class. Participation helps in the productive persistence and the learning aspect of it, but it isn't an end goal of my course. Participation is something we observe and there is participation that might be happening that we don't observe. So, unless participation is one of those learning outcomes that you're grading on, for example, in a theater class or a speech class, I could absolutely see that. Or in it in an English class that you're expected to provide peer review, right? So, that kind of participation is a learning outcome for those courses. And unless participation is a learning outcome, I don't know that it's equitable to include that in your grading.

Earle M. Crosswait III [00:06:39] So, I used the zero to four evaluation and summative assessments instead of a zero to 100 percent points, percentages because it gives the students really distinct levels of understanding that they also can, that is meaningful to them, right? The difference between a 94 and an 89 may not, or an 86 and an 87, right? Those things are kind of just built into the math, but we don't, even as instructors, we don't generally have a distinct idea of what every one of those percentage points looks like. In addition to that, the zero to 100 scale is not equitable in that you have more than half of the scale is failing. And for students that are in developmental education, they have to get a C or better to move on. Now you're looking at somewhere between 70 or 71 to 100 percent that they need to get. So, only 30 percent of your overall possible grades are passing. And if you are somebody who's including zeros in your grading, then a zero you would, a student would need three or four A's just to balance out one zero. And you have to think, does that is that student really a C student if they're able to do four of your assessments at an A level and they might have missed one. The zero to four gives the students a better understanding of what their learning is. It's equitable in that it, for me, a two or above shows that they have met minimum mastery, right? Two is a C as opposed to 70 percent, and if they are below level, then they have notes that instruct them where to find these, where to find this element back in the text or lessons that we've completed.

Alicia, Student; Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College [00:08:43] On the four-point scale, even after I get the assessments back, I can kind of tell for myself that, even before looking at the grade, I probably got a three on this, so probably, definitely got a four on this. But, like, on a 100 point scale, I wouldn't be able to tell if I got an 80 on this or a 70 on that.

Natasha Nurse-Clarke, RN, PhD; Assistant Professor; School of Nursing; Lehman College, CUNY [00:09:09] I like to give a lot of formative assessments in my course because it gives students a chance to grapple with concepts, again, have those and low-stakes assignments, and the summative assessments are usually my high-stakes assignments that I give, usually much later in the semester or, even the first one might be a few weeks into the semester after students have gotten their footing. But during every module, students will still have low-stakes assignments. The discussion board assignments, the VoiceThread assignments, the ungraded quizzes and these are things that will help them to formalize their thinking really grasp a concept, so that by the end, when it's higher-stakes, they should be able to demonstrate what they have learned from these lower-stakes assignments. So, whereas my lower-stakes assignment might be worth, let's say, two or three percent of an overall grade, the



higher-stakes assignment might be worth 20 or 30 percent of the grade. If there was a concept that they did poorly on and it was only worth two or three percent of their grade, they have time to build up a better understanding of that concept before it gets to those higher-stakes, 20 and 30 percent of their grades.

Michael Davis, PhD; Associate Professor; School of Biological, Environmental, and Earth Sciences; The University of Southern Mississippi [00:10:26] My upper level field-based classes, some of the early assignments are just simply field quizzes, and I'm teaching them the names of plants and identification things. Those are fairly low-value point quizzes so they can just build that skill. And then later in the semester, I'll just take them out somewhere and say, OK, well, here's a habitat. Evaluate this habitat and they have to take all of the skills that they learned throughout the semester and apply that to that question. And then that assignment now becomes worth a lot more because it's building on all these smaller pieces.

Earle M. Crosswait III [00:10:56] I firmly believe that students who demonstrate the same level of mastery, at whenever that happens in the course, should earn similar grades. And so, it again stresses the learning aspect, not about accumulating points. If what's important to me is that they've learned the material and are, especially in my developmental courses, going to be successful in the next course, right? It isn't necessarily about getting through my material, but being in a position where you can be successful down the road, then grade, then this kind of grading just makes more sense.