Assessment and Grading
in Remote Learning

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Overview

1 | Assessment, grading, and their overlap

2 | Changing contexts

3 | Grading and assessment practices

Assessment vs. grading

Assessment

Summarizes one outcome for many students.

Assessment rooted in learning goals and course objectives will tell us about the actual learning taking place. In order to improve student learning, we need to know specifically what our students understand-- and what our students still struggle with. Assessment gives us summarized information about the level and extent that our students have reached our intended learning outcomes.

Goal: improve student learning.

Grading

Summarizes many outcomes for one student.

Grades represent a sum of an individual student's progress (outcomes) and overall performance. Grades often include other elements of course expectations beyond the learning goals and objectives, such as attendance. Grades tell us a student has learned something, but they don't tell us what.

Goal: evaluate an individual's demonstrated learning.

Definitions provided by Mount Holyoke Teaching and Learning Initiative and Carnegie Mellon University's Eberly Center

Assessment vs. grading, continued

Where do assessment and grading overlap in your purposes and methods for using each?

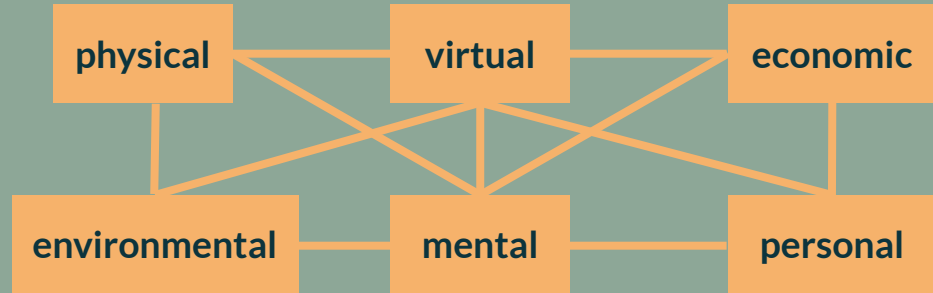| ★	Grading	Assessment
Purpose	To provide summative feedback for an individual student	Provide data to improve to student learning Primary focus is on formative assessment (improvement)
Who is Involved?	Instructor determines what is graded and criteria for grading.	Questions originate from key stakeholders and users of the assessment findings
Data and Results	Reflects individual student performance on courses or course assignments May reflect class management goals related to student behavior that are separate from learning such as attendance, participation, meeting deadlines.	Attempts to specifically identify and describe what was learned – based on assessment questions or learning outcomes. Quality and importance judged by stakeholders and those who will use the findings to make decisions
Value	Provides a representation of individual performance.	The ability to use results to improve student learning.
Dissemination	Letter/marks/points to an individual	Report to stakeholders

The overlap

Assessment can be part of grading *if* part of what's being graded ties directly to learning goals being assessed, and vice versa.

Formative or summative assessment (think: during and post assignment feedback) can also be part of the grading process.

Although assessment and grading measure different things, both should be conducted with learning goals in mind, which can be accomplished through backward design.

Considering changing contexts

What contexts should we consider when establishing grading and assessment practices (in general and during remote learning)?

physical	virtual	economic
environmental	mental	personal

How can we grade in a way that acknowledges these contexts?

How can we improve our assessment practices based on these contexts?

Grading innovations

What innovations in grading can we use to ease the burden of grading for ourselves and our students?

- Labor-based grading contracts
  - Co-created by students and the instructor, assigns value to effort or labor rather than other measures. See Asao Inoue's work on labor-based grading and adjusting pre-existing curricula.

- Co-created rubrics
  - Students and the instructor create rubrics for evaluation together. See Asao Inoue again on community-based assessment.

- Other rubrics and pass/fail system that prioritize feedback (or formative assessment) over points or letter grades
  - See John Bean on Using Rubrics to Develop and Apply Grading Criteria.

Assessment practices

The goal of assessment is to measure student learning and adjust elements of the course to improve learning.

1. Establish learning goals for the course, or refer to department or programmatic learning goals.
2. Design a learning opportunities that will provide learning demonstrate proficiency of these goals.
3. Collect data from students and assess the uptake of the intended learning goals.
    *keep in mind that "data" does not mean a grade, which measures the sum of the student's work. Assessing means isolating skills to determine proficiency.

4. Incorporate this feedback into your teaching and course design.

Assessment practices, continued

Strategies based on assessment goal:

- If you are looking for evidence of thinking and performance skills, consider assignments planned and evaluated using scoring guides or rubrics.

- If you are looking for evidence of knowledge and conceptual understanding, consider a comprehensive exam or an assignment or exam questions already embedded within courses that require demonstration of skill in application or analysis.

- If you are looking for evidence of attitudes, values, dispositions or habits of mind, consider reflective writing, surveys, focus groups, or interviews.

- If you are looking for an overall picture of student learning, consider portfolios (using scoring guides or rubrics).

Information from Mount Holyoke Teaching and Learning Initiative

Sources

Assessment, Mount Holyoke College

"Establishing Criteria and Standards for Grading," Barbara Walvoord and Virginia Anderson, *Effective Grading*

Grading during a Pandemic: A Conversation, Joe Feldman and Douglas Reeves

Grading vs Assessment , CMU Eberly Center

Grading vs. Assessment vs. Evaluation vs. Research, Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching, ISU

How Do You Do Labor-Based Grading In Pre-Existing Curricula?, Asao Inoue

Labor-Based Grading Contracts, Asao Inoue

New approaches to assessment can promote student success in times of crisis as well as normalcy (opinion), Rosalie Metro

Using Rubrics to Develop and Apply Grading Criteria, John Bean