Creating Great Learning Experiences that Help Students Learn and Succeed

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Creating Great Learning Experiences that Help Students Learn and Succeed

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Learning Activities that Make Students Want to Come Back

- Focus on important goals
- Clear traits of excellent work
- Hands-on practice
- Make students think
- Worthwhile
- Significant time and effort
- Scaffolding

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Students focus time & energy on what they’re graded on.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>This is what you’ll learn to do.</th>
<th>This is what you’ll do to learn it.</th>
<th>This is how you’ll show me that you’ve learned it.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>

(c) Linda Suskie
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<tr>
<th>This is what you’ll learn to do.</th>
<th>And this will help you learn how to...</th>
<th>This is what you’ll do to learn it.</th>
<th>This is how you’ll show me that you’ve learned it.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>[Program learning goal]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Deliver professional presentations.</td>
<td>Deliver a presentation to the class.</td>
<td>Deliver a presentation to the class.</td>
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</table>

(c) Linda Suskie
Intro to Psychology Assignment: 
*Presentations on signs of mental disorders in fictional characters*

- **Learning outcomes**
  - Analyze and interpret relevant information
  - Generate well-reasoned conclusions

- **Grading Criteria**
  - **30% Visuals**: PowerPoint, handouts, movie clip, etc.
  - **30% Information**: statistics, data, etc.
  - **30% Overall presentation**: smoothness, knowledge of character/topic
  - **10% Attendance at all presentations**

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Great learning activities have 3 transparent traits that connect to each other.

- Purpose
- Task
- Grading criteria
  - Mary-Ann Winkelman
Transparency

- Spend more time giving the assignment and guiding it
- And less time grading it.
  - Barbara Walvoord & Virginia Anderson
1. Purpose

- Explain what you want students to learn through the assignment and **why**.
  - *Learning goals/outcomes*
Good learning goals are...

- Stated as outcomes
- Clear to colleagues and students
- Observable
- Thinking & performance skills, not just knowledge
- Relevant
- Rigorous yet realistic
- Neither too broad nor too specific

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Try restating this as an institutional learning goal (applicable to all students and all disciplines) that meets the criteria of well-stated learning outcomes.

- **Stated as outcome**
- **Clear to colleagues and students**
- **Observable.**
- **Focuses on skills and not just knowledge**
- **Relevant**
- **Rigorous yet realistic**
- **Neither too broad nor too specific**
2. Grading Criteria

- Give students the rubric.
What is a Rubric?

A Guide for Evaluating Student Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Checklist</th>
<th>Rating scale</th>
<th>Analytic rubric</th>
<th>Structured observation guide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

(c) Linda Suskie
What is a Good Rubric?

- **Useful results**
  - Feedback to student
  - Feedback to us

- **Clear**

- **Fair**

- **Consistent/reliable**

- **Appropriate range of outcome levels**
  - Lowest level = floor = unacceptably poor
  - Highest level = ceiling = achievable by some

- **Generalizable**
  - Assesses the learning goals, not the task

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Creating a Great Analytic Rubric

**Left Column**
- Explicate the learning outcome(s) into essential traits.

**Top Headings**
- Identify & label performance levels.

**Fill in the Boxes**
- Create descriptions of every trait at every level.

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<table>
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<th>Fill in the Boxes</th>
</tr>
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(c) Linda Suskie
Effective Traits

- Characteristics of the *learning outcomes*, not the assignment
- **Essential**
  - *Aim for a rubric that fits on one piece of paper.*
- Include ineffable as well as concrete traits of your learning outcomes
  - *Effort*
  - *Overall impact*
- Don’t include extraneous traits unrelated to learning outcomes
  - *Consider professionalism as a learning outcome.*
Time to Collaborate!
Oceania Migration Paper

- Learning goal:
  - Present clear, compelling arguments that are supported by appropriate evidence.
  - Brainstorm up to three traits of that learning goal that should be evidenced in these papers.
Left Column

- Explicate the learning outcome(s) into essential traits.

Top Headings

- Identify & label performance levels.

Fill in the Boxes

- Create descriptions of every trait at every level.
How many performance levels (columns) should a rubric have?

- At least 3 levels
  - Inadequate or unsatisfactory performance
  - Adequate, satisfactory, or proficient performance
    - Meets the standard
    - Earns a passing grade
  - Exemplary performance
    - Exceeds proficiency
- No more than 5 levels

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Use terms that **beginning students** understand.

—Susan Brookhart
Specify observable behaviors.

- Minimize subjective, evaluative, value-based terms.
  - Appropriate
  - Adequate
  - Poor
  - Limited
  - Proficient
  - Above average
- Give students concrete ways to improve their shortcomings.
  - *Sally Andrade*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lab Design</th>
<th>Level 1</th>
<th>Level 2</th>
<th>Level 3</th>
<th>Level 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Design</td>
<td>Very ineffective</td>
<td>Somewhat ineffective</td>
<td>Somewhat effective</td>
<td>Effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Execution</td>
<td>Little or no ability</td>
<td>Some ability</td>
<td>Adequate</td>
<td>Superior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insight</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Little</td>
<td>Adequate</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
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</table>
Define the minimally adequate level first.

- Passing work (C? C-? D?)
- You would not be embarrassed that this student passed the course or graduated.
- The student is doing well enough to succeed in later studies or career.
- Almost all (passing) students should reach this level (or better).

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Try to restate the descriptions so students will see concrete ways to improve their presentation’s organization.

- **Use terms the students will understand!**
3. Task

**Great assignments**

- Consistently focus on important learning goals
- Are meaningful and worthwhile
- Are relevant and engaging
- Mirror real-world experiences
- Have challenging but realistic, attainable expectations
- Are varied

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**Time to Collaborate!**

First-Year Seminar Assignment

- Learning goal: Evaluate the quality and relevance of information.

- Brainstorm an assignment that will
  - *Help students achieve this goal.*
  - *Make them want to come back!*

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