Creating Great Learning Experiences that Help Students Learn and Succeed

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WMU ScholarWorks Citation
Suskie, Linda, "Creating Great Learning Experiences that Help Students Learn and Succeed" (2018). Assessment in Action Conference. 64. https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/assessment_day/64
Creating Great Learning Experiences that Help Students Learn and Succeed

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Western Michigan University
March 2018
Learning Activities that Make Students Want to Come Back

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

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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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(c) Linda Suskie
This is what you’ll learn to do. | And this will help you learn how to... | This is what you’ll do to learn it. | This is how you’ll show me that you’ve learned it.
--- | --- | --- | ---
1. [Program learning goal] |  |  |  
2. |  |  |  
3. |  |  |  

(c) Linda Suskie
## Time to Talk!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>This is what you’ll learn to do.</th>
<th>This is how you’ll learn how to do this.</th>
<th>This is how you’ll show me that you’ve learned it.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deliver professional presentations.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Deliver a presentation to the class.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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
Great learning activities have 3 transparent traits that connect to each other.

- Purpose
- Task
- Grading criteria
  - Mary-Ann Winkelmes

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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>

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What is a Good Rubric?

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

**Clear**

**Fair**

**Consistent/reliable**
- Lowest level = floor = unacceptably poor
- Highest level = ceiling = achievable by some

**Appropriate range of outcome levels**

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

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Explicate the learning outcome(s) into essential traits.

Identify & label performance levels.

Create descriptions of every trait at every level.
- Explicate the learning outcome(s) into essential traits.

- Identify & label performance levels.

- Create descriptions of every trait at every level.
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.*

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

• Identify & label performance levels.

• Create descriptions of every trait at every level.

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

• Identify & label performance levels.

• Create descriptions of every trait at every level.

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Use terms that **beginning students** understand.

—Susan Brookhart

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Specify observable behaviors.

- Minimize subjective, evaluative, value-based terms.
  - Appropriate
  - Adequate
  - Poor
  - Limited
  - Proficient
  - Above average

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- 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><strong>Design</strong></td>
<td>Very ineffective</td>
<td>Somewhat ineffective</td>
<td>Somewhat effective</td>
<td>Effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Execution</strong></td>
<td>Little or no ability</td>
<td>Some ability</td>
<td>Adequate</td>
<td>Superior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Insight</strong></td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Little</td>
<td>Adequate</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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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).
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
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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