Adlai E. Stevenson High School

May 2016

The Assessor

Making Sense of Mistakes

4 Common Misconceptions about Feedback

Evidence-Based Approach to Final Exams

Most Missed Questions Protocol

Using an Evidence-Based Approach to Final Exams

By Eva Lange, Stephanie Ross, Steve Soszko, Holly Swansen
Mathematics Division

With the traditional final exam grading system, students' scores did not necessarily reflect their overall knowledge. Some students showed such mastery throughout the semester that a low score on the final exam did not affect their grade. On the other hand, some students who struggled early in the semester, but performed well on the final exam, could only improve their grade a certain amount.

With an evidence-based mindset of showing growth, we recognized a need to change the way we approached final exams so students had the opportunity to show retention and continual growth. Our Algebra 2 team took on the task of changing the final exam experience to allow students the chance to show mastery of the standards and assure that all students must show retention in order to maintain their grade.

The process started by informing each student of his/her proficiency score in each of our three standards based on the entire semester of evidence, collected from a variety of assessments.

Students used this information to structure their review to prepare for the final exam. The final exam was then taken in three portions, one for each standard.

The Algebra 2 team carefully discussed what was expected for mastery in order to calibrate the grading in all of the classes.

After this final exam students received a proficiency score in each standard that was compared to their semester score in order to determine if more evidence was needed. In general, if students maintained their semester score, no additional evidence was needed and that standard score remained.

If students showed growth, these students were asked to re-assess that standard to prove their increase in score was an accurate reflection of their knowledge. If students performed at a lower proficiency level than earlier in the semester, they were given the opportunity to re-assess again.

What we discovered was that most students showed retention of their knowledge in at least one of the three standards, and therefore only needed to re-assess one or two standards.

Lastly, after identifying which of the three standards each student needed to re-assess, two days of class review was differentiated and focused on that standard. On the schoolwide final exam days, students then took the necessary portions of the final exam.

These scores, along with the semester scores, informed the teachers of an appropriate overall semester grade for each student.

Changing the final exam experience to this format benefited teachers and students. Teachers liked how students were required to show retention of concepts to maintain their grade and still promoted continual growth.

This process also supported self-efficacy, as the students were able to identify their areas of strength and growth and determine what was needed to demonstrate mastery.

Students appreciated how they were able to identify the standards in which they still needed to show evidence and focus their studies.

Overall this evidence-based final exam process prompted conversations about how to demonstrate mastery instead of calculating points. It also allowed both teachers and students to maintain an EBR mindset of growth and reflection as they had all semester.

An example of our process can be found on the next page.

Algebra 2 **Name:** _____

Algebra 2 Semester 1 Grade Calculations

	# of 1's	# of 2's	# of 3's	# of 4's	PreFinal Semester Standard Score:	First Final Exam Score	Second Final Exam Score *(if needed)*	Semester Standard Score
Standard 1 Graphing/Writing Equations								
Standard 2 Simplifying/Solving								
Standard 3 Analyzing/Interpreting								

Semester 1 Course Grade: _____

Based off your semester scores and the scores on the first final exam, you need to <u>show more evidence</u> in the following standards on the second final exam.

Standard 1

Standard 2

Standard 3

None (you do not need to take any portion of the 2nd final exam)

Talking About The Test

Most Missed Questions Protocol

Deanna Warkins & Sara Cahill - Science Division

For a while, after all of our lessons, our team assessed and then we simply handed back the test. We would briefly look at the test and move on to the next unit. We stated, "Look at what you did poorly and let me know if you have any questions." Students would say, "Are we done with this unit?" We would say "no", but through my actions, we were really saying "yes."

When we sat down to think about it, we had taken some of the most teachable moments and tossed them aside. This meant that we were not talking about common misconceptions, or even helping the students relate where the question may have come from in their notes. But possibly most importantly, we were not allowing another student to explain these concepts to their peers. As a class we had done all the leg work, we now had new experts, and we were not even utilizing them!

As we lamented one day a colleague showed us how they implemented an assignment called most missed questions. We immediately loved the idea and modified it to fit our course. A process was developed that got the students talking about the test and best of all teaching and re-teaching concepts to their peers to gain better understanding of our learning targets!

How it works is that after an assessment, we first do some data analysis. As the activity is named, we look for the most missed questions on the test. We rank any question that had a class average of less than 70% on that question as a most missed question.

We will then put a post-test sheet together, or what we call a Most Missed Question (MMQ) assignment. Depending on where we thought students went wrong on this question, we might give them the full question from the test or the question with answers eliminated. Accompanying the question is generally space for them to explain why they chose this answer, draw a picture to help explain the answer choice, or solve the question showing work. Most importantly, there is also a separate space for evidence that this concept was engaged with during the unit. The piece of evidence for this could be a page number in the packet, a lab assignment, a warm-up or any other artifact that they completed in class that could verify their choice as the correct answer.

The most important part of this process is that the MMQ assignment is handed out before students receive feedback about their own test! Without yet knowing how they did on their test, all the students in the class will have an MMQ in front of them and they will begin working through the questions. What we hear from students: "Oh, I had no idea on this question." "I remember this one." "I think I picked this, but I really wanted to check my notes." "What is this question saying."

As teachers, we can walk around and hear their thought process, double check groups to make sure they are getting it, or even pause class and instruct on something that they may still be missing.

Most of the time, the groups give the accurate feedback before we do! They are really curious to see if their answers are correct, but are forced to satisfy that curiosity by discussing concepts with other students! A student that might not understand the concept is now getting a mini-lesson from a peer, or they are revisiting key points and solidifying their current understanding. Formative assessment at its best!

As they finish up the assignment we only now hand out the feedback from their test and they get to see what they initially answered. Some students are proud to find they beat the odds while others are glad that they finally learned a concept. They continue conversing with their group members about other questions on the test that they may not have understood. Even the student that tests well will find that they have a MMQ and will often learn from a student that may not test so well.

What we find most rewarding about this method is that shows us that students are exceptionally collaborative. By dedicating time to this type of post-assessment discussion our students are more invested in learning from a test than they ever have been.

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The Value of Unobtrusive Assessment

Christina Erickson
Applied Arts Division

Robert Marzano identifies 3 types of assessments: obtrusive, unobtrusive and student-generated. The one that many of us are most unfamiliar with using is unobtrusive assessment. During unobtrusive assessments students are not aware they are being assessed and feedback can be provided instantly. This assessment takes place as a teacher observation, completion of a task, or a checklist of skills.

Using unobtrusive assessment is easiest with learning targets that are tied to a skill that can be demonstrated by a student. This includes procedural content, a student's current level of performance of a skill. This type of assessment provides the teacher with information about how the student is currently doing in the learning of a skill.

If you want to use this type of assessment with more thinking based skills, you will need to question the student in order to ascertain their level of comprehension. However, with an observable skill, I move around the room assessing the desired learning target and not disrupting the learning and work of the students. It also allows me the opportunity to provide instant feedback to students. In a step-by-step process, if the second step is incorrect, it will end in a poor final product. Therefore, it is my goal to assess students in their progress and provide feedback and corrections so their final product meets with high professional standards.

How can this type of assessment work in your classroom? All content areas can use unobtrusive assessment with just a little bit of effort and creativity. Here are a few ideas that might get you started:

World Languages: The teacher observes a casual conversation between 2 students about their weekend. One student has mastered this skill while the other hasn't. The teacher assesses this as one student meeting the learning target while the other student can receive feedback on their progress.

Physical Welfare: The teacher observes a student following the rules of volleyball and demonstrating positive sportsmanship. The teacher assesses this skill in the moment as meeting their sportsmanship learning target.

Social Studies: The teacher observes a political debate between 2 students demonstrating they understand the differences between political parties. This becomes the proficiency evidence that is entered into the gradebook.

Language Arts: A teacher observes a student writing a haiku poem and reads it over their shoulder, although it is not turned in, it is clear that the student has mastered this skill.

Art: A teacher observes a student correctly rehearsing a piece of music before the assessment. Once the day of the assessment arrives, the student does not perform the piece correctly, however the next day the teacher hears them performing the piece correctly once again. This would be an unobtrusive assessment of the student showing mastery of the skills of the music piece.

Science: A teacher observes several lab groups, focusing on if they are following the correct procedures for a lab.

(Continued from previous page)

The next lab, the teacher focuses on the rest of the lab groups not observed the previous lab. The data the teacher records this proficiency evidence is entered into Infinite Campus.

Applied Arts: In the foods lab, students are focusing on correct measuring techniques. Over the course of 3 labs, all students will be unobtrusively assessed and provided feedback on their mastery of this learning target.

Math: A teacher converses with a student while working on a calculus problem from their homework.

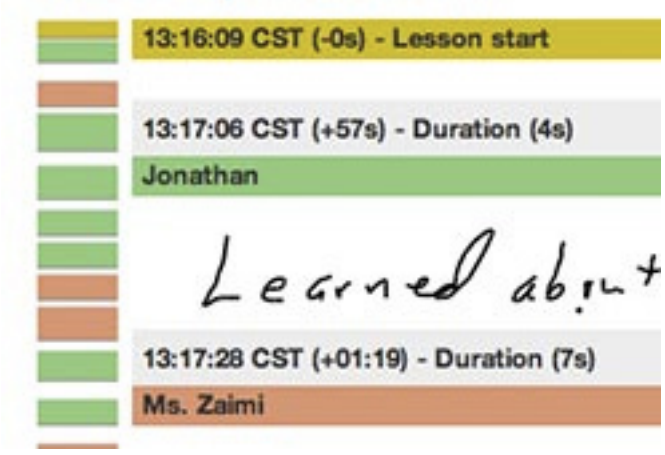
It is the same learning target that was assessed on the recent quiz; the student however did not show mastery at that point. It is now clear that the student has mastered the process to correctly solve the problem.

In using unobtrusive assessment, it can be difficult to assess ALL students in the same class period therefore is important to find a method of keeping track of student progress. I started out by printing a seating chart and making notes on student progress as I moved around the room assessing students.

I had a seating chart printed for each learning target, so I could see which students

I had already assessed on the target and which ones I still needed to observe. I then enter that data and comments into Infinite Campus for the students to check their progress. Then my colleague Sara Lohrmann started using an app called LessonNote. Using this app has streamlined the process, has saved quite a bit of paper and keeps a digital copy of the unobtrusive assessment.

Of course there is no perfect assessment, but by using unobtrusive assessment throughout a course of instruction you can create a unique formative assessment environment and hopefully gain a complete picture of a student's growth as a result of their learning.



If At First You Don't Succeed Try, Try Again

Maureen Levanti
Fine Arts Division

In the current grading system students are penalized in a way that places them into a deep hole they often cannot get out of. In addition to penalizing the students that are beginning with less experience, the current grading system can also make for complacent students that do what they need to do to get a grade. Walt Disney lived by the motto that you never settle for your first success. As an artist it takes a lot of patience and discipline to get to a point of pairing refined technique with strong ideas and concepts. The process of developing an innovative and thought provoking piece of art that incorporates the voice of the artist consists of taking chances that can sometimes lead to failure.

In today's world students cannot fail, students are so concerned with grades and GPA's that they fear challenging themselves. They are afraid to take chances, they often resort to finding a solution with less risk and, with the high expectations and heavy workloads they take on, they look for the path of least resistance. Students fear anything less than a 'B' letter grade and will do whatever it takes to achieve this, including but not limited to manipulation and negotiation. Evidence Based Reporting isn't about averaging or playing with numbers, instead it rewards growth and encourages the student to become more concerned with the work they are creating.

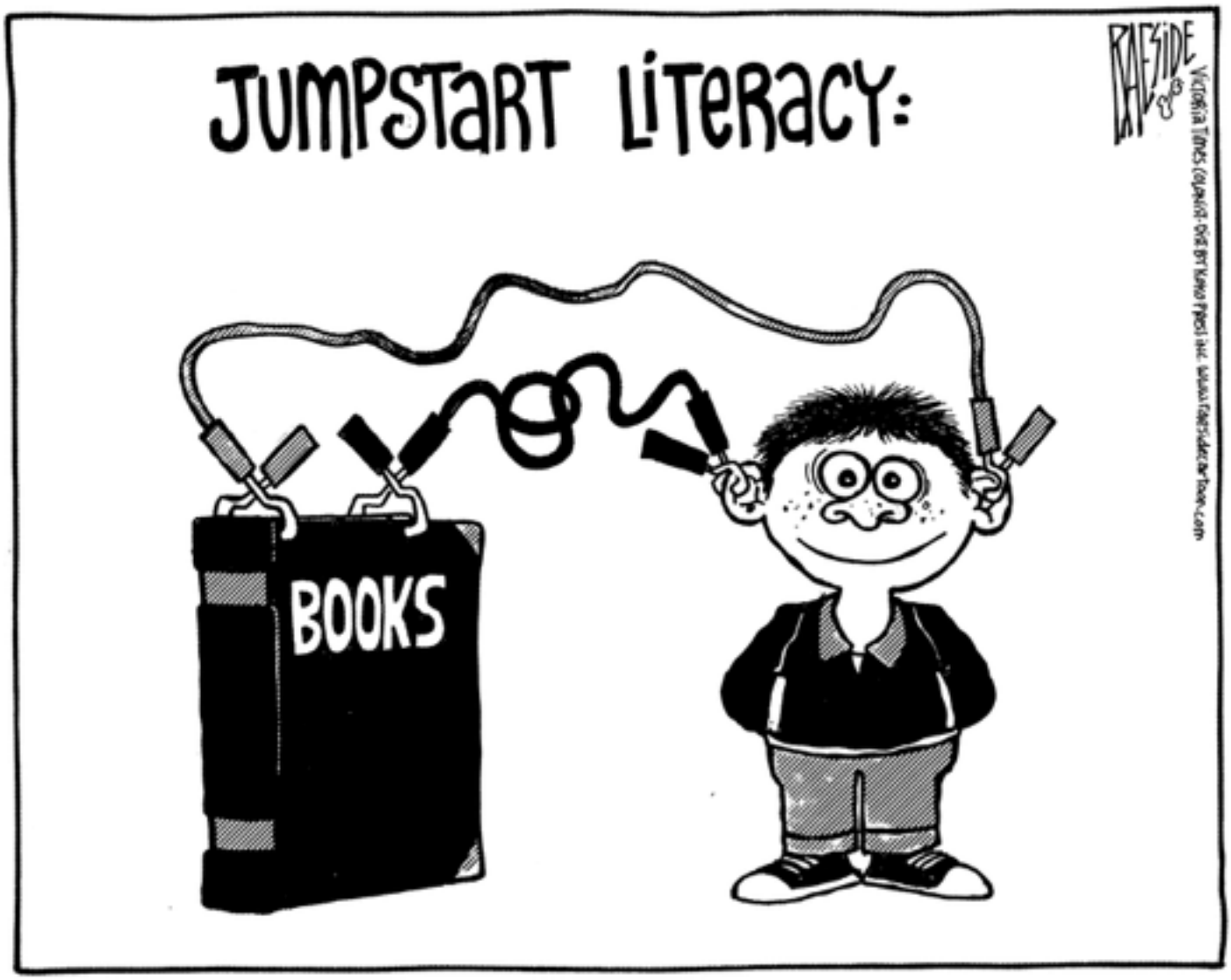
The student learns to ask questions about how they can improve their skills and how they can develop stronger concepts and ideas. The students are not asking, "What can I do to get an A?" Instead, they are asking questions such as, "How can I establish my focal point in this photograph?" Evidence Based Reporting is a method of giving students feedback provides them with the tools to develop self-awareness, decision making skills and independence. They learn how to identify their strengths and areas in which they can improve. They take chances and worry more about how they will finish, than where they will end.

In addition to acting as an Art Teacher I am both a cross country and track coach. In this role one of my primary jobs is to make kids run faster. As a coach I do not give my runners grades, but I do have benchmark time trials, dual meets and workouts that act as formative assessments. I also have checkpoints to identify strengths and areas in which we need to improve. We look at our Sectional and State Meet, a true evaluation of growth and development. By collecting evidence I am able to evaluate my runners and they eventually get to the point of evaluating themselves.

Within this system a runner that starts at a slower pace is rewarded when he/she works hard, practices and listens to feedback. On the other hand a runner that is already at a high level is challenged and the expectations for all athletes vary depending on their ability.

After I went to a seminar about the new Evidence Based Reporting System, I saw a correlation between the way I train my athletes and a way in which I can train and teach my art students. Without averaging and letter grades, my students were challenged with questions instead of numbers. My students began seeking out help and asking for guidance. They began working collaboratively with one another to develop ideas and find solutions. They ask me questions about ways to refine their camera handling skills and or ways to unify their color schemes in their imagery.

When I began working with the evidence-based grading system, At first I worried that the students that were at a high level would be less concerned with the summative assessment during final exams. Instead these students saw this as an opportunity to show off their skills and demonstrate their knowledge and strengths. The students that began at a lower level were also able to use that final summative as a way to demonstrate mastery and growth. Student work has become stronger and the learning has become more meaningful and authentic.



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Dancing Around Assessment:
Bridging the Divide Between Points and Feedback

Melinda Criglar, Angela Dauphin, Janet Rothwell, and Tiffany Van Cleaf
Fine Arts Division

In the early days of dance assessment we struggled with using the school's system of points to reflect and communicate to students their grade and more importantly to provide them information for growth. Our old system did not aid in our assessment of students' learning or understanding of dance material. A student could just naturally be a great mover but that did not mean they understood more in depth dance concepts and movement within the body. We teach dance beyond imitation and want our students to truly embody movement for themselves.

This being said we needed to create a rubric where students would know course expectations and take on the responsibility of achieving the goals of the class. In the past we had rubrics for every assignment and the downfall was that the goal of every assignment would shift and we found ourselves constantly re-inventing the rubric wheel. We began to create one rubric to go beyond numerically scoring a student and instead one that would encapsulate the expectations of the course and would simultaneously provide important feedback for the students.

We started with what the pillars (standards) for the course are: Technique, Choreography, Content Knowledge and SEL. Next, we categorized all the rubrics we had into these Standards and then finally outlined the learning targets. We then changed the language from very specific to more broad and all encompassing. We were careful to use language that was user-friendly and changed the tone of the rubric from what students could NOT do to what students could DO.

This is an evolving process which has lasted for few years and still continues today. We started with 143 targets then scaled to 60-70 targets. In order to limit the amount of targets, we developed rubrics that scaled the expectation and only list the success criteria instead of the reverse. We now have approximately 16 targets that we assess at different times throughout the year.

What we realized from all of this is that "Content is the variable and the target is the constant." This is the fundamental principle of quality formative assessment that we have determined throughout this process. We have one set of rubrics for all Dance class levels and although the content and rigor increases as students progress through the year and through the levels, the target remains constant for everyone. See example of our current rubric below.

3	ranking	Execution(TE)	Dynamics(TD)	Time(TT)	Performance(TP)
4	4	In a structured dance phrase, ALL movements (essential and prior learned) were performed in the proper way.	In a structured dance phrase, ALL movements were performed with given expressive qualities.	In a structured dance phrase, ALL movements were performed with given rhythm, tempo, and musicality of music.	In a structured dance combination, the performer effectively engages the audience using FULL energy and FULL kinesphere/range of motion (ROM).
		In a structured dance phrase, the	In a structured dance phrase, essential	In a structured dance phrase	
	Success Criteria:	alignment and posture, connectivity, clarity of movement, attention to correction and detail.	flow, accent, movement qualities:swing/suspend, sustained, percussive, vibratory, collapsed	tempo, rhythm, melody, sound interpretation	Energy, Risk, Focus, Kinesphere

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Making Sense of Mistakes: Implementing Formative Assessment to Improve Student Learning

Sheila Edstrom & Ryan Fedewa - Science Division

Every teacher, regardless of school or content area, has challenges to tackle in helping students learn. For AP Physics C (calculus-based physics), one of the unique features is that students need to speak in the language of fairly advanced mathematics while reasoning through increasingly abstract content. Further, there are multiple pathways to approach a particular content area, and mastery of one approach does not necessarily guarantee mastery in another. How do we help all kids tackle the content of the course, while providing ample opportunities for each of them to succeed?

Perhaps the greatest challenge we faced in answering this question is in serving the needs of the increasingly diverse set of students in our classes. This diversity is a fairly recent phenomenon, as we have watched the course more than triple in size in less than five years.

With this growth came varying skill sets, including mathematical ability, engineering and science backgrounds, and even personal motivation.

Success, to us, meant equity across this increased population. Obviously, we wanted our students to be prepared for college, and more than that, we wanted to build their cognitive and metacognitive thinking skills as much as possible. The latter set into motion a need to differentiate instruction, as well as a need to examine the means in which individual student growth could be communicated.

Our Initial Approach

We noticed that our students tend to struggle with multiple choice questions where the opportunity for partial credit is absent. We figured preparing the students to tackle these questions was a good place to start. We built a collection of weekly formative assessments (WFAs), each consisting of 5 to 10 multiple choice questions.

We then built a system to analyze student performance on these questions. We decided to "tag" each question in Mastery Manager with both a content area identifier linked with a specific science skill identifier. We did the same for other assessments, both formative and summative. Our hope was that we could pull reports for individual students or classes on specific identifiers in order to track individual and collective student performance.

While that sounds like a great idea, it did not work as hoped. Our first framework included 50 to 75 content areas, each linked to 5 different science skills (totaling 350 unique tags through which each of our questions were filtered). Even when pooling data from WFAs, unit exams, review assignments, and practice and final exams, most content areas had too few questions to do meaningful analysis on student or class performance. In other words, it was impossible to infer any trends.

We eventually realized our problem. We were diving too deep. We took a step backwards and reduced our content area tags to our 12 unit topics. We also tagged the content area and the science skills separately, whereas initially we linked them together. In other words, we initially had a Newton's Second Law - Graphing tag as well as a Newton's Second Law – Calculus tag. By creating two separate groups of tags, we effectively went from 350 unique tags through which each of our questions were filtered to 12 content tags and 5 science skills, each tagged separately.

Now, we can filter data based on content OR skill, or both. While it seems like a simple change, it took an entire year of data collection to reach this point. Luckily, Mastery Manager continued to store all data we input into it.

Changing the tags simply changed the way in which this data could be compiled, and likewise, the reports we were able to run. Trends (individual, class, teacher, course) could now be seen.

We believe that our system of tagging questions could be applied to many other subject areas. For example, a foreign language class may find that each content area is useful for a tag, as we did, and then tag skills such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening that are interwoven through each unit, like our five science skills are. A math class might use solving, graphing, modeling, simplifying, and analysis as their skills. Teachers in those areas would know better than we do which tags fit their classes best, but the paradigm of content areas and 4-6 skills is hopefully applicable across departments.

Analyzing Data and Feedback

One of the best reasons to undertake a somewhat time-intensive process like this is that we are able to speak to our students who are struggling in the class. If you look at Figure 1.1, you can see a "sample" student from a previous year after one semester of the class.

Objective	Description	Points	Assessments	Achievement Level
	Science (2012)			
A	GRAPHING	17 of 27	12	Non Mastery
B	CALCULUS	15 of 16	9	Mastery
C	PROPORTIONAL REASONING	22 of 35	14	Non Mastery
D	MATHEMATICAL SYSTEMS	14 of 19	7	Mastery
E	CONCEPTUAL/MATHEMATICAL	63 of 113	20	Non Mastery
A	KINEMATICS	28 of 35	4	Mastery
B	DYNAMICS	24 of 31	4	Mastery
C	WORK AND ENERGY	17 of 27	3	Non Mastery
D	MOMENTUM	14 of 29	3	Non Mastery
F	ROTATION	21 of 44	6	Non Mastery
F	SIMPLE HARMONIC MOTION	19 of 25	2	Mastery
G	GRAVITY	8 of 19	2	Non Mastery

Figure 1.1

If this student asked for guidance in how to study, we could offer a more personalized set of recommendations. Based on the data, we can see that the student is clearly mathematically talented, as seen in the scores in the 'calculus' and 'mathematical systems' skills.

This conclusion is supported by the units in which this individual has excelled: 'kinematics', 'dynamics', and 'simple harmonic motion' are all very mathematical units, and this student likely did well in those units based on mathematical strengths. However, in the units that are more conceptual, utilizing the skills that rely less on mathematical analysis, the student struggles. In other words, instead of working on solving more problems, this student should try reading the book, writing out explanations in words, focusing on ranking tasks, or listening to an online lecture for the why of the problem, not the how of the problem.

In addition to providing feedback relating to the trends of individual student strengths and weaknesses, we can also identify class, teacher, and even course, trends. With that identification, adjustment to teaching can happen, both in conscious decisions we make to address areas of weakness, and in the involvement of students by the questions they pose as a result of the feedback provided. Furthermore, this additional interaction between students and teacher fosters student accountability and responsibility. Students have the opportunity to assess themselves, and then take a more active role in identifying how to improve.

Perhaps a final benefit to our tagging system, and resulting pedagogy, is that we now are intimately connected to the content in our exams, especially in how they relate to the skills we assess. In a sense, it helped us to experience the tagging process, mistakes included. By tagging each question, we identified which skills we were assessing, and how much we assessed it. As a result, we were able to make sure our exams were balanced; each skill needs to be represented in the amount that makes sense for that unit, both in terms of the physics, and in relation to the value the College Board places on it in that content area. In doing so, we have a greater confidence in the exams we give our students, as they are providing what we hope to be an accurate measure of our students' progress, individually and collectively.

4 Common Misconceptions about Feedback: An excerpt from The Feedback Process

by Joellen Killion
The Feedback Process: Transforming Feedback for Professional Learning via learningforward.com

There are many popular misconceptions about the content of feedback in the literature. Most misconceptions about feedback result from a more traditional view of feedback as information transmitted to a learner by a knowledgeable other as a part of assessment or evaluation.

Misconception 1: Feedback occurs only in performance evaluation.

This is understandable since most supervisors provide feedback during the dreaded annual performance review. When feedback is associated only with performance evaluation, it will continue to be sparse. In its 2013 State of the American Workplace Report, Gallup reports that 70% of American workers are not fully engaged in their workplace. Of the 12 attributes Gallup uses to assess engagement, a factor consistently associated with high levels of organization performance, four directly relate to the presence of feedback.

Misconception 2: People are feedback adverse.

Feedback is logical. Its absence in most organizations is illogical. Feedback as a process to promote growth is the fuel for improvement. When feedback is scarce, people lack knowledge to make changes in their practice...When they have ongoing opportunity to understand expectations, have clear goals, know where they stand in relationship to expectations, and clarify actions for changes, they are able to be more self-directed, continue to improve, feel more engaged, and feel better about their own performance.

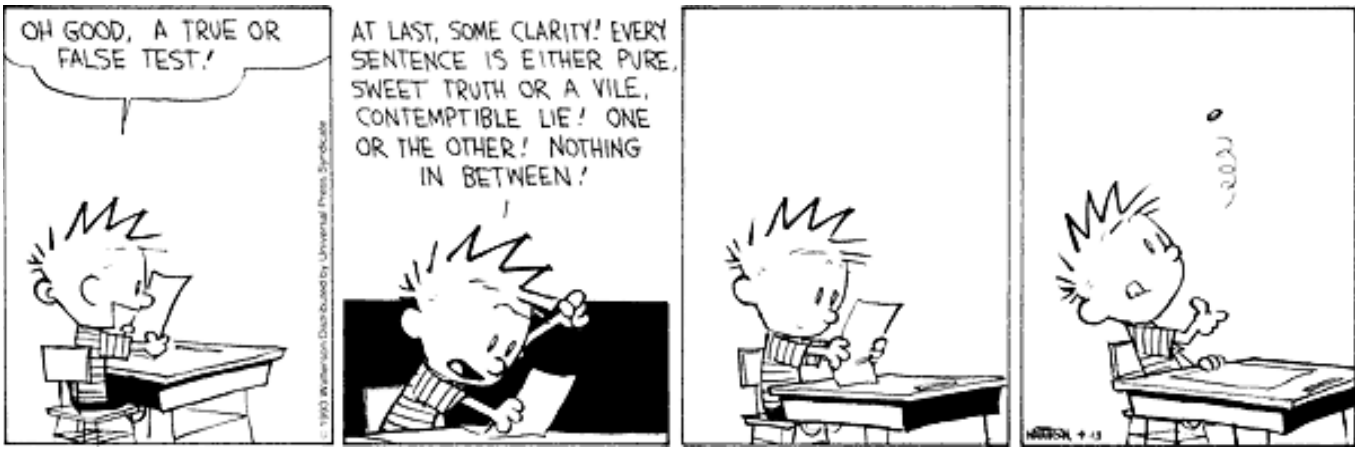
Misconception 3: The feedback sandwich softens critical feedback.

Some management advisors recommend the use of the feedback sandwich, critical feedback pressed between two slices of positive feedback...While common as a component of performance evaluations or review, the feedback sandwich also has the potential to miscommunicate the intent, lessen the learner's motivation to act on the information, and eliminates the learner's opportunity to learn how to be analytic and independent.

Misconception 4: People prefer positive to negative feedback.

The direction of feedback, positive or negative, has been the subject of multiple studies over the years, yet results are inconclusive that one direction of feedback is preferable to or has a greater impact than the other. Learners usually understand that the purpose of the feedback process is to promote their growth. To that end, they want to be a part of a process that helps them understand how to improve.

Common though they may be, these misconceptions contain the seeds of an approach to feedback as a process rather than a product. Misaligned practices can, with some care, practice, and guided effort, be adapted or adjusted so they more closely align with practices recommended throughout this book.



Are you using assessments to verify proficiency or develop it?

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Creating Contemplative Learners

By Bruce Vaughn

via Yearning For Learning

A few educators still refuse to admit that learning is as much accident as by design. The effort that is put into creating perfectly formed lessons, while important, does little to drive learning. In my experience learning happened for my students, not as a result of the flawless design of my lessons, but as a result of the reflective experiences that I created for my students. Through much trial and error I discovered that learning only occurred on the far side of reflection (Schoemaker, Brilliant Mistakes 2011). What this means is that I was attempting to activate student learning through activity instead of thinking. Furthermore I saw that it was student reflection that I should be after not student knowledge.

With this realization I set out to create a different type of lesson. A contemplative lesson. This type of lesson, in my estimation, was a lesson that makes students highly aware of their current state of learning, builds reflective stamina, helps students accept critical feedback, and develops a growth mindset. This was the lesson I wanted to create, that I needed to create in order to produce contemplative learners. If my students could become contemplative learners then the learning would take care of itself.

To start I made a list of of criteria that would show me if my students were becoming contemplative learners as a result of my lessons.

A contemplative learner will display qualities similar to the following:

- Reflective questioning.
- Self-awareness and self-reliance.
- Speculate and Scrutinize
- Strong reflective skills and reflective stamina.
- Explain connections between concepts, prior and new knowledge.

This was a start however soon I realized that this was only half the battle. The other half was to actually create these lessons. To do that I had to be highly aware of the reflective experiences that I was providing the students. Remember Schoemaker says that learning only occurs on the far side of a reflective experience.

So with that I realized I could control the learning by managing the type of reflective experience in which I was asking my students to engage.

Below is a list of reflective experiences that I used to help create these contemplative learners.

1.Logistical Reflection: What was the assignment? When was it due? Did I get it turned in on time?

2. Completion Reflection: Do I understand the parts of the target and how they connect? Did my response completely cover all parts of the target? Do I see where this fits in with what we are studying?

3. Connection Reflection: How was this target similar to other target? (In this course or others). Do I see connections in content, product or process? Are there ways to adapt it to other targets? Where could I use this (content, product or process) my life?

4. Practical Reflection: Were the strategies, skills and procedures I used effective for this target? Do I see any patterns in how I approached this target - such as following an outline, keeping to deadlines? What were the results of the approach I used - was it efficient, or could I have eliminated or reorganized steps?

5. Growth Reflection: What are we learning and is it important? Did I do an effective job of communicating my learning to others? What have I learned about my strengths and my areas in need of improvement? How am I progressing as a learner?

6. Personal Reflection: What suggestions from my teacher or my peer's can I used to improve my learning? How can I adapt this content or skill to make a difference in my learning in this course?

7. Active Reflection: How can I best use my strengths to improve? What steps should I take or resources should I use to meet my challenges?

Is your SLO ready to GO?

Review with your director soon!

Shifting the Grading Mindset Starts With Our Words

By Starr Sackstein on February 14, 2016 7:54 AM
Via Edweek

Language matters. It's that simple. What we say and how we say it has a big impact on how students and other stakeholders respond to our choices.

Students are always waiting from a variety of cues from their teachers and peers to determine what and how much they are learning. So rather than perpetuate the issues around grading by using the same language we've always used, it's time to be deliberate in the shift as we change our assessment practices.

Getting rid of grades is a big and challenging step to make, but it can be done and even if you aren't ready to go all in, there are ways to adjust small things in the classroom that will lead to important growth for students. Start with the words you use when communicating learning. Look at the below chart from Hacking Assessment:

Grades vocabulary	No-grades vocabulary
grading	assessing
score	assess
"What grade did I get?"	"What did I learn?"
"This is wrong."	"Try another way."
problem	challenge, opportunity
judgment or criticism	feedback
get good grades	achieve proficiency or mastery

The traditional grading language is passive and judgmental and subconsciously by using this language, we are putting the focus on the wrong things.

When we say to each other or to kids that we are "grading", it reduces the work that we are trying to do. What we are actually doing is "assessing" growth and understanding. Rather than "scoring", again use "assessing" because we are spending time trying to see what students know and can do.

When we start to adjust what we call what we are doing, students will do the same.

"What grade did I get?" or some variation like "What did I get?" is a question that most teachers don't enjoying having to answer.

But imagine if we could get student to think instead, "What did I learn?" This has the opportunity to be a rich conversation. So parents reading this, fight the urge to ask your child, "What did you get on the test?" and instead ask, "What did you learn in school today?"
When students see a red x on their papers or we tell them they are wrong, we are shutting them down and ending a potential learning experience. Why not say that "you aren't there yet" or "try another way" to encourage students to keep going.

As we start to shift our words, the behaviors will follow. And once all of these things are in sync with each other, then changing the way we assess in class becomes the next logical step.

Learning should be equipped with an endless feedback look rather than a terminal grade. Start the loop of communication by changing the words you use in conversation about learning and then it will become about the mastery instead of getting great grades on a report card.
Think about the words you use in class. Which ones can have potentially negative connotations and how can they be adjusted for a growth mindset? Remember, words matter.

Are your data getting to big to handle?

Visit Joe Pine or
Kevin Lambermont
in office 6000 for help!

No Points, No Problem: Determining Student Grades From Assessment Evidence

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Every wonder how you might grade a student without using points such as in the traditional grading system? Here are the essential habits of mind that will help ensure an accurate evidence-based grade determination process.

1. It's like filing your taxes: Filing your taxes is the act of compiling fininacial evidence for professional interpretation....and you need all of it! Think about it this way if you did not turn in one page of your tax documents or forgot to fill in few line items you run the risk of the IRS fining you…right?

Evidence-based grading works the same way. If the teacher doesn't get ALL the evidence he or she deems essential then the teacher cannot make an accurate determination of a student's overall proficiency. Thus the student runs the risk of failing the course.

2. A pattern of 'missing work' can override the collected evidence: Make sure the students know that missing work in the grade book may result in a failing grade regardless of the proficiency scores they have earned.

Yes…even though a student may have an A/B trajectory on the small amount of work he or she happened to complete that may not override the fact that there is missing work in the grade book. If this is the case please talk with that student early and often to explain to them the consequences.

3. Don't grade by hand!: Software such as Tableau or Excel can be used to estimate a student's proficiency based on the most common proficiency scores in the grade book.

Using such software in combination with grade book is the most efficient way to review and determine grades.

Using technology can help assist evidence compiling and evidence tracking which creates more time for the teacher to have conversations with the student.

4. The teacher is the grade giver: Remember you are the grade giver, not a formula! All the grade book does is help process quickly through the mounds of proficiency scores and suggest to you, and the student, the central tendency of the student's work.

Whether it is a 2-4, 3-1, 4-3 or any other score combination …if it is not a score the student deserves then don't give it to them. Merely invite a conversation with the student and discuss why they did not earn that grade and discuss what is the grade they truly have earned. Always use common assessment evidence to highlight the reasons why the student did not earn the proficiency score or grade that was suggested.

5. Talk to the students: Invite conversations with students early and often about their projected grade. This can alleviate any tension or confusion that may exist. Remember evidence based grading is about the co-construction of learning, which means giving a grade must involve both you and the student!

6. Focus on patterns: It is important to remember that evidence-based grade determination is based on patterns of proficiency.

The following is our proficiency pattern guide that helps determine the overall grade for a student:

A: A score of "3" or "4" in each of the standards

B: A score of "2" in any one Standard (with grades of "3" or "4" in the remaining Standards)

C: A score of "2" in more than one Standard (no score of "1")

D: At least one score of "1"; at least one score of 2 or above

F: A score of "1" in each of the three academic standards

The teacher must review the patterns that exist within the proficiency scores a student has earned.

7. Rely on your team: If a discussion about a grade has turned a bit contentious, rely on the assessments, and targets, that you collaboratively developed with your team.

If your assessments are quality assessments then the evidence produced by them should show you, and the student, the way through a tough conversation.

Remember when in doubt you can always ask a team member what they think about a student's performance!

8. Make sure your grade book is in order: Make sure your grade book is organized properly

Aside from reporting out on the three Ps (Progress, Product, Process)please ensure that all formative assessments are reported separately from summative judgments, events (assignments) are clearly aligned to learning targets (categories), and that all the proficiency scores are entered and accurate.

9. Don't hesitate to give an Incomplete: In the case of extreme disagreement concerning a final semester grade do not hesitate to use the code "I" for incomplete and offer a plan to demonstrate proficiency. Here is how it works:

If a student, or parent, feels a semester grade is not accurate consider doing the following:

1. First change the grade to an INCOMPLETE

2. Identify the targets that are leading to the current grade

3. Then develop a plan with the student, which should consist of more evidence gathering events.

4. Through this plan the student can then prove out that they are in fact deserving of what they say they are.

5. When complete the teacher should review the evidence with the student and determine the appropriate final mark.

The evidence produced should show a proficiency level that can be used to determine a final grade.

There are cases where the student has missed so much work for non-valid reasons. In these cases consideration must be made to repeat the course due to a failure to engage in the curricular experience that is required. This is discussion to be had with all stakeholders before a decision is made.

10. Always consider growth: Aptitude should not be the only factor in determining student performance. We must also consider how a student grows.

Rarely does a student come into a course proficient in every target. Instead they GROW into their proficiency. Therefore the final grade is just as much about how they finish the race as how they ran it.

For example if a student's proficiency scores for particular standard looked like this:

121111344444

and another student's scores looked like this:

444443111211

In each case the preponderance of evidence is the same. A teacher would consider a overall standard score of a 3 for each student, resulting in an A grade.

But here is the key question though, did both these students demonstrate proficiency?

One student is clearly growing past a 3 and the other is retreating from a 3.

What grade would you give these students?

While most recent scores should not override the body of work, however if a clear pattern of growth is evident a teacher should strongly consider the most recent scores.

Growth should be viewed from a 1000ft view, then 500ft view, then a 100ft view to accurately determine growth context.

This means that a teacher is better served by looking at for example the last 10 scores, then the last 5 scores, and then the last score to determine an accurate growth profile.

This approach helps qualify how a student is growing in relation to their body of work. Regardless, the point here is growth is an important context to consider when reviewing student performance.

Hope you find this information helpful as you determine your grade for students.

Do you have an *assessment story* to tell?

Please contact Tony Reibel in 3042
to submit for the next publication
of *The Assessor*.

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