

Using Classroom Assessment Information in Your Teaching Portfolio

The process of assessment of student learning should not involve a great deal of additional work but could feed seamlessly into what we already do. By formalizing and documenting this process, we may learn there are changes we can make in instruction to improve our part of the student learning process.

Per Article X of the College Bargaining Agreement (CBA), all tenured faculty are required to submit a portfolio at least once every four years. Non-tenured faculty are required to submit a teaching portfolio on an annual basis until tenure is achieved. Incorporating the assessment from one unit of a course could be a convenient way to satisfy those parts of the portfolio that address outlines, syllabi, assignments, etc. while not being burdened with added paperwork. The purpose of this paper is to acquaint all of us with some of the simpler techniques and examples that are easily integrated into the classroom and provide valuable feedback from students regarding their learning.

Classroom assessment is basically a four-step process that many of us use all of the time but some of us rarely document. These steps involve:

- Writing measurable learning outcomes;
- Providing the opportunity for students to learn those outcomes;
- Evaluating student success at those outcomes; and
- Deciding what could be done to improve student learning of those outcomes in the future.

The last step of this process could very easily be the reflective essay (Item 8 of the *Improvement of Teaching Process* of the CBA) in the teaching portfolio. Faculty completing such a portfolio would also greatly benefit the college in meeting the Middle States Accreditation Standards to document evidence of student learning.

The following are some of the more common techniques as listed by Angelo and Cross in *Classroom Assessment Techniques*. It is generally a good idea to select a class that is going fairly well where most of the students are succeeding and not with a problematic class or a difficult situation until you become more experienced.

(1) The One-Minute Paper

The one minute paper consists basically of two questions: “What was the most important thing you learned during this class?” and “What important question remains unanswered?” These questions are probably most useful for lecture or discussion courses immediately after completing one of the major objectives of your course. The questions are usually passed out toward the end of a class and students are given 3 – 5 minutes to write. In some cases, it could also be used at

the beginning of class (with a slight rephrasing) if an assignment was made at the end of the previous class. If, after reading the responses from your students, you notice a lack of understanding of the concept or objective, you may correct those misconceptions before an exam. Typing these questions on a half sheet of paper or an index card makes a useful tool that is quick to administer and easy to analyze (even with a fairly large class). If, after reading the responses from your students, you notice a lack of understanding of the concepts or objectives covered, you may correct those misconceptions immediately. It may not be a good idea to use this after every class since students begin to take the exercise too lightly.

Example (Angelo and Cross): An instructor in European History finished a lecture on why Italy was so important to the Renaissance and, at the end of the class, asked two questions: “What is the single most significant reason that Italy became the center of the Renaissance?”, and “What one question still puzzles you about Italy’s role in the Renaissance?” After perusing the responses, the instructor noticed that many students confused cause and effect. However, the responses to the second question showed students asking more insightful questions than they had during class. At the beginning of the next class, the instructor was able to clarify many of the concerns in 10 to 15 minutes.

(2) The Muddiest Point

The muddiest point is again a very quick technique that consists of basically one question: “What was the muddiest point in today’s discussion/assignment?” or “After today’s discussion, I am still confused about...”. Most likely, this would be administered at the end of a class or presentation but it could certainly be used at the beginning if an assignment or reading was given from the previous class. Unlike the one-minute paper, it can be used quite frequently in class where new concepts are presented on a regular basis (such as mathematics or natural sciences). Analysis should be kept simple and you should probably sort them into piles of similar responses before you address any misunderstandings.

Example: A CCAC mathematics instructor, asking for comments on unclear points, found that students did not understand the difference between equations whose solution set are empty (no solution) versus those where all Real numbers are solutions.

In a help session after class, the distinction was resolved very quickly with a couple of examples.

(3) Application Cards

After hearing or reading about an important concept, you could ask the students to write down one (or more) real-world application of what they have just studied/learned. This technique requires students to connect what they are covering in class to prior knowledge or experience. Reviewing the responses will allow you to determine those that show insight, and you could make them known in a subsequent class. All students could benefit from hearing the best examples, and it may even give instructors a new source of material that helps future

students understand the connections between the in-class material and the applications.

Example (Angelo and Cross): A Foundation of Physics instructor discussed Newton's Third Law of Motion: "To every action there is always opposed an equal reaction." The students were instructed to give three applications of the law around their house.

Remember that these assessment techniques could easily be incorporated in the teaching portfolio and the following is a list of the components to be included in the portfolio per Article X of the CBA and how your portfolio could include items of assessment.

Statement of Teaching Philosophy

- How has assessment of student learning influenced, changed and/or confirmed your teaching philosophy?
 - Assessment tools used to measure students' values, attitudes, and self awareness.
 - Assessment tools used to measure students' reactions to your teaching methods.

Course Outline

- Are learning outcomes stated in clear measurable terms?
 - Comparison of last portfolio course outline and current course outline. Describe changes that are reflective of assessment of student learning.

Sample Lecture/Laboratory Assignments

- Examples of Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs) and how results are utilized in your teaching. Examples: Use of One Minute Paper, The Muddiest Point, and Application Cards mentioned earlier in this document.
- Assessment tools used to measure students' reactions to learning activities. Example: Group Work Evaluations

Sample of Examinations and Writing Assignments

- Do exam questions and writing assignments relate to course learning outcomes?
 - Samples of grading criteria. Example: Use of rubrics.
 - Use of Test Blue Prints or outlines.
 - Samples of study guides.
 - Use of capstone projects. Example: Student Portfolios, Research Projects
 - Exam Item Analysis. How are results utilized?

- Assessment tools used to measure students reactions to student evaluation.
Example: Exam Evaluations.

Handouts and Learning Aids

- Samples of handouts and learning aids to assist student learning. Provide a brief explanation why handout and learning aids were developed.

Summary of Student Opinion

- Review of questions about the course rather than the instructor.

Involvement with Assessment

- How have you participated in the assessment of student learning?
 - Classroom – Conducted classroom assessment? Submitted an Assessment of Student Learning Faculty Summary Sheet (Appendix C) to the ASL committee as evidence of faculty participation in assessment?
 - Course – Worked with other faculty in your program/discipline to assess a course learning outcome?
 - Program – Volunteered to lead the assessment of a program objective? Participated in program assessment by providing data?
 - General Education – Participated in Gen Ed assessment by submitting student artifacts? Participated on a Gen Ed evaluation team?

Evidence of Professional Growth

- Professional development activities focusing on the assessment of student learning

Please remember that any activity you do for the assessment of student learning is important to this institution. For further information concerning other student learning assessment techniques, please consult the Angelo and Cross book;

Classroom

Assessment Techniques, which is on reserved in each campus library. ***We would appreciate it if you would write a short summary of the activity and forward it to aslcommittee@ccac.edu.***