

Measuring Learning Outcomes

DC Faculty Workshop 4/97

*[Before completing this workshop, you should have completed the **Teaching from Learning Outcomes** workshop. If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions about this workshop, please contact the DC Office at complete@lbc.edu, 1.866.4.LBC.DCP, or 560.8220.]*

In preparation for and during our last workshop, we have been refining the learning outcomes for our modules. While there may still be some work to do on some of them, we are getting closer to what we would like to see our students learn by the time they have completed our modules. Now the task becomes **assessing** whether or not the students have met the learning outcomes and then **grading** them based upon how they measure up to these expectations.

NOTE: As the instructor, you are the final authority on grading your students and their ability to meet the learning outcomes of the course.

A S S E S S I N G

In most modules, the final exam has been developed as the primary tool by which to assess all of the learning outcomes; there is a direct one-to-one correlation.

MODULE LEARNING OUTCOMES
1
2
3
4
5

FINAL EXAM
Essay questions measure outcomes...
1
2
3
4
5

However, in those modules where the final exam does not address all outcomes, it becomes necessary for you to devise other assessment methods (see reverse side).

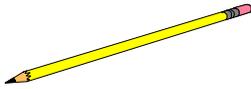
MODULE LEARNING OUTCOMES
1
2
3
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FINAL EXAM
Essay questions measure outcomes...
1
2
3

OTHER METHODS OF ASSESSMENT
Learning outcome # ___ is measured through ___
4 = homework assignment
5 = role play activity

GRADING

Question : Does a student have to meet all outcomes to pass, or only the majority of them?



Question : If everyone met all the outcomes but it is obvious that one person excelled in meeting them, do you still give all A's?

BLENDING CRITERION AND NORM-REFERENCING

- Ideally, DCP modules should be a blend of criterion and norm-referencing systems.
- A student must meet *almost all* (all but one?) of the learning outcomes *to some degree* for a passing grade; i.e. a pass/fail or criterion-referenced system.
- The *degree* to which the student meets the outcomes determines whether they pass with a D, C, B, or A; i.e. a letter grade or norm-referenced system.

1. Did the student meet each outcome?

2. How well did the student meet each outcome?

Out- come	did not meet (F)	poorly met			adequately met			superiorly met			excellently met																					
		D-	D	D+	C-	C	C+	B-	B	B+	A-	A																				
1	0	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100
2	0	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100
3	0	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100
etc.																																
Totals																																

Calculate grand total and divide by number of outcomes for an average. Assign letter grade based upon the average (ex. If average equals 89, a letter grade of B is given).

[What constitutes an A, A-, B, B-, etc. is up to you. The above is just an example.]

SUGGESTIONS ON NORM-REFERENCING ESSAY EXAMS

1. As you grade essay exams, have in front of you a list of the thoughts you are looking for in the essay. Your list may be broken down into some “must have” thoughts as well as some that will separate the best from the average students.
2. Try to maintain anonymity as much as possible.
3. Read through all answers to essay question number one.
4. Put aside all those that have not met the learning outcome.
5. Of the remaining papers, locate the two benchmarks; i.e. the best answer and the worst answer.
6. Rank the other papers according to the benchmarks.
7. Assign a numerical grade according to the chart above.
8. Repeat process for each essay question assigned.



WORD OF CAUTION:

If very few of the students meet a particular objective or two, could it be that you or the curriculum failed to address it sufficiently?

REMEMBER:

- a) Several papers may be equal in quality and can be given similar grades, however...
- b) It is unlikely that most or all answers will be exactly the same in quality.
- c) While written expression is part of the academic process and should be taken into consideration, remember to grade mostly on content and not necessarily on the fact that one student expresses himself better than another.
- d) _____
- e) _____

