University of Phoenix℠

Grading, Evaluation and Feedback Manual

Central Administration
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Resource

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Grading, Evaluation and Feedback

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Section One

Role and Concept of Evaluation

DEFINITION

Evaluation includes a myriad of activities designed to assess the overall worth of a program, class components, or objectives. Evaluation also enables a faculty member to assess the extent to which their goals and objectives have been attained. It provides faculty members with information for improving less successful elements of a workshop and for extending effective practices. Evaluation can assist in communicating impact information to people interested in the outcomes. However, evaluation is more than a simple matter of stating behavioral objectives, building a test or analyzing data.

FACULTY ROLE

A faculty member's role is to facilitate their course to help students attain the course objectives. Faculty members are also concerned with an assessment of student progress. This assessment is necessary both to provide feedback on a student's academic performance and to provide the basis for grades. University of Phoenix faculty members are required to conduct this assessment.

Evaluating student performance is a necessary fact of academic life and is often seen as a burden. While faculty members are expected to make appropriate assessments of student achievement of course objectives, it is possible to turn evaluations and assessments into "episodes of learning." Grading should be accomplished as objectively as possible. The University's policy is that grading is not done "on a curve." Individual grades should reflect student demonstration of mastery of course objectives and outcomes, and achievement of the University's Learning Goals. Faculty members emphasize that we do not "give" grades, but that students earn grades.

GRADING STANDARDS

The following grading standards have been adopted through the University's faculty governance process:

1. GRADING CRITERIA MUST BE SPECIFIC AND MEASURABLE

An important purpose of grading is to provide students with feedback that can be used to improve learning and academic performance. Feedback based on objective criteria that are specific and measurable is much more useful for students.

2. GRADED WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS ARE EXPECTED IN EVERY COURSE

University of Phoenix students are required to complete written papers and reports throughout their academic program. A focus on effective written communication is included in the University's Learning Goals.

3. GRADED PAPERS AND REPORTS SHOULD BE EVALUATED FOR CONTENT, ORGANIZATION, AND MECHANICS

Faculty members are expected to provide detailed, specific comments on all written assignments, pointing out both strengths and areas for improvement.

4. LATE ASSIGNMENTS SHOULD BE DISCOURAGED

Assignments are late if they are not submitted on the due date. Granting an 'A' grade for a late assignment is inappropriate. Given that timeliness is requisite in defining excellence for workplace projects, University of Phoenix faculty members are encouraged to assess a penalty for late work. Penalties for late work should be clearly outlined in the faculty member's course syllabus.

5. A VARIETY OF PERFORMANCE EVALUATION METHODS SHOULD BE UTILIZED TO PROVIDE AN ACCURATE ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT OF COURSE OBJECTIVES

Faculty members are encouraged to explore a variety of performance evaluation methods, including discussion questions, written papers, weekly summaries, quizzes, and exams, in such a way that they become "episodes of learning" for students. For example, discussing and reviewing answers after a test or quiz can lead to greater retention of knowledge. The Faculty Resource Guide, available on the Faculty Web, contains a variety of supplementary materials to assist in improved development of evaluations and assessments.

Non-graded classroom assessments of student learning help faculty members adapt teaching strategies and are highly recommended. Examples of non-graded classroom assessments, can be found in Cross and Angelo's *Classroom Assessment Techniques for College Teachers* available on the Faculty Web at http://ecampus.phoenix.edu.

6. MAINTAIN AN ARCHIVE OF STUDENT GRADE RECORDS

All faculty members must maintain student grade records for a minimum of six months following the end date of the class. Additionally, Online and FlexNet® faculty members must save all email messages pertaining to student grades for the same minimum time frame.

Section Two

Feedback

INTRODUCTION

It is well known that the essential route to communicating with students and influencing their learning positively is done on the basis of feedback. The National Report on Learning published by the U.S. Department of Education in the 1980's stresses that improvement in learning is more likely to occur following both written and oral critiques of student work. It should be acknowledged therefore that a significant approach to improving grading is to supply much more information to each student than solely the number or letter symbol on a test paper or written assignment.

CHARACTERISTICS

The role of feedback in an assessment-for-improvement model is to provide a continuous flow of information that is useful to the student in shaping the learning process while it is happening. Feedback is most effective if it is not made public, and if it emphasizes competencies instead of comparisons. The following characteristics should be considered in providing feedback:

- **Feedback Should Be Multi-Dimensional**
  Covers a variety of areas: content, presentation skills, grammar skills, etc.
- **Non-Evaluative**
  Provides objective information about the receiver's work; allows receiver to step back from his/her work and personally acknowledge strengths and weaknesses.
- **Supportive**
  Seeks to offer information in a way that will allow the receiver to recognize areas for improvement.
- **Receiver Controlled**
  Permits the receiver to accept or reject the information.
- **Timely**
  Works best when given as soon as possible after the work for which it is intended.
- **Specific**
  Works best when the information precisely describes observations and recommendations for the receiver's consideration.

STUDENT ISSUES

The largest single concern expressed by adult students is feedback. Feedback can range from noting student errors to detailed criticisms to lengthy discussions and explanations of test material. Students desire regular and constructive feedback from faculty on all of their activities. Students appreciate remarks or comments that indicate the faculty member has paid attention to what the student has written or said and has tailored remarks for that student.

FACULTY ROLE

All faculty are expected to take time prior to instructing a class to clarify what material will be covered, what will be expected of students, and what will be the standard for evaluations. A syllabus that accurately covers these items should be provided to each student. Early clarification of your expectations will serve to reduce student anxiety about grades and preconceived notions of how their work will be evaluated. A clear interpretation of your expectations can be facilitated if your evaluations have the following characteristics.

- **Clear**
  The evaluation is communicated in a form and style that can be understood by the student.
- **Thorough**
  The evaluation covers all the areas of student performances as requested by the faculty member.
- **Consistent**
  Expectations and guidelines established by the faculty member in the beginning are not repudiated.
- **Equitable**
  The faculty member follows through on a commitment to make discriminatory judgements and does not put students into one or two categories (a and a-) for the sake of ostensible harmony.
- **Professional**
  The faculty member honors all commitments to the University and to the student.

Section Three

Grading

GRADING PRACTICES

The five-letter grading system has prevailed through the first half of this century and is currently used in over 90 percent of colleges and universities. Occasionally, flurries of concern over grading have brought about new systems, i.e., Pass/Fail, whole numbers with decimals to one place signifying more finite grading distinctions. With the latter system, the amount of faculty time spent in discussing and creating the changes was incalculable. At most the "grade tinkering" did more to distract faculty from their primary task, promoting learning, than it did to fulfill the illusion of precision. Using Pass/Fail also posed problems for those faculty members who soon found that there were relatively large gradations in the performance of those students who achieved mastery and were assigned a grade of "pass." How often have you overheard this conversation?

Student #1: "What did you get out of Smith's class?"

Student #2: "I got a B. What did you get?"

These students have a very narrow view of their course—not to mention of what they learned! Although the majority of students believe grades are important, numerous studies spanning seventy-five years reveal there is little or no relationship between grades and any measure of adult accomplishment. It is important to remember the proper meaning of any grade is not defined by its metric properties, but by a consideration of the various frames of reference within which it was produced. The central theme of grading should be influencing learning.

GRADE POLICIES

A faculty member's policies will affect grade meanings in a number of ways. Faculty members should consider the following when developing their own policies:

1. Clarify the purpose of grades. Will grades promote teaching and learning or simply rank order students?

2. Recognize tests and grades are created out of a faculty member's personal values when they decide on an evaluation plan, select the content to be tested, etc.

3. When testing is appropriate, faculty members should construct questions to seek more than isolated factual information.

4. Realize the primary audience for the grade is the student.

5. Supply much more information to each student than solely the number or letter symbol on a test paper or assignment.

Faculty members should select a grading system that will allow them to use the data they collect through tests and written and oral assignments to assign students grades which reflect their degree of success in accomplishing the objectives (learning outcomes) of the course.

EVALUATION SOURCES

It is also your responsibility to state the performance level expected from students. This criterion is based on your professional judgement as well as your experience in teaching the content in the past. In most cases, the faculty member relies on a particular set of standards or norms. The following represent three principal sources of evaluation used by faculty:

STANDARD OF KNOWLEDGE

The student is evaluated against some standard of knowledge or competency which can legitimately be expected: e.g., the student's ability to write an effective marketing plan, design a treatment plan for a client, perform a common statistical task.

INDIVIDUAL ACHIEVEMENT

The student is evaluated on the basis of individual achievement independent of any other external norm. A pre-test and post-test may indicate gains made by a specific student that are not part of gains made by the rest of the class.

LEARNING PROCESSES

The student is evaluated on the basis of the learning process involved. The student's ability and willingness to participate in learning processes such as small group discussion, debate, or simulation may influence the evaluation of the student.

GRADING GUIDELINES

The previous section listed common sources of evaluation used by faculty. As a faculty member, you should select those sources or a combination of sources that will provide the greatest feedback value to the student in the form of a single standard of evaluation or a "grade." Regardless of the method used, each letter grade must be clearly defined, and the student must understand the requirements for attaining the letter grade. UOP's standards for evaluation of student performance are presented in Section One. In support of these standards, UOP's ADCs have established the following grading guidelines and grading system, that must be followed by all faculty.

Graduate students are expected to do above average work and must maintain a "B" average to earn their degrees.

GRADE DEFINITIONS AND CRITERIA

- A= Clearly stands out as an excellent performer. Has unusually sharp insight into material and initiates thoughtful questions. Sees many sides of an issue. Articulates well and writes logically and clearly. Integrates ideas previously learned from this and other disciplines; anticipates next steps in progression of ideas.

Example: "A" work should be of such a nature that it could be put on reserve for all students to review and emulate. The "A" student is, in fact, an example for others to follow.

- B= Grasps subject matter at a level considered to be good to very good. Participates actively in class discussion. Writes well. In On-campus environments, speaks well. Accomplishes more than the minimum requirements. Produces high quality work.
  Example: "B" work indicates a high quality of performance and is given in recognition for solid work; a "B" should be considered a high grade.

- C= Demonstrates a satisfactory comprehension of the subject matter. Accomplishes only the minimum requirements, and displays little or no initiative. Communicates orally (on-campus environments) and in writing at an acceptable level for a college student. Has an acceptable understanding of all basic concepts.
  Example: "C" work represents average work. A student receiving a "C" has met the requirements, including deadlines, of the course.

- D= Quality and quantity of work is below average and barely acceptable.
  Example: "D" work is passing by a slim margin.

- F= Quality and quantity of work is unacceptable. Academic credit is not earned for an F.
  Example: "F" work does not qualify the student to progress to a more advanced level of course work.

Other Grades

I= Incomplete. Most work for the course has been submitted. Through prior arrangement with the faculty member, the student has agreed to submit the remaining work within a specified period, not to exceed the amount of time prescribed in University policy.

W= Withdrawal. Indicates a passing grade at the time of the withdrawal. The student must repeat the entire course.

WF= Withdrawal/Failing. Indicates a failing grade at the time of the withdrawal. The student must repeat the entire course.

TABLE TWO

QUALITY POINTS BY GRADE

Grade		Quality Points	Grade		Quality Points
A	=	4.00	C	=	2.00
A-	=	3.66	C-	=	1.66
B+	=	3.33	D+	=	1.33
B	=	3.00	D	=	1.00
B-	=	2.66	D-	=	.66
C+	=	2.33	F	=	0.00
I	=	Incomplete	IP	=	In Progress
W	=	Withdrawal	W/F	=	Withdrawal / Failing
F	=	Fail			

TABLE THREE

RECOMMENDED GRADING SCALE

(Based on a 100-Point Scale)

Grade		%	Grade		%
A	=	95+	C	=	74-76
A-	=	90-94	C-	=	70-73
B+	=	87-89	D+	=	67-69
B	=	84-86	D	=	64-66
B-	=	80-83	D-	=	60-63
C+	=	77-79	F	=	<59

EVALUATION FORMS

The University provides several evaluation forms faculty members may use in their assessment of a student's work. These forms are available on the Selected Readings page. A faculty member may use the forms as is or modify them meet the specific needs of a course. Faculty members should provide students with copies of theses forms, to help clearly outline grading criteria.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Research into best practices in higher education strongly supports the notion that "time on task" leads to improved learning. That is why the University's teaching and learning model puts such great emphasis on attendance.

On-Campus Attendance Requirements

Most classes meet four hours per week, usually in the evening. Most education classes meet either four hours per week in the evening or 15 hours per weekend on alternating weekends. Attendance is mandatory. Special instructional activities may be scheduled on weekends or at other times convenient to both students and faculty members.

Class attendance requirements are as follows:

1. Students enrolled in courses with one workshop are allowed no absences.

2. Students enrolled in courses with two to four workshops are allowed no absences. However, the campus Director of Academic Affairs may grant an excused absence upon verification with the faculty member that the student is in good standing and is going to meet all course requirements.

3. Students enrolled in courses with five to nine workshops are allowed one absence and may still earn a grade other than "W" or "WF." However, the campus Director of Academic Affairs may grant an additional excused absence upon verification with the faculty member that the student is in good standing and is going to meet all course requirements.

4. Students enrolled in courses with 10 or more workshops are allowed two absences and may still earn a grade other than "W" or "WF." However, the campus Director of Academic Affairs may grant an additional excused absence upon verification with the faculty member that the student is in good standing and is going to meet all course requirements.

5. Students in any nursing courses with clinical hours must still achieve the total number of required clinical hours regardless of any absences in these courses. Students must make up all missed work requested by the faculty member. Any absence will affect students' grades.

6. In addition to workshop attendance during the course, most courses require additional weekly student interaction in learning teams.

Students who do not meet these attendance requirements must officially withdraw from the course and will receive a grade of "W" or "WF." No letter grade will be awarded.

Exceptions

POST BACCALAUREATE TEACHER EDUCATION ATTENDANCE POLICY

Note: An absence is defined as having not been in attendance at one four (4) hour class. This translates to one evening on a weeknight schedule, one morning or one afternoon on a weekend schedule.

1. Students enrolled in one credit courses may not miss any nights of class.

2. Students enrolled in two-credit courses may miss one night of class.

3. Students enrolled in three- and four-credit courses are allowed one (1) classroom absence.

4. There are no absences allowed for student teaching. All work or days missed, including holidays, must be made up at the end of Student Teaching. If a student must be absent for more than five days out of the required weeks of student teaching, he/she will be required to repeat the entire student teaching experience.

Attendance Requirements for Online Campus

Online classes meet over the course of an entire week. Students are recorded as being in attendance in any given week if they post a note to any of the class newsgroups on two separate days within an online week. Learning teams meet throughout the course of the entire class week.

Attendance Requirements for FlexNet®

FlexNet® students are in attendance at the on-campus workshops if they physically attend the on-campus workshop meeting and sign the attendance roster. They are in attendance during online workshop weeks if they post a message to any of the class newsgroups on two separate days within the seven-day period that constitutes the online workshop week for the course. Online posts are date-and time-stamped when received at the servers set up on Mountain Standard Time year-round.

Attendance Requirements for Directed Study

In courses completed through directed study, attendance is defined as weekly contact with the assigned faculty member. This student contact with the faculty member may be either written or verbal communication, including the submission of required course assignments. Attendance is mandatory; students are required to attend (make contact with the faculty member) each scheduled week of the course. The application of the directed study attendance policy may vary by campus.

ON-CAMPUS PARTICIPATION

With the use of group activities, oral presentations, and class interaction, class participation is almost guaranteed. Some on-campus instructors may choose to give class participation points to encourage active involvement of all class members. If a student has an absence, make-up work may be required to compensate for the missed participation. This make-up work should be directly related to the material discussed in the missed class. As with all other grading policies and procedures, any participation stipulations should be discussed at the beginning of class and reiterated in the syllabus.

ONLINE PARTICIPATION

A portion of a student's grade should be based on the quality and quantity of the contributions the student makes to class discussions four out of seven days per week. Students should receive substantive, weekly comments on all assignments, including participation.

Section Four

Assessment of Assignments

INTRODUCTION

University of Phoenix faculty members have the responsibility of assessing student assignments such as written reports, oral presentations, individual/group projects, oral examinations, and case studies. Scoring of assignments is difficult and time-consuming. As an option, however, assignment examination has high validity, measures (or simulates) real-life situations or performance, and is a preferred assessment method by the University.

PERFORMANCE STANDARDS OF ASSIGNMENTS

The foundation of any assessment of assignments is the development of standards as opposed to merely reading a written paper or listening to an oral presentation and grading it "on the fly." Criteria for judging assignments should be developed prior to making the assignment, and they should be developed in concert with course objectives and learning outcomes. The following questions are examples of items faculty members might address in the development of performance standards:

- What level of performance should the student be demonstrating at this point in the program?
- What will be the difference between and "A" paper and a "B" paper?
- Will equal weight be given to content, organization of ideas, writing style, grammar, spelling, etc.?
- How will oral presentations be evaluated? Content only?
- How will group projects be graded? What standards will be applied where one or more persons have not carried their "share" of the work?
- What student mental processes do you want to bring out with the assignment?
- What is the "question" to be answered by the product? What competency will it demonstrate?

EVALUATION OF WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

- Decide in advance what factors are to be measured.
- Define what critical factors will be evaluated in a paper before the assignment is given.
- Present an explanation of the difference among A, B, C and lower papers before the assignment.
- Do not use "gut feelings," though perhaps somewhat accurate, as the basis for the grade.
- Make separate evaluations of each factor to be considered (e.g., spelling separate from organization).
- Provide a working model, if possible, illustrating those critical factors selected for evaluation such as a grading worksheet.

WRITTEN FEEDBACK

Even the most thoughtful, fair grading criteria will often be perceived as arbitrary and/or unfair if written feedback is not provided. A paper returned with only check marks, "good," or a grade will usually be received with either more questions, feelings of frustration, perceptions of little, if any, real "reading" by the faculty member, or all of the above. Feedback needs to include strengths of a paper and problem areas, usually in that order. Unless the paper is a perfect "A," a discussion of problem areas will provide information concerning why an "A" or "100%" was not given.

EVALUATION OF GROUP PROJECTS

Another issue that needs to be addressed prior to giving a group project assignment is "How do you increase the likelihood of an equitable distribution of work?" Student feedback indicates that this is an area of concern. The following technique might be useful. A form should be included as an appendix to the written document that indicates the part each group member was responsible for and the level of contribution. Part of the grade could be based on each group member anonymously grading the other group members. For example, an assignment worth 50 points would be graded by the instructor based on the criteria given, up to 40 points. In this instance the project grade given was 38 points. The group members will determine the additional 10 points. They will hand in a piece of paper with the other group member names on it. By each name, the group member will give points from 1 to 10 based on his/her perceptions of the other members' contributions to the group project. The instructor then averages the points given and adds them individually to the group's 38 points.

Example

	Average Points		Group Grade		Final Grade
Jonathan	9	+	38	=	47
Tamara	10	+	38	=	48
Jeffrey	8	+	38	=	46
Melinda	10	+	38	=	48
Carolyn	7	+	38	=	45

Though this method requires a little more effort, it works well. Students indicate they perceive it as being fair and effective in keeping everyone honest. When the group's written project is returned, comments will still need to be given on the paper. However, project grades should be given to each member individually. This system can also be used for group oral presentations where part of the grade will be based on the group members grading each other.

EVALUATION OF ORAL PRESENTATIONS

Similar to written assignments, it is important to establish grading criteria for oral presentations, both individual and group. Faculty members may choose to have other class members evaluate oral presentations. Benefits of using class members in the evaluation process include increased attention given to presenters and greater awareness of what constitutes a good presentation. When an oral presentation assignment is initially given, the following should be addressed and included in the grading criteria:

TIME CONSTRAINT

While an individual presentation should be at least five minutes, a three to four member group presentation should be approximately 15-20 minutes. As in any presentation in the student's work environment, time constraints should be established and adhered to. One way to teach and encourage this is to tell the individual/group that points will be deducted after going five minutes over the allotted time. This encourages the presenter(s) to focus on the critical content, to avoid rambling, and to practice before the actual presentation.

PARTICIPATION

Each group member should actively participate in the actual presentation on a fairly equitable basis. For example, in a 20-minute presentation by four members, each member's participation should be roughly five minutes. Presentations in which one or two members present for the entire group should be avoided.

CONTENT PARAMETERS

To increase the effectiveness of an oral presentation, it is important the subject matter be clearly defined and usually narrowly focused. Often students without guidelines will choose broad topics and five "shotgun" or "generic" presentations covering a little bit of everything on the topic. Listener feedback indicates these types of presentations are difficult to follow, and lack substance, depth, and enough "meat" to be useful. To avoid this, the instructor needs to work with the individual student or group. Some steps that can be used include the following:

- **Discuss oral presentation in the first workshop.**
  Because of the time constraints of each course, oral presentation assignments should be discussed during the first workshop. Have the student or group define the topic area and major areas of focus and goals for presentation. Though not necessarily graded, this should be written and given to the instructor for feedback during the second workshop.

- **Meet early with group.**
  For group presentations, the instructor should meet with the group during the 2nd and 3rd workshops to discuss the mechanics of the presentation, i.e., use of role-plays, skits, etc., breakdown of subject matter, and responsibilities.

- **Identify major ideas.**
  An effective question to ask students/groups is "What are the one or two major ideas/concepts you want the audience to remember from your presentation?" The entire presentation should then be developed around and in support of these major ideas.

- **Encourage use of visual aids.**
  To ensure the effectiveness of the presentation, the use of visual aids should be strongly encouraged. These can include flip charts, posters, overhead transparencies, short video clips, props, handouts, etc. For example, during a 20-minute presentation, at least two types of visual aids should be used. This can be part of your grading criteria.

AREAS TO OBSERVE

The following questions are suggested areas to observe while evaluating an oral presentation. These questions may also assist class members in providing feedback to the student, as well as assisting in the preparation of their own presentation.

ORAL REPORT – AREAS TO OBSERVE

INTRODUCTION

- How effective was the attention factor?
- Did the speaker relate his/her subject to your needs and interests?
- Was this a good subject choice for the assignment?
- As an audience member, did you feel involved in the presentation?

DEVELOPMENT

- Was there a clear relationship between major and minor (supporting) points of information?
- Was there good variety in the use of supporting materials, e.g., interesting examples, specific instances, illustrations, analogies, etc.?
- Were there areas of the development that failed to hold your interest? Why?
- How effective were the transitions?
- Could you "hear" the parallel structure in the speaker's thought divisions?
- Would you be able to write down the essential information of the report in a clear, logical order from what you heard?

CONCLUSION

- Did the speaker recapitulate the major points of information in the report?
- Did you feel as though the information in the report was brought to a satisfactory closure?
- Did the speaker end with a strong closing statement? Or did the ending tend to ramble?

NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

BODY MOVEMENT: HOW EFFECTIVE WAS THE USE OF

- Facial expression?
- Gestures?
- Posture?
- Movement in general?

VOICE

- Did the speaker use good vocal variety?
- How would you describe the quality of the voice?
- Pleasing? Strident? Rich? Clear? Too Soft?
- Was the speaking rate effective? Monotonous? Too slow? Too fast?

LANGUAGE

- Was language use appropriate to the situation?
- Absence of slang? Grammatical errors? Colloquialisms?
- Too esoteric? Too technical? Imaginative? Interesting? Compelling?

VISUAL AIDS

- What was the overall effect of the speaker's visual aids?
- Neat? Clear? Easy to follow? Too much information? Too little information?
- Handled well? Talked to the aid rather than the audience?

Section Five

Written Assessment/Testing

INTRODUCTION

"*Will there be a final exam?" "Will that be on the final?" "Will the test be essay?"* These familiar questions reveal the feature of instruction that greatly influences how many students will study and what they will learn. The rationale behind most grading systems is that something has been taught to a group of students, and an assessment of their learning of the content has taken place. Based on the outcome of that assessment a label or grade is assigned to each student. The primary method for accomplishing this assessment is the administration of a test or examination. Volumes have been written on testing, and there are more varieties of examinations than most people realize or care to know about.

DEFINITION

Simply defined, a test is a collection of items developed to measure some human educational or psychological attribute. An item on a test includes a set of instructions that (1) presents a situation (the stimulus), (2) records the examinee's response, and (3) provides a means of scoring the response (Worthen & Sanders, 1987). However, too many test questions only ask for isolated factual information.

PURPOSE

The primary purpose of grading is to influence learning. This is the same goal in any organization when a supervisor conducts a performance evaluation. The entire evaluation process should be designed to encourage learning. When an individual is performing below standard, he/she should be provided information on how to meet or exceed the minimum standard.

FACULTY ROLE

The goal of a classroom facilitator is to create an environment where material learned can be applied both at a later time and in other contexts. In other words, the facilitator is responsible for

ensuring the transfer of learning. The transfer of learning is increased if applied examples are discussed in class and written exams include practical application questions. The individual test question is the starting point for tests of better quality. A simple step toward this end is the editing of test questions by a colleague prior to the test administration. Answer questions such as "Are the questions clearly written?" and "What aspect of learning does each item tap—factual information, application, evaluation, etc.?" Tests should be examined in conjunction with the objectives or goals of the course.

ACHIEVEMENT TESTING

Several guidelines for how to test for achievement are available with the following four approaches most commonly used for collecting evaluation information.

- Norm-referenced testing (NRT)
- Criterion-referenced testing (CRT)
- Objectives-referenced testing (ORT)
- Domain-referenced testing (DRT)

Norm-referenced and criterion-referenced tests both yield evaluative results in the sense that both provide standards for judging students' performance. Objectives-referenced and domain-referenced tests yield descriptive data about student performance, with no judgements attached. The following table summarizes the most salient points of Achievement Test approaches (Worthen & Sanders, 1987).

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF BASIC ACHIEVEMENT TEST APPROACHES

CHARACTERISTIC	NORM	CRITERION	OBJECTIVES	DOMAIN
1. Definition/ Interpretation	Test performance as compared against others taking the same test.	Test performance as compared against absolute standards.	Test performance on behaviorally stated objectives.	Test performance as estimated on universe of similar items.
2. Key Emphasis	Maximize individual differences. Survey of generally accepted skills and knowledge. Items logically sampled, then sorted, from generally defined content areas Evaluative results.	Explicit standards used for interpreting test performance. Items taken directly from specific curriculum. All items for unit used—no sampling. Evaluative results.	Use of behaviorally stated objectives. Test items prepared for priority areas of concern. Items judgmentally sampled from all possibilities. Descriptive results.	Explicitly defining content area of test. Creation of item pools. Developing estimates of performance over a large number of similar items randomly sampled from domain. Descriptive results.
3. Development Procedure	1. State content areas. 2. Test items developed to discriminate. 3. Norms developed. 4. Appropriate validity and reliability estimates documented.	1. Curriculum or content analysis. 2. Test items written to match analysis. 3. Standards present. 4. Appropriate validity and real reliability estimates documented.	1. Objectives stated and selected. 2. Test items written to match objectives. 3. Appropriate validity and reliability estimates documented.	1. Content limits set. 2. Item form established. 3. Sample items drawn from domain & written. 4. Appropriate validity and reliability estimates documented.
4. Item Selection	Sample on a logical basis from theoretically denied content. Select items that discriminate.	Use items that replicate behaviors called for in specific instructions.	Use items that are indicators of achievement of objectives of interest.	Develop item forms for specific domains. Draw a representative sample of all items that could be generated using an item form.
5. Necessary input for the Test Development Process	Knowledge of a curriculum content area or a construct on which students can be expected to differ.	Performance objectives that include an acceptable level (standard) of performance.	A statement of objectives in terms of student behavior.	A content domain either explicit in a curriculum or explicitly stated in the form of objectives.

CHARAC-TERISTIC	NORM	CRITERION	OBJECTIVES	DOMAIN
6. Types of Scores Reported	1. A percentile rank. 2. A standard score. 3. A stanine score (a special case of standard score). 4. A grade equivalent score.	1. A statement of whether or not a student has achieved a predetermined % or number correct. 2. A statement of whether or not a group has achieved a prede-termined level of performance. 3. Time taken to perform a given task and an indication of whether or not the task was completed in the allotted time.	1. Number of correct items for a student. 2. Percent correct for a student. 3. The percentage of students in a program who pass each item.	1. The percentage of correct items for a student and an estimate of the percentage of items that a student could get correct in a universe of items.
7. Example of Test Interpretation	"You performed better on this test than approximately 79% of the students in the group against which you are being compared."	"You have answered 80% of the items for this unit correctly so you may move on to the next unit."	"You have gotten 3 out of the 4 items written for this objective."	"You have answered 90% of the items correctly so we estimate that you will answer about 9 out of 10 similar items correctly."
8. Recommend ed Uses	1. Selection. 2. Classification.	1. Progress in specific curriculum.	1. Gathering information about priority area.	1. Instruction or education.
9. Inappropriate Uses and Limitations	1. Not best suited for program or curriculum evaluation. 2. Not for frequent use in instruction.	1. Not for cross-curriculum testing. 2. Not for discrimination (selection, classification).	1. Not for comprehensive coverage of instruction. 2. Not for discrimination (selection, classification).	1. Not for low-cost budgets (can be expensive to set up). 2. Not for discrimination (selection, classification).

Source: Worthen & Sanders, 1987

Section Six

Grade Submission Procedures and Grade Grievance

Grade Submission Policies

In addition to the grading standards outlines in Section One, the Faculty Handbook outlines the following grading procedural requirements for faculty members:

RETURN STUDENT HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS WITH APPROPRIATE FEEDBACK NO LATER THAN ONE WEEK AFTER SUBMISSION

Faculty members must return student assignments in a timely manner with specific, objective feedback that will assist students in learning from the experience.

SUBMIT GRADES AS SOON AS POSSIBLE BUT NO LATER THAN ONE WEEK AFTER THE LAST DAY OF CLASS

Many students receive tuition assistance from employers. These programs often require that grades be submitted to the organization before reimbursement can be made to the student. Timely submission of grades helps ensure good service to students. It also demonstrates that the instructor is committed to providing timely feedback.

GRADE SUBMISSION PROCEDURE

Faculty members should submit student grades using the Faculty Web site, http://ecampus.phoenix.edu. By choosing the Services tab, faculty members can enter grades by Group ID or the student's last name.

POLICY ON GRADE CHANGES

Grades—(Policy and Procedures Manual, 102.6J)

Students' grades may not be changed by the faculty member after grades have been submitted for official posting unless the student has initiated the formal grade dispute process within six (6) weeks from the course end date or unless the faculty member independently determines that the original grade was improperly calculated.

*Exception**: If the faculty member determines that a grade was calculated incorrectly, the grade may be changed and submitted on a grade change form.***

GRADE GRIEVANCE

Students disputing a grade may contact the campus Director of Academic Affairs, who will assist them in contacting the faculty member to discuss the grade dispute. The faculty member's decision is final. Grades disputes based on discrimination are reviewed as non-grade related grievances.

Section Seven

Terminology and Bibliography

A number of terms are associated with grading, assessment, evaluation, etc. The following list is a limited introduction to the terminology. A bibliography has been included to provide you with further information on grading, evaluation and feedback.

GENERAL TERMINOLOGY

EVALUATION

The formal determination of the quality, effectiveness, or value of a program, product, project, process, objective, or curriculum.

CRITERION-REFERENCED EVALUATION

To what extent has a specific objective been attained at the desired level of attainment (the criterion)?

CRITERION-REFERENCED GRADING

Assigning grades based on a student's performance relative to some predetermined standard (criterion). Technically, it is possible for all students to receive an "A" or an "F" or any other grade if they all meet the performance standard.

FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) (also know as "The Buckley Amendment") affords K-12 and Postsecondary students certain rights with respect to their educational records. In general, students have the right to: 1) inspect and review their educational records within 45 days of the date the University receives a request for access; 2) request the amendment of the educational records that the student believes are inaccurate or misleading; 3) consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in educational records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes nonconsensual disclosure; and 4) to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the University to comply with FERPA.

NORMS

Descriptive statistics—average scores, or percentiles of various groups of people. These descriptions give you a framework that you may use to compare your scores with those of various groups of people. They are not standards, but they are often misinterpreted as such.

NORM-REFERENCED EVALUATION

How does this program population compare to some specific norm or reference group on selected variables?

NORM-REFERENCED GRADING

"Grading on the curve." In other words assigning grades based on the student's relative position within the class. Technically, it is not possible for everyone to get an "A" or an "F." Norm-referenced grading is appropriate only when you wish to divide students up into homogeneous ability or achievement groups for placement purposes.

MEASUREMENT

The quantitative description of behavior, things, or events. It is a process for collecting the data on which research generalizations or evaluative judgements will be made.

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE

A statement of what students will be able to do when they have completed instruction. It has three major components: a description of what the student will be able to do, the conditions under which the student will perform the task, and the criteria for evaluation of student performance.

VALIDITY

What does the instrument measure? Will the data be useful? The basic validity questions center around which traits are being measured, what the scores mean, and how useful the data are. Six types of considerations about validity are commonly made (content validity, predictive validity, concurrent validity, convergent validity, discriminant validity, and construct validity).

RELIABILITY

The basic question that you must ask of any measuring device: "Is it consistent?" Does it continue to measure the same characteristics that it purports to measure over a period of time? Test reliability means that the instrument is measuring something other than chance responses, guesses, or some characteristic that comes and goes. The importance of reliability is that it determines the error of measurement.

NOMINAL

Numbers are used to "name" things and are arbitrarily assigned. No "greater than" is implied. (Example: numbers on a baseball uniform.)

ORDINAL

Numbers represent ranks. There is the notion of "greater than" but not "how much greater." (Example: rank in graduating class.)

INTERVAL

Numbers denote how many units greater one score is than another. There is no true zero point, however. (Example: A Fahrenheit thermometer.)

RATIO

Numbers indicate positions on a scale with a true zero point, such as weight. Comparisons such as "twice as much" are permissible. The assessment of learning that requires the assessment of various psychological processes. You will be concerned primarily with the Cognitive Process of Learning. There are six levels of Cognitive learning as specified by Bloom (1956). They are briefly reviewed below:

BASIC KNOWLEDGE

To recall and memorize (assessed by direct questions and multiple choice exams).

COMPREHENSION

To translate from one form to another (assessed by having students restating material in their own words, reordering, or extrapolating ideas, predicting or estimating).

APPLICATION

To apply or use information in a new situation (assessed by placing students in a unique situation and asking them to apply their knowledge to solve the problem or execute the procedure).

ANALYSIS

To examine a concept and break it down into its parts (assessed by placing students in a unique situation of the same type but not identical to one in class and have them analyze the situation and describe the appropriate procedure or solution to the problem).

SYNTHESIS

To put information together in a unique or novel way to solve a problem (assess by placing students in a unique situation and asking them to solve a problem by selecting and using appropriate information).

EVALUATION

To make quantitative or qualitative judgements using standards of appraisal (assessed by presenting the students with a situation that includes both a problem and a solution to the problem and asking them to justify or critique the solution).

Resources

Additional reading selections and resources can be found on the Selected Reading page, located at http://www.apollolibrary.com/srp/acu/grading.asp.