2017 Teaching Assistant Orientation

Using Grading Strategies to Promote Student Learning
Cynthia Campbell

Session Summary
Grading is usually not one of the most popular aspects of teaching, but it is critical to the teaching and learning process. In most courses, grading is the primary mechanism for giving students feedback, so that students can determine how their learning is progressing. Depending on the timing and frequency of grading, students can use this feedback to change their study habits or improve their performance. Grading is also important for the instructor as feedback on their effectiveness. If students are not doing well, that is an indication that you may need to change your teaching approach.

Key Concepts

- It is important to communicate your learning objectives and grading policies to your students. Your students will want to know what they are expected to learn, how you plan to grade their work, and how they can track their progress.

- Grading student work should be consistent and fair. Grading strategies will help you. Rubrics can help you communicate your expectations to students and make grading quicker and more productive.

- Feedback to students should be timely and frequent. Providing formative feedback to your students is very helpful to their success. Feedback should be specific, encouraging, and identify next steps for improvement.

Next Steps

- Review the NIU Grading Systems for Undergraduate and Graduate students in the NIU catalog.

- Think about how you will be providing feedback to your students through the grading process.

Resources


Got Questions?
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View the presentation at facdev.niu.edu/tao17
Grading Done Well

Directions:

1. Take a moment to think about your own grading experiences as a student. Reflect on two very different experiences. The first experience is when grading was done well. The second is when grading was done poorly. Picture those experiences and recall the instructor and the course. Think of the consequences of each grading experience. How did it affect you?

2. Complete the first row of the table below by describing some of the characteristics of your grading experiences.

3. Complete the second row by describing some of the consequences of each grading experience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of Experience</th>
<th>Grading Done Well</th>
<th>Grading Done Poorly</th>
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<tbody>
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| Consequences of Experience   |                   |                     |
|-------------------------------|                   |                     |
Reflection Prompts

To enhance student learning and prior to instruction, ask students to reflect and write responses to the following prompts. This activity is best as a worksheet/template that students complete and keep with their instructional materials to guide their learning strategy and set doable goals for meeting learning objectives and tasks.

Instructional Theme: **Using Grading Strategies to Promote Student Learning**

At the end of this instruction or instructional unit . . .

1. **Assessment Task:** What will I be *asked* to do or create to promote student learning through use of grading strategies? Think about your role as a teaching assistant this fall.

2. **Knowing Goals:** What kind of things do I need to know and understand to promote student learning through use of grading strategies?

3. **Doing Goals:** What will I need to be able to do to promote student learning through use of grading strategies?

4. **Action Plan:** What is my plan for completing these expectations successfully? What steps will I take?