



This is a graded discussion: 4 points possible

due -

Week 3 Discussion (1st post due by Wednesday)

15 64

This discussion runs from Monday to Sunday

Think back to your own classroom assessments when YOU were in school. Do you remember a teacher ever evaluating you through a portfolio? What ways do you remember being assessed? Did they seem fair? Were you better at some assessments?

Because of your own past experiences, will you assess differently?

Please complete your first post on the discussion board by Wednesday. You have the rest of the week (until Sunday) to respond to 2 classmates.



← Reply

○



[https://](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/146916)

[Colleen Laurent \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/146916\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/146916)



Jan 28, 2021

Although my dominant memory of assessments is tests and quizzes, I can recall many teachers who used a wide variety of assessment tools. Like so many students, I experienced test anxiety and stress, which is probably why tests stand out so much in my memory. However, numerous teachers used projects, portfolios, written work, etc. as assessment strategies. Projects were always a favorite of mine, because I enjoyed delving into a topic with depth and breadth. Occasionally an assessment would take the form of a presentation to the class, which was highly anxiety-inducing for me when I was younger. The quickest way for me to forget something was to talk about it in front of a large group! Luckily, teaching has helped me overcome the fear of public speaking :)

I only remember two teachers whose assessments felt unfair. In both cases, the tests and quizzes were not related to information taught in class, and instead relied heavily on textbook facts from homework assignments. For example, my high school math teacher would teach us how to solve an equation, but the test would require us to solve it using the textbook's method, which was never taught by the teacher.

I do think traditional tests and quizzes have their place in classrooms, but my goal is to use a variety of formal and informal assessment techniques with my students.

← [Reply](#)



[Edris David \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/32108\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/32108)

Jan 31, 2021

Colleen,

You have a good memory, or maybe I'm just getting older. I only remember my favorite English teacher, French teacher, and School Principal, who was German and often brought Holocaust survivors to our school to speak with students. I don't remember too many assessments, and it could be because I was a good student who enjoyed reading and writing. Funny, I don't remember any math teachers, and math was my worst subject.

← [Reply](#)



[Colleen Laurent \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/146916\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/146916)

Feb 1, 2021

I also enjoyed reading and writing, and now that I think about it, I don't have many strong memories of assessments in English or Lit classes because they were probably fairly low-pressure for me (they also tended to be more project-based and rarely involved standard exams). Math and science, on the other hand, were my high-stress classes and I have strong memories of those standardized tests. Interesting how our memories sort things out!

I haven't met many people who mention their principal as an influential educator, and I think it's admirable that yours was so involved in bringing community members to the school.

← [Reply](#)



[Edris David \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/32108\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/32108)

Feb 1, 2021

My principal was memorable because he ran the school like a military facility. We had a security team and metal detectors. The security team wore green suit jackets similar to the jackets golfers wear during the Masters and no student could possibly hide in a bathroom because female security teams would arrive to send us back to class. Learning was our only escape!

← [Reply](#)



[https://](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/32108)

[Edris David \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/32108\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/32108)



Jan 31, 2021

My classroom assessments were always presentations and handwritten formal, informal, and summative quizzes or tests. I don't ever remember a portfolio requirement. The exams seemed fair because I was a teenager and didn't know any better. Based on the students I see now, who cannot read or write, I can only assume that my assessments were useful, practical, and accurately assessed my skill levels. I mastered written exams because I mainly wrote my examinations, and no other choices existed. Although I always planned to diversify my teacher created evaluations based on current school curriculums, it is impossible not to provide various assessment tools. Twenty-first-century school districts require diversity expecting teachers to use oral presentations, poster presentations, written reports, portfolios, rubrics, surveys, or concept maps. I must say that my feelings and memories about assessments administered during my earlier school years are incredibly subjective simply because memories of exams do not take priority. Memories about feelings, friends, fun activities, and enjoyable classes were the only things that truly mattered.

← [Reply](#)



[http](http://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/147480)

[Russell Fung \(He/Him/His\) \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/147480\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/147480)



Feb 3, 2021

Hi Edris,

Amen to that last sentence. I rarely remember anything I learned to pass an exam. I do remember the experiences of learning through fun activities. I remember the people and enjoyment, which makes me remember the material.

Russell

Edited by [Russell Fung \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/147480\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/147480) on Feb 3 at 8:15pm

← [Reply](#)



[Kris Lambert \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/438\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/438)

Feb 5, 2021

Hi Edris,

I am a terrible test taker... I always remember this and try to avoid stressful tests for my students.

Funny how we really bring our own experiences to our classroom.

[← Reply](#)



[Lisa Bradbury \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/146949\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/146949)

Feb 6, 2021

Hi Edris,

I wish I could forget the terribly long essay exams I had in high school. I went to a private school and the emphasis was preparing us for college to take long written exams. I would sweat and get so nervous, especially with final exams that took the entire period to complete. I will never forget having to put two folders up so no one could look at my paper, and the extreme quietness in the room. It gives me the shivers just thinking about it. I would have nightmares sometimes the night before, where I would go into the test taking room, look at the test and draw a blank and be laden with fear. It did prepare me for college and the long blue book essay exams but I will never forget my experience with them in high school. I think that is why as a teacher, my emphasis is not solely on tests. I think portfolios are a much better picture of how a student is doing, as the stress factor is not involved.

[← Reply](#)



[Xin He \(She/Her/Hers\) \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/162484\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/162484)

Feb 1, 2021

To be honest, one kind of assessment that almost everyone can't get away with growing up is testing. And the only way to test is to give out paper tests when I was in school, at least I can't remember any other assessments. I don't know whether or not I'm better at some assessments. But I think it is unfair, because the high test scores can only represent your excellence in the area, but not your overall excellence. I was lucky because all the teachers I met didn't judge a person only by their grades. Our founding leader Mao Zedong once said, we should train students who develop morally, intellectually, physically, aesthetically, and laboriously.

in an all-round way. So if I were a teacher,I will assess my students like this.I will regard their grades as one part,which may represents their intelligence.And judge their virtue by their daily behavior,like what they say,what they do,the way they speak to their elders,their peers,their juniors,whether they respect others,whether they are willing to help others,etc.I will also encourage them to exercise and work to strengthen their body.We should always remember that the body comes the first.And the morality is as important as our body.I will make a form when I first meet them,the first line of this form will contain the five evaluation items of morality,intelligence,body,aesthetics and labor.In the chart I will record their daily performance and performance them.In this way I can evaluate them comprehensively.

That's my opinion about it.

[← Reply](#)



Colleen Laurent (<https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/146916>)

Feb 2, 2021

I agree that standard exams only provide a limited view of a student's intelligence, and am so glad to be teaching during a time when diverse assessments are not only encouraged but often required by schools (as Edris notes in her post above). It was encouraging to see traditional tests being slightly revamped when Common Core Standards were implemented, and emphasis was shifted to problem-solving and critical thinking over rote memorization.

[← Reply](#)



Edris David (<https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/32108>)

Feb 2, 2021

I like your reference to Mao Zedong and how this leader has influenced your teaching beliefs and expectations. I believe that the evaluation of the whole person instead of the part is more humane. If schools acknowledged the entire person, we would have more skilled, educated, and happier citizens. Common Core and testing are often off-putting for those with poor testing skills or other interests and talents. It makes me think twice about the Montessori method.

[← Reply](#)



Xin He (She/Her/Hers) (<https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/162484>)

Feb 4, 2021

 [Reply](#)[Russell Fung \(He/Him/His\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/147480) (https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/147480)

Feb 3, 2021

Xin, I love how unapologetic you are with your response. You are very clear and straightforward with your opinions on assessment. I also liked your Mao Zedong reference. That took me aback, and I was fascinated by what you wrote. I agree that intelligence is just one part of judging a person. I know there are people who are good at taking tests, but they don't work hard. There are people who study hard, but don't take care of their bodies. There are people who are just and moral, but do not test well.

Five evaluation items are a good place to start and measure a person's progress. It's not fair that the best test takers get ahead in life.

 [Reply](#)[Christina Westrem](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/162970) (https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/162970)

Feb 2, 2021

I attended a private elementary school and recall that each year there was a week of testing using standardized IQ tests. I remember that we would be told that there was no way for us to study prior to the tests. A letter was always sent home to our parents instructing them to be sure that we got plenty of sleep the entire week, that we had a good breakfast each morning during the testing week, that we would have no homework the entire week (Yeah!), that our parents were to be sure that we arrived at school early each morning during testing week, etc. It felt like there was so much nervous energy on the part of the teachers, parents and the principal that it in turn made us nervous, but we had no clear understanding of why all the nervous energy existed.

I don't recall too much about the specific tests but do remember the teachers being very precise about the time allowed for the test. The one section that I do remember had to do with reading comprehension and choosing a title for a story. You would read a passage and then had to choose the best title for the passage from four possible answers. I remember thinking at the time, that at least two of the titles would be fine and that I viewed it as really the author's preference. I never felt like that type of question was truly objective. Later, in university, I remember in a Psych class learning how controversial some of these tests were due to the underlying social, economic, racial, class, etc. biases that existed in many of the questions.

Also while I was in elementary school, I had an aunt who had a Masters in Psychology and worked at Systems Dynamic, a think tank where they were developing some of the questions for IQ tests. I remember being used often as a guinea pig for the analogy questions, the A is to B as C is to ____ questions. I enjoyed doing the questions because I viewed it as a game rather than a test – the pressure was off!

Besides the IQ tests and our usual tests and quizzes in class, I remember the big project for the year was the Science Fair. We worked hard for about half the year to present our science project close to the end of the year. We could work individually or with one other classmate. It was a large part of our grade for our science class. Within each grade level, there was a 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place, along with a couple of Honorable Mentions. It was always very competitive! We all enjoyed the big night when all the parents would come to see the projects and presentations. While we did have fun, there were times when it was clear that the project was done more by the parents than the students. It always seemed unfair when a 'parent project' won.

While it is understandable that assessments have a role in schools, for administrators, for allocation of resource funding, for regulatory requirements, for student evaluation, etc., there are times that some students get forgotten or overlooked in the process. I think that sometimes we must evaluate the student and their advances or challenges from a very individual perspective. Then we can look to different and creative ways to help students achieve. I realize this is often difficult given the numbers of students and the constraints on our time, commitment and resources as teachers.

← [Reply](#)



[Russell Fung \(He/Him/His\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/147480) (<https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/147480>)

Feb 3, 2021

Christina, I loved your response. Science fair projects were the best times. I remember that we could tell the difference between a student-made project and a parent-made project. I'm glad the judges in our school awarded the student-made ones.

Edited by [Russell Fung](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/147480) (<https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/147480>) on Feb 3 at 8:18pm

← [Reply](#)



[Karl Leitz](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/147612) (<https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/147612>)

Feb 7, 2021

Hi Christina,

I liked your story about the schools letter advising plenty of sleep, and good breakfasts on test week. That should be standard procedure at all schools.

Also, I have to say, I love science, and if I had kids, they would have as much Diet Coke and Mentos as they wanted for their projects.

Karl

← [Reply](#)



[Yoon-Jung Cho \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/151222\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/151222)

Feb 3, 2021



In Korea, most assessments in schools are tests and attendance. My test and quiz scores were better than average, but to be honest, my constant tardiness was always a problem. Back then high school, I was late almost every day. Korea highly appreciates attitude, so I accepted the deduction, and the teachers seemed fair.

I think they were fair enough, but I would like to assess students a bit differently. Because I believe one cannot evaluate others through a uniform evaluation method, I will apply various ways. In addition to written tests (final), I will let them choose oral presentations or essays (midterm). Some students may prefer speaking, but others may not. For example, if I let all students do oral presentations, it may not be enough to assess students who cannot speak in front of others but can write.

I believe teachers are people who maximize students' potential as much as possible. For that, teachers should try to recognize students' abilities by various evaluation methods.

Edited by [Yoon-Jung Cho \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/151222\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/151222) on Feb 8 at 6:40am

← [Reply](#)



[Christina Westrem \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/162970\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/162970)

Feb 6, 2021



Hi Yoon-Jung,

I found it interesting that you brought up the issue of attendance as part of the assessment. In my schooling, we received a 3 part grade: course grade (A to F), an attendance/tardiness grade (E, S, or U), and a participation grade (E, S or U). E was excellent, S was satisfactory, and U was unsatisfactory. The final course grade and one's GPA were calculated based on formal assessments and were not changed based on the attendance/tardiness or the participation grade.

It is interesting as I know attendance, tardiness and participation are things that are highly valued in some cultural groups, while in other groups it is almost considered incorrect to be on time. I did a Google search on the correlation between tardiness and learning and there is a lot of information available. While I personally do think there is a positive correlation, I did not really find studies that pertain to this in cultures that don't necessarily view attendance and being on time thru that cultural lens. Have you read anything about this? Would be interested if anyone has some resources on this topic. Thanks.

← [Reply](#)



[Yoon-Jung Cho \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/151222\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/151222)

Feb 8, 2021

Hi Christina, thank you for asking! I think Korea highly values general attitudes because of traditional Confucian culture and American puritanism(after the Korean War in the 1950s). I am not majoring in History, Culture or Education, so I could not find proper studies on this issue.

But two papers below are studies about the correlation between academic achievement and personality. These are not particularly about culture, but I hope these will help. Thanks. :)

Trautwein, U., Lüdtke, O., Roberts, B. W., Schnyder, I., & Niggli, A. (2009). Different forces, same consequence: conscientiousness and competence beliefs are independent predictors of academic effort and achievement. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 97(6), 1115–1128. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0017048>
(<https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/a0017048>)

Chamorro-Premuzic, T., & Furnham, A. (2003). Personality predicts academic performance: Evidence from two longitudinal university samples. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 37, 319-338. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0092-6566\(02\)00578-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0092-6566(02)00578-0)
([https://doi.org/10.1016/S0092-6566\(02\)00578-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0092-6566(02)00578-0))

← [Reply](#)



[Lisa Bradbury \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/146949\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/146949)

Feb 6, 2021

Hi Yoon-Jung,

I liked your comment that you would let students make choices. I think that when students have choices, they are more apt to want to learn and get involved. Students know what makes them feel the most comfortable and relaxed and will choose the option best for them. This way you can get an accurate picture of how they are doing without any stress involved. You're right, as teachers we try to maximize our students' potential as best we can.

← Reply



Yoon-Jung Cho (<https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/151222>)

Feb 8, 2021

Hi Lisa, I love your comment. I do not have teaching experience yet, but later I want to be an inspiring teacher who encourages my students like you. Also, the idea that gives students choices was from my experience. I have stage-anxiety, so giving an oral presentation was always immense pressure on me. I want my students to find their abilities in a more relaxed environment. Thanks. :)

← Reply



Robin Kremen (She/Her/Hers) (<https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/8339>)

Feb 7, 2021

Dear Yoon-Jung Cho,

I agree with you belief that not all students can be evaluated uniformly, in the same fashion. Student's have different strengths and weaknesses, different learning styles, and these need to be acknowledge in the assessment process for fair and informative outcomes. I agree that teachers should recognize their varying talents, dispositions, and abilities as they tailor assessment methodologies to their class. This is a wonderful idea. Thank you so much for your insight,

Robin

← Reply



Yoon-Jung Cho (<https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/151222>)

Feb 8, 2021

Hi Robin, I agree with your opinion that "Students have different strengths and weaknesses, different learning styles". So I believe teachers need to assess their

students in various ways. I hope we all can remember and apply this idea when we become teachers. Thanks. :)

← [Reply](#)



<https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/160835>

Feb 3, 2021



The only classroom assessments in school were tests and examinations; my teachers did not try to evaluate me through a portfolio. Two assessment methods I could remember were reading passages aloud and writing narrative stories. I was better at the test paper; however, I believe ethnographic output are more of an interest to evaluate learners' progress. Therefore, I would assess learners' ability through continuous assessment instead of regular tests and examinations.

Edited by [WING SHA CHAN \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/160835\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/160835) on Feb 3 at 4:30pm

← [Reply](#)



<https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/151222>

Feb 7, 2021



Hi Isa, my teachers usually used traditional assessment methods such as written-tests, and they did not use a portfolio either. So I would like to try another assessment method like you. Can you give me a more detailed idea of continuous assessment? It sounds interesting, and I want to know more about the continuous assessment. Thank you!

← [Reply](#)



<https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/135934>

Feb 3, 2021



In my fine art classes we had portfolio assessments. I think the theory behind art portfolio assessments and academic portfolio assessments is probably similar. In art we gather our best work together and present it as a group. I can show how we developed over the course of the semester as well as being a demonstration of our best ability. It also sets up a system of long term assessment as I can go back to my earlier portfolios to see how I have improved or developed over longer periods of time.

I recall interview assessments in language classes, short presentations for history, a lab journal that was turned in weekly for science classes and of course tests and quizzes through out every class. I was always the worst at anything that involved speaking and test really well so I liked tests a lot. But I'm pretty sure I am part of very small minority in that and the best way to assess a class fairly is to have several different types of assessments so students like me who love taking tests and students that have trouble when faced with the test taking environment can both show our skills and succeed.

← [Reply](#)



Christina Westrem (<https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/162970>)

Feb 3, 2021

Hi Caitlyn,

I didn't ever remember being assessed with a portfolio myself but immediately thought of this related to art or graphic design students. Now having seen and read a little more about portfolios as an assessment tool in other academic realms, I really like the idea. As you said from the student perspective, that it showed "how we developed over the course of the semester as well as being a demonstration of our ability". Sometimes, we forget where we started and how much we have learned, so it can be very powerful for self reflection and evaluation, in addition to a strong motivation to continue.

← [Reply](#)



Robin Kremen (She/Her/Hers) (<https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/8339>)

Feb 7, 2021

Dear Caitlin,

I love the practice of visual art portfolios. The process of gathering the work for the portfolio and formatting it is very instructive. One gets to build upon all that one has learned by creating the actual portfolio, communicating new ideas through how the work is presented and labeled. Visual portfolios are the frosting on the cake. They emphasize process, skills, and creativity rather than a finite result. They are a more liberal practice of

assessment, offering an opportunity to keep learning while preparing the vehicle which is to be assessed.

Varied types of assessments are so important for the reasons you underscored. A diversity of assessment methods allows students with different strengths to find appropriate opportunities for accurate assessment.

Thank you for your observations.

Robin

← Reply



Pablo Gonzalez (<https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/21380>)

Feb 7, 2021

Hi Caitlin. I am also one of those students who really enjoyed taking tests. I've always had a very good memory and was able to retain a lot of information so I was very successful in taking tests throughout both my high school and college career. That said, I was never a particularly "good student" and I saw how some of the good students didn't do well on tests and suffered because of it. I agree with you that the only way to fairly assess students is through a variety of different types of assessments.

← Reply



Robin Kremen (She/Her/Hers) (<https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/8339>)

Feb 3, 2021

Do you remember a teacher ever evaluating you through a portfolio?

The only time I was evaluated by portfolio in school was in my visual art classes in both high school and college. This is very standard for visual education. A visual art student is accepted to university programs based on his/her/their portfolio. It is the primary determining factor, the proof in the pudding.

What ways do you remember being assessed?

I remember my report cards from grade school. They were mailed to our parents and we trembled as they reviewed them. I remember the comments my professor wrote on my paper at Berkeley. I cherished their feedback on my writing and ideas and tried to make improvements based on their insights.

Did they seem fair?

My assessments throughout my education were primarily fair. An exception was a high school social studies teacher who was overly critical of my work. His personal pathology was acted out upon his students. I was an insecure adolescent and he enjoyed using his position of authority to discourage me. It was unfortunate.

Because of your own past experiences, will you assess differently?

I will never use assessment to intimidate my students as my high school social studies teacher did. I always want to encourage my students and lift them up. This is a primary motivation for me. But I do feel that assessments should enlighten and direct students to correct mistakes and push harder. Assessment should be used to stimulate understanding and growth, not as punishments.

← [Reply](#)



Christina Westrem (<https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/162970>)

Feb 6, 2021

Hi Robin,

I really like your statement "I will never use assessment to intimidate students as my high school social studies teacher did", as this seems to be a common thread. Seems like everyone has had that teacher at one time or another. Furthermore, the idea that assessments "should enlighten and direct" is near to my heart. In my work in Mexico which is really new and developing, part of the vision is to work more closely with students who are struggling in the traditional system and/or with standard assessments. Would love to hear any ideas that you may have towards this end. I'm sure your work with the Library Literacy program has given you some great ideas. Also, would like to hear more about your experiences.

← [Reply](#)



Yoon-Jung Cho (<https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/151222>)

Feb 7, 2021

Hi Robin, I agree with your idea about assessment. I want to use assessment for students' growth, not for punishment like you. I believe you will be an inspiring teacher, not like your high-school social studies teacher. Thank you for sharing your thought!

[← Reply](#)



<https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/150889>

Feb 3, 2021



I love this topic! My master's thesis's focus was on writing assessment, and I came to that topic out of my personal experience and thus frustration with the educational assessments I had experienced. My research showed that certain types of writing assessments affect student self-efficacy. My thesis argued for programmatic portfolio assessment, and although I was targeting writing, my ideas apply to most if not all subjects, not just writing. Our education system has done a terrible job explaining how and why assessments are used to further students' learning. Instead, student understanding of assessments is typical and judgmental. I use a labor-based grading contract for course assessment along with a portfolio of revised work. Besides, I have found that as much transparency in the assessment process and purpose helps students participate in the process.

[← Reply](#)



<https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/438>

Feb 5, 2021



Hi Valerie!

Wow! Super interesting!

With all of that background. How will your teaching/ assessments change? Do you have any samples to share with us?

[← Reply](#)



<https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/162970>

Feb 6, 2021



Hi Valerie,

Think the topic for you thesis is amazing. I feel the passion you have for this subject in your statements, "Our education system has done a terrible job explaining how and why assessments are used to further students' learning. Instead, student understanding of assessments is typical and judgmental." I looked up labor-based grading contract to get a clearer understanding of what that might look like. How did you present this to students,

and did you find it to help them stay motivated in keeping their part of the contract?
Thanks.

← [Reply](#)



[Valerie Smith \(She/Her/Hers\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/150889) (<https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/150889>),

Feb 7, 2021



I've presented the grading contract numerous ways! Because students can drop my class if they choose I have a statement in my syllabus that states if you remain enrolled in the class you are agreeing to the contract. This semester I had students read the contract-which is a medley of so many others' contracts- and submit a written plan for the grade they were shooting for. I have had only good experiences with the grading contract it gives student a choice without judgement- they can only shoot for an A, B, or C.

Here is the contract I use which has been adapted from a few different folx's.

Rationale

This course is assessed using a grading contract.

What we know about grades. Grades ...

- Are not used in most learning situations outside of school
- Are unreliable predictors of success and subjective
- Decrease intrinsic motivation for learning
- Lead students to think about the grade or pleasing the teacher
- Reduce the quality of a student's thinking
- Create a preference for the easiest task
- Create fear of failure and resulting unwillingness to take risks
- Undermine feedback: "When comments and grades coexist, the comments are written to justify the grade" (Kohn, "The Case against Grades").

For these reasons, I use contract grading in this class and, more specifically, a labor-based contract. Your grade depends on the amount of work you complete with due date perimeters. I will not "grade" your writing drafts but provide feedback to help move you forward in your writing.

Assessment

How will I be graded, and how can I check on my grade?

To earn an A:

- revise the first three projects until you are passing in every rubric dimension
- submit any extra work detailed on major project prompts or otherwise
- earn a passing grade on the final reflection
- complete *all* low-stakes informal writing assignments, including proposals, research write-ups, and discussion boards
- participate in all assigned peer reviews

To earn a B:

- revise the first three projects until you are passing in every rubric dimension
- earn a passing grade on the final reflection
- complete *almost* all of the low-stakes informal writing assignments, including proposals and research write-ups — you can miss **one** of these assignments
- participate in all assigned peer reviews— you can miss **one** round of commenting on others' work

To earn a C:

- revise two of the three major papers until you are passing in every rubric dimension
- earn a passing grade on the final reflection
- complete most of the low-stakes informal writing assignments, including proposals and research write-ups — you can miss **two** of these assignments
- participate in all of the assigned peer reviews — you can miss **one** round of commenting on others' work

← [Reply](#)



Caitlin Flynn (<https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/135934>)

Feb 7, 2021



That's a really cool thesis topic! I also like your point about making the assessment process and it's purpose as transparent as possible to students can participate in it better.

← [Reply](#)



Valerie Smith (She/Her/Hers) (<https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/150889>)

Feb 7, 2021



Here is a Rubric I use for most major projects.

The idea is that if it doesn't quite meet the objective then they can revise to reach the objective multiple times. I give direct feedback on how ways they can reach the objectives. I will revise this basics structure for most writing assignments so students always know they reach the objective and how to do that.

Rhetorical Situation

Passing — shows a clear awareness of audience, genre, purpose, and message

Almost there — shows some awareness of audience, purpose, and/or message, but might lose focus at moments

Revise for credit — shows little or no awareness of audience, purpose, and/or message

Analysis

Passing — the majority of the paper reflects the author's writing and thinking, rather than relying heavily on quotes, paraphrase, and summary; the deeper thinking is apparent throughout the paper

Almost there — the paper has some of the writer's writing and thinking, but it is not the majority, and the author relies too heavily on quotes, paraphrase, and summary; there are moments where deeper thinking is on display, but it is not consistent throughout the paper

Revise for credit — the paper is almost entirely quotes, paraphrase, or summary; the reader barely gets a sense of the author's writing and thinking; little or no analysis present

Organization

Passing — the paper is unified around a single thesis/focus as stated in the introduction; all body paragraphs are unified around a controlling idea, coherent, and well-developed with examples and analysis; all paragraphs tie back to the thesis/focus; the conclusion drives home the "so what?" of the paper

Almost there — the paper loses focus; at least one body paragraph lacks focus or development; and/or the reader is left dangling at the end

Revise for credit — the paper lacks an introduction or conclusion; more than one body paragraph lacks focus or development

Flow & Reading Experience

Passing — The paper overall flows logically and smoothly, with transitions to guide the reader; the reader can easily follow the writer's train of thought

Almost there — The paper mostly flows logically, though some transitions might be awkward or not employed correctly; the reader can mostly follow the writer’s train of thought

Revise for credit — The paper is choppy or lacking in transitions; there might be unclear sentences or fuzzy ideas; the reader gets lost more than once while reading the paper

Evidence & Examples

Passing — Evidence and examples are relevant and appropriate; the context and attribution of all evidence and examples are clear; the significance of all evidence and examples are stated and well-developed; writer shows an awareness of whether to quote, paraphrase, or summarize evidence and examples

Almost there — Most evidence and examples seem relevant and appropriate; the context or attribution of evidence or examples might be missing at one or two moments; the significance of at least one piece of evidence and or one example is not explained; some confusion about when to quote, paraphrase, or summarize

Revise for credit — Evidence and examples are not related to the point at hand; evidence or examples are “plopped” into the paper without introduction or discussion; little to no awareness about whether to quote, paraphrase, or summarize

Ethical Attributions & Respecting Your Audience

Passing — All evidence and examples are clearly attributed; author uses in-text citations for all quotes and paraphrases, and states when they are summarizing someone else’s work; the Works Cited follows MLA practices and the reader can easily track down the source

Almost there — One or two instances of evidence and examples not being clearly attributed, or lack of in-text citations, or not stating when they are summarizing someone else’s work; the Works Cited mostly follows MLA practices with one mis-step

Revise for credit — More than a couple instances of evidence and examples not being clearly attributed or a lack of in-text citations, or not stating when they are summarizing someone else’s work; the Works Cited doesn’t follow MLA practices or help readers find/assess the source

Polish

Passing — Has few distinct mechanical/grammar errors; errors are minor and do not seriously impede the reader’s ability to understand the paper

Almost there — Mechanical or grammar errors disrupt the reader’s ability to understand the paper at moments

Revise for credit— Many mechanical and grammar errors prevent the reader's ability to understand while reading multiple times; shows little evidence of proofreading

*adapted from Bethany Halstrom

← [Reply](#)



[Christina Westrem \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/162970\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/162970)

Feb 7, 2021

Dear Valerie,

Thank you for sharing some of your wealth of knowledge on this subject. It really sheds a whole other dimension on assessments. I really like for the students how clearly the assessment process is presented, their level of involvement in the contract process and the submission of their individual written plan. I'm sure their levels of commitment and motivation clearly reflect in the positive results that you are experiencing with this. Thanks again for sharing this with all of us!

← [Reply](#)



[Robin Kremen \(She/Her/Hers\) \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/8339\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/8339)

Feb 7, 2021

Dear Valerie,

I love your idea of allowing students to revise their work for assessment, It transforms the assessment process into a constructive learning opportunity which is genius. Portfolio assessment is such a rich and varied practise which offer a better opportunity for the student ot display what they are capable of. Your thesis work sounds fantastic! Thank you so much for sharing it with us.

Robin

← [Reply](#)



[Melinda Cavalletto \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/150435\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/150435)

Feb 3, 2021

I have had one amazing style of assessment and one horrifying assessment. Let us start with the positive. In grad school, I studied historic preservation and restoration of architecture

where we were critiqued on our restoration of historic buildings in Savannah, GA. The majority of my studies were hands-on projects or research. After a months-long structure rehab project, our professors would assess the building and then sit down and discuss alterations, historical sensitivity, floor plans, and more. These walkthroughs usually ended with a drink at the nearest pub :-) I appreciated the professor's frank criticism whether good or bad. We were able to form a relationship outside of a traditional school setting that has classroom with four walls and a hallway.

Now to the negative assessment. In order to finish my degree, I was required to complete a laboratory test involving chemical reactions. Science is not my strong point but I did my best and thought I would receive a decent grade. Rather than assessing my theory and research work as I thought would happen, I was graded on the outcome of my project resulting in a low grade. I do not think this way of grading is fair. I believe all aspects of a project should be considered when grading.

When I begin teaching in a classroom environment I will be sure to look at the whole picture and not simply the final outcome when grading students.

← [Reply](#)



WING SHA CHAN (<https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/160835>)

Feb 5, 2021

Hi Melinda

I am sorry for the negative assessment. Were the assessment rubrics clearly stated? Sometimes, students could have been misdirected to the wrong foci if the rubrics were not clear.

Isa

← [Reply](#)



Valerie Smith (She/Her/Hers) (<https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/150889>)

Feb 7, 2021

This- exactly! I couldn't agree with you more that judgment or assessment based solely on outcome wrecks havoc on the value of the learning! I have had colleagues (in the nursing faculty department) argue that the outcomes in their disciplines are the only thing that matter and while I see their point, I think assessing in ways that encourage and build students knowledge are more helpful in the long term. There is a place for outcome based

assessment but is cannot forget completely the path taken and the learning involved in getting there.

← [Reply](#)



[Robin Kremen \(She/Her/Hers\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/8339) (<https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/8339>)

Feb 7, 2021

Dear Melinda,

I completely understand your dismay at having a very narrow opportunity for assessment in the chemical reaction laboratory test. It was lazy of your instructors to use this limited tool for your assessment, rather than employing a number of smaller and more diverse tests to illuminate the full breadth of your restoration skills and knowledge. It was indifferent on the faculty's part and punitive for the students. I hope that you gave them feedback in your course review. You certainly deserved better.

Robin

← [Reply](#)



[Russell Fung \(He/Him/His\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/147480) (<https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/147480>)

Feb 3, 2021

I remember in fifth grade, my teacher revealed to the class that she has portfolios of all her students' writing samples from grades K-4. She randomly chose my portfolio and read my samples to the class. I was pleasantly and awkwardly surprised. It was like a time capsule that felt like remnants of early childhood. I was only ten years old, so those samples felt like they were fossils.

Other than that, I've never had formative assessments that I could remember. We had summarized assessments, which were quizzes, tests, report cards, etc. I did well on them, and never had any problems.

I did go to Speech class. The teachers pointed out that my R's sound like W's. So that needed to be corrected. I thought I resolved that problem, but I got assessed again in high school. The history teacher pointed out that my R's sound like W's. I was nervous and couldn't pronounce the word "brother." It sounded like, "bwahther." That was embarrassing for me, because I never knew I had a Chinese accent. I didn't even speak Chinese!

Because of my own past experiences, I feel that formative assessments weren't necessary as much as summarized assessments for me. Perhaps I never needed them because I did well in

school. I did the homework. I studied. I passed my tests.

Wait. Correction: I did homework with my friends after school. I studied with my friends over the phone. We helped each other pass tests. It was not a solo effort.

Because of this TESOL class, I'm now more aware that maybe the ESL kids in my school had a completely different experience from me. I was never in the loop about that world. Perhaps they had formative assessments that I didn't know about. That's something I would totally do with my students because not everyone progresses at the same pace.

← [Reply](#)



[Christina Westrem \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/162970\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/162970)

Feb 6, 2021

Hi Russell,

Really enjoy your post as you seem to have a refreshing sense of self awareness that expands outward to others..."maybe the ESL kids in my school had a completely different experience from me". Do you know, were the ESL kids at your school taught with the English proficient students or were they taught separately or have additional guidance? You may not know, but I imagine that each of the possible scenarios would also add to their completely different experiences.

← [Reply](#)



[Karl Leitz \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/147612\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/147612)

Feb 7, 2021

Hi Russell,

I'm impressed that your 5th grade teacher had portfolios of her students' works from kindergarten. It makes sense, but that's a different level of commitment.

Karl

← [Reply](#)



[Karl Leitz \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/147612\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/147612)

Feb 3, 2021

The only time I was evaluated through portfolio was when I was studying art and photography in college. All art majors had a sophomore and a senior portfolio review, when the entire art faculty would review your body of work. I remember the sophomore portfolio review was particularly stressful. The rumor was that if they decided that you had no artistic talent, they would make you change your major. This never actually happened. They would just review and give guidance and suggestions.

I mostly remember being assessed by written tests, however there were some exceptions. One of my English classes graded us on a daily journal we kept. In my German language class my final exam was an oral exam, which I did much better than I thought I would.

When assessing my students I want to make sure they are not being penalized for making mistakes, as making mistakes is an important part of language learning. Assessing should be about finding where mistakes are being made so they can be corrected.

← [Reply](#)



[Kris Lambert \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/438\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/438)

Feb 5, 2021

Hi Karl,

I love the daily journal idea!! Were you given a topic each day to write about?

← [Reply](#)



[Karl Leitz \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/147612\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/147612)

Feb 7, 2021

Hi Kris,

We had a fair amount of autonomy for our daily journal entries. But yes, the teacher would give us some thoughts and inspiration to get us started.

Karl

← [Reply](#)



[WING SHA CHAN \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/160835\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/160835)

Feb 5, 2021

Dear Karl

I have the same thought too. Making mistakes is natural, and students should understand how to avoid the same mistakes. However, how can teachers motivate students to learn from the mistakes? Since some of my students make the same mistakes over and over again, I wonder if any strategies can be suggested for them.

Best regards

Isa

← Reply



Christina Westrem (<https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/162970>)

Feb 6, 2021

Hi Karl,

I find the issue of making mistakes and how to correct them interesting. Some students respond well to gentle corrections, while others may shut down to the first sign of correction. It seems that one has to be very attuned to the individual styles of each student.

Saw an interesting article that made me remember your post from last week. It is about a new program, Lingopie, that taps into the use of foreign language shows and movies on Netflix to learn a second (or third..) language. It is a fairly new program and only is available so far in Spanish and French, but suggests that other languages may be added soon. Forgive the title of the article! No judgement here - new language learning by any means is hard work. Here's the link. [Hey, Lazybones! Now You Can Learn a New Language by Binge-Watching TV | Frommer's](https://www.frommers.com/blogs/arthur-frommer-online/blog_posts/hey-lazybones-now-you-can-learn-a-new-language-by-binge-watching-tv#.YBxOr_cB1Mw.mailto) (https://www.frommers.com/blogs/arthur-frommer-online/blog_posts/hey-lazybones-now-you-can-learn-a-new-language-by-binge-watching-tv#.YBxOr_cB1Mw.mailto). Hope you find it interesting.

← Reply



Karl Leitz (<https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/147612>)

Feb 7, 2021

Hi Christina,

Thank you for the recommendation. I checked out the Lingopie site, and it looks promising. Yes, it looks like only Spanish and French programs are supported. But I'll check back to see if Japanese is added.

Karl

← Reply



Pablo Gonzalez (<https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/21380>)

Feb 7, 2021

Hi Karl. It seems like being evaluated by portfolio would be the most appropriate assessment for visual art. It also sounds like It would be a lot of pressure for a student. As you mentioned, the thought of being deemed untalented is extremely stressful as well as having this portfolio determine the rest of your academic and professional career.

← Reply



Pablo Gonzalez (<https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/21380>)

Feb 3, 2021

I had one teacher who evaluated students through a portfolio. The class was a unique experience. The school operated on a six 50-minute period system but this teacher taught English and History in a block period so we were there for two 50-minute periods. The teacher had a very interdisciplinary approach to teaching and both subjects were interrelated so there was no distinction between an English or History assignment. The class was conducted in “learning units” and each unit was graded through a portfolio. We would submit an assignment, the teacher would attach a rubric to the assignment, would check off whether it met or did not meet the rubric criteria, and accept it into the portfolio or return it to the student. The portfolio would be accepted at the end of the learning unit and it wouldn’t be graded and returned until halfway through the next unit. I really struggled with this type of assessment. I did not think it was fair that I did not know how well I did on an assignment until a month later. I was a student who did very well on standardized test so this was outside of my comfort zone. I did not enjoy the concept of not knowing how I was doing in a class or having the feedback on what I needed to improve on for the next assignment.

I did see how this type of assessment was preferred by a lot of my classmates. For many of them who did not do well in a testing environment, this was great. There wasn’t much anxiety for those who did not like or did well on tests. This was also a good assessment tool for those students who did not have the best time management skills because it spread out the assignments of the learning units in digestible chunks and made it more manageable. I see how providing students with assessment options that reflect different learning modalities and multiple intelligences is the best way for a student to demonstrate what they have learned in a way that is more equitable.

← [Reply](#)



[Caitlin Flynn \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/135934\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/135934)

Feb 7, 2021

Hi Pablo,

I you make a good point about the need for more immediate feedback even when using a portfolio assessment. It's hard not to know where to focus on without getting feedback.

← [Reply](#)



[Valerie Smith \(She/Her/Hers\) \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/150889\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/150889)

Feb 7, 2021

The reason I like portfolio assessment is it reflects more of a real-life experience. I worked in the business for 15 years before teaching, and not once was a draft of one my reported not revised and read by many others before I submitted it. If I had submitted a report and it was not up to "standard," I would not have been fired from my job on the spot. I would have been allowed to fix and revise my report- portfolios can be used in the same vein. Also, students are able to see a body of work in ways in which they don't, when projects are submitted and never revisited.

← [Reply](#)



[Lisa Bradbury \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/146949\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/146949)

Feb 3, 2021

When I was a student, I was never evaluated through a portfolio. All assessments were through tests and quizzes alone. We also had essays and research papers which were my favorite. I think all the assessments were fair but personally, I think that research papers were my favorite because I enjoyed writing immensely. I excelled in my writing assignments because there was no stress involved and I had time to put all my thoughts together into one concise paper. As a teacher, I prefer portfolios and I have used them in the past with my students. It gives a more well rounded picture of how the student is performing.

← [Reply](#)



[Melinda Cavalletto \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/150435\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/150435)

Feb 7, 2021

Hi Lisa,

I believe this is the third class we have had together. Each week I enjoy reading your posts and comments on the discussion board. I can see why you excelled in your essays and research papers...it shows! Sometimes, I look at an essay prompt and stare for a while without a creative idea of even beginning the paper. How do you tap into your thoughts to begin writing?

[← Reply](#)[Kris Lambert \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/438\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/438)

Feb 5, 2021

When I was teaching elementary school, our school made us all keep portfolios on each child. Then, when the school year was over we would pass the portfolio to the next teacher. As you can imagine this was great to have ahead of time as the teacher. I could get a clear picture of where each child was. To me, this is so much better than a grade. It gives the large picture. Also, when I would meet with students and parents I would pull out the portfolio and spread it on the table. Again, super clear evidence of both strengths and weaknesses. Do you think you would use portfolios in this way?

<https://www.showbie.com/4-smart-ways-to-use-portfolio/> [\(https://www.showbie.com/4-smart-ways-to-use-portfolio/\)](https://www.showbie.com/4-smart-ways-to-use-portfolio/) Here is an article on 4 ways to use portfolios

[← Reply](#)[Russell Fung \(He/Him/His\) \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/147480\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/147480)

Feb 5, 2021

Passing on the portfolio to each teacher was something that was a surprise to me. That makes so much sense! By the end of sixth grade, students were handed back their entire portfolio to keep. It's really quite amazing and low-key cringe when reading past writings. I would definitely use portfolios this way. I didn't know about showbie.com. That's totally new to me and it looks like something I could use if I taught elementary school.

[← Reply](#)[Christina Westrem \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/162970\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/162970)

Feb 6, 2021

I really like this idea. As you stated from the teacher's perspective, you had "a clear picture of where each child was". But more than that I like the idea of sharing the portfolio from time to time with students and parents. Sometimes they forget how far they have come, and it could be used to remind them periodically and hopefully serve as a motivator. It reminds me of some of my patients who have shared a photo album (yes, they still do exist). Often, when they finish sharing they will say something like, "I've had a good life", "I've done a lot of nice things", "I'm lucky", etc. Almost universally, it is a feel good reflection. Hopefully, the portfolio would be that for the students and parents.

[← Reply](#)[Lisa Bradbury \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/146949\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/146949)

Feb 6, 2021

I used the kindergarten portfolios for parent conferences, and also to pass on to their first grade teacher so they could see the student's strengths and weaknesses. It was a tremendous asset for the first grade teacher. It also contained checklists to show what the students had mastered and what they still needed help with by the end of the year. That way, the first grade teacher could pick up where I had left off with each student. Incredibly helpful.

[← Reply](#)[Melinda Cavalletto \(https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/150435\)](https://my.uclaextension.edu/courses/32520/users/150435)

Feb 7, 2021

This is an absolutely brilliant idea! The concept seems so logical yet this is the first time I have heard of it. I have two different views on the subject. My first thought is that this would be a smooth transition for students and teachers by filling in gaps. On the other hand, it would be nice for a student to start off on a clean slate with the new teacher. I was not the best-behaved student in grammar school so from a student's point of view it could be better for the teacher to not have a bias. However, I would encourage Showbie in schools.

[← Reply](#)