

# Teaching Learning Center

## MAKING ASSIGNMENTS WORTH GRADING

Barbara Walvoord and Virginia Anderson state in their book, "Effective Grading" that, the way to save time, make every moment count, and integrate grading, learning, and motivation is to plan your grading from the first moment you begin planning the course. You should consider not only how you will shape goals but how your students will. To do otherwise—to regard grading as an afterthought—is to create wasted time, dead-end efforts, and post-hoc rationalizations as students question their grades.

- ◆ **Begin by considering what you want your students to learn.** Effective grading practices begin when the teacher says to themselves, by the end of the course, I want my students to be able to.... Concrete verbs such as define, argue, solve, and create are more helpful than vague verbs such as know or understand or passive verbs such as be exposed to.
- ◆ **Select tests and assignments that both teach and test the learning you value most.** Choose assignments that are likely to elicit from your students the kind of learning you want to measure. Pay attention to what you name your assignments and test and what those names mean to your students. Calling a paper a "literary review" as opposed to a "term paper" will get students to listen carefully to all parts of the assignment and look past all preconceived notions related to the "term paper."
- ◆ **Construct a course outline that shows the nature and sequence of major tests and assignments.** This skeleton helps you see whether your assignments fit your course goals and whether they are manageable in terms of workload. The skeleton helps you put together an "assignment-centered course." Research suggests that the assignment-centered course enhances students' higher order reasoning and critical thinking more effectively than the courses centered around text, lecture, and coverage (Kurfiss, 1988). This model answers the question "what should my students learn to do?"
- ◆ **Check that the tests and assignments fit your learning goals and are feasible in terms of workload. Ask yourself two questions:**
  1. *Fit:* Do my tests and assignments fit the kind of learning I most want?
  2. *Feasibility:* Is the workload I am planning for myself and my students reasonable, strategically placed, and sustainable?
- ◆ **Collaborate with your students to set and achieve goals.** Through discussion, try to reach agreement and clear understanding about the goals of the course and the reasons for your major assignments and tests. Then ask students to write down their personal goals for learning in the course and some strategies by which they think they can accomplish those goals.
- ◆ **Give students explicit directions for their assignments.** Students will complete the assignment they think you made, not the assignment you actually made. With a careful and thorough assignment sheet, you can be more confident that an assignment is going to measure the knowledge and skills you want it to.

Above content taken from "Effective Grading: A tool for Learning and Assessment," Barbara Walvoord and Virginia Anderson



### THE TLC IS HERE TO HELP

Don't forget, we in the TLC are here and eager to help you tackle whatever challenge you face with your online or face-to-face class. Whether you would like to add some new media to an existing course or plan out a brand new one, we're here to lend a hand. The possibilities are endless...

- ◆ Update your syllabus to be more conducive to online use.
- ◆ Create tutorials for frequently asked questions.
- ◆ Divide your discussion board into groups.
- ◆ Create a plan for updating your eCampus site.
- ◆ Learn to use Twitter, Facebook, blogs, and more.
- ◆ Learn how to use images with eCampus.
- ◆ Experience and use Second Life in your course.



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## SUDOKU

Fill in the missing numbers so every row, column and quadrant contains the number 1 through 9.

*“Choose assignments that are likely to elicit from your students the kind of learning you want to measure.”*

*-Effective Grading: A tool for Learning and Assessment*

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### GREAT FREE DOWNLOADS:

- ◆ **PhotoFiltre** - Great photo editing program. [photofiltre.free.fr/download\\_en.htm](http://photofiltre.free.fr/download_en.htm)
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- ◆ **Abstract Fonts** - Great free Font site. Allows you to see a preview of your text in the font of your choice. [www.abstractfonts.com/](http://www.abstractfonts.com/)

## CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT:

Mwauna Davis and Derrick Sledge presented a workshop in the TLC on classroom management. Several methods were discussed to help teachers establish a strong foundation of mutual respect and control in the classroom.

**Establish rapport with your students.** Find something you may have in common with the student(s), or something unique about them. Work on building a relationship with the class and among the students in the class.

**Respect is crucial.** Explain to your students your personal philosophy concerning respect. Treat them as you would like to be treated, be consistent, address problems as they arise and use nonverbal communication when ever possible.

**Remember to use positive reinforcement.** Be consistent, act promptly, be age-appropriate, identify a specific behavior, and reinforce any improvement toward the desired behavior.

Derrick asked the group to consider what, as educators, we are responsible for in terms of our interactions with our students. He continued on to have the group define “rigor” and how it relates to classroom management. Lastly, the group discussed “recourse” in terms of behavioral interventions.

**Link to the Student Code of Conduct:** <https://www1.dcccd.edu/cat0910/ss/code.cfm?loc=3>