



The Teacher's Playbook: Practical Pedagogy for Classical Educators with Jerilyn Olson

Lecture 10: Instruction: Assessing

Outline:

Assessment

- Assessments are a tools in the reflection process so we can reflect back with the student to we can move forward.
- Formative assessment includes shorter written quizzes and tests that form the way we teach and for the students.
- Summative Assessment include semester or final exams which are about the sum of what a student has learned.
- It can be said that all assessments are really formative in nature.
- Formative and summative assessments should be separate from the day-to-day assessments in class which should be checking for understanding.
- Teacher needs to be continually responsive so that they can step in and clarify or further explain before moving ahead.
- Purpose of Assessments
 - Evaluation tool
 - Communication: reinforcing what we think is the most important think in the lesson, unit or course of study
 - Pedagogical tool: Assessments engage the act of learning through preparation of the assessment and the processing of information more deeply. Learning is also occurring while they are taking the assessment.
- Study Guides should not be just a rereading of notes but instead a series of mini tests to help students better retain the information.
- Assessments should reflect the nature of the discipline.

Hierarchy of Assessment

- On the low end of the hierarchy there is the basic checking of facts.
 - More information is retained by giving short checks across a range of time.
- In the middle of the hierarchy, we find weekly quizzes that should demand questions going deeper that just the basic facts.
- Unit tests should include some questions that communicate the nature of the discipline through big ideas.
- If we do not ask students to show how they can use their knowledge we are saying that the material is not important.



Choosing the type of assessment

- The temptation for teachers is to use the method that is easiest to grade but it may miss the core authentic activity of the discipline.
- The assessment should also be comfortable for the student.

Great Assessments

- Great assessments allow teachers to see the student's thought process.
- These assessments should test various levels of students, challenging high level students while still meeting the needs of one needing more support.
- Complaint on these types of authentic assessments are they are difficult to grade.

Feedback vs Grading

- We need to find a balance between the feedback and grading
- Feedback should be:
 - tailored to the needs of the student.
 - specific and selective, focused on the good of the student.
 - Allow students to continue to progress and seek excellence and see that the feedback has a goal.
- Assessments should never feel like a final judgement and determine what the student is capable of in the future
- Grading (Evaluation)
 - Is a a common standard for all and allows us to see who is achieving excellence in that area.
 - It should reflect on the student as a whole learner first then using the data to help determine an actual grade.
 - For essays it is best to not give an initial grade instead have students read their essay along with feedback and work to improve the essay.
 - Grading is not subjective but objective.
 - Teachers should be factoring in improvement/participation while also factoring in competency finding a balance between the two.
- Assessments also can show the progress of the teacher.
- Students can provide teacher feedback through assessments, a cumulative activity or asking students for their opinion on the class.
- Teachers' self-assessments are also helpful.
- Just because an activity or practice does not appear on a short-term assessment does not mean it is not of value and illustrate progress.