Faculty Teaching Handbook

CTL – Fall, 2010

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I - First week of classes

This first day of class provides an initial opportunity for you to describe yourself as a person and a professional educator, as well as the discipline that captivated your interest when you were a student. It is also a time for you to examine the characteristics of the students who make up your class, so that you will be able to develop learning situations that are more likely to succeed. You will want to be positive as the first day sets the tone for the entire semester. It will help establish rapport with students, motivation and enthusiasm, set norms and tone for the course, prepare students for the semester's work, correct any misperceptions about the course, and generate excitement about the subject matter.

First things first

- Make you sure you arrive at class on time and write your name, office number, phone number(s), and office hours on the board.
- When students come in, introduce yourself.
- Share general ideas such as your philosophy of teaching with your students, how long have you taught, how many subjects/classes have you taught, what level of class you normally teach, what you enjoy about being in the classroom, what do you learn from your students, and what you expect to teach in the future.
- Specifically explain what is interesting/ new/ exciting about the class to awaken student interest.
- Ask the students: What would you like to know about me or about this class?
- How can you convey your enthusiasm for teaching, for the course?

Learn who your students are - Use icebreaker activities

- Pass out index cards for students' names, majors, and anything else that will be useful to know. Have the students introduce themselves briefly, or pair up the students and have them introduce each other based on these cards.
- Ask the students to explain why they are in the course.
- Ask students to write out their expectations for the course and their own goals for learning.
- Ask what students know about the subject matter you will be presenting.

Review the course expectations

- Go though the course syllabus with your students.
- Provide an overview of the overarching topics and a preview of key strategies for succeeding in the course.
- Note exam and assignment dates for your students, point out where the reading assignments are heaviest; make clear, if you can, what the major emphasis of each part of the course will be.

Set classroom ground rules

- Discuss the Academic Honesty policies and focus on key points and expectations.
- Explain your policies for talking in class (raising your hand vs. calling out), coming to class late, late homework, cell phone usage, etc.
- Review the DU policy for attendance.
- Learn the names of students as quickly as possible as this is the most effective way to create a positive first impression among students and establish early rapport with your class.

II - Course Design

Student learning is less effective when students sit inertly in classes barely listening to teachers, passively viewing PowerPoint presentations, memorizing pre-packaged assignments, and spitting out answers. Learning is not a spectator sport. Student learning is optimized when students are actively involved in their own learning. Students must talk about what they are learning, write about it, relate it to past experience, and apply it in their own lives. They must make what they learn part of themselves.
——[Adapted from Chickering and Gamson, *Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education*]

Dhofar University encourages faculty to adopt a **learner-centered approach** to teaching. In this type of teaching the focus is on what the students are doing, not what the teacher is doing. Furthermore, it shifts the responsibility to the students and away from the teacher.

Syllabus essentials

A course syllabus is a vital part of any class as it provides a framework for the instructor and the student on what is expected from each party. It is the student's first impression of you. All university faculty are required to have a syllabus for each of the courses they teach.

A syllabus is essentially the material that students receive on the first day of class which gives all the course attendees clear information about what is expected. It is essential that a course syllabus contains information pertinent to the instructor(s), university policies, and curriculum. This document needs to be "user-friendly" so that the students can easily find the information they need.

DU has a list of recommended syllabus content. The purpose of this approach is to ensure consistency across courses, but also to make sure students are informed of the rules (e.g., grading, plagiarism) so that they cannot argue "ignorance" later in the course if they fail to meet expectations (see Appendix A).

Before you write your syllabus, stop and ask about:

1- The Students

- What kind of students enroll in this course (e.g. number, prior knowledge and experience, gender, motivation, etc.)?
- What role does this course play in the overall educational experience of the students who take it (e.g. General Education, elective, required, majors-only, lower or upper division, prerequisite for other classes, etc.)?
- What problems do students typically have with this material?

2- Your Goals for the Course

Goals are where you want to go,
Objectives are how you get there, and
Outcomes are proof that you have arrived.

- What knowledge, skills, and attitudes do you hope your students will have as a result of having taken this course?
- What levels of cognitive thinking do you want your students to engage in?

3- Course Description

- What content will the course address? How does the course fit into the program? How is the course valuable to the students?
- How does it relate to other courses? What courses does it build on? What courses follow it?
- How is the course structured? Large lecture with discussion sessions? Large lecture with laboratory and discussion sessions? Seminar?
- What aspects of the course are likely to pose the greatest challenge for students, and how will you help them meet those challenges?
- How are the major topics organized?

4- Teaching Approaches / Activities

- How will you implement student-centered learning?
- What kinds of instructional interactions need to occur? Small group work, pair work, whole class?
- What kinds of teaching approaches are most conducive to helping students accomplish the course learning objectives?
- What activities need to come in the beginning, in the middle, and which do you want to conclude the course with?

5- Course Requirements, Assignments

- What will students be expected to do to show that they are learning in the course?
- What kinds of assignments (frequency, timing, sequence), tests, exams do most appropriately reflect the course objectives?
- Do assignments, tests, exams elicit the kind of learning you want to foster?
- Are special projects, field trips, journals, case studies, online databases, multimedia project, and collaborative project possible assignments for the course?
- What kinds of skills do the students need to have in order to be successful in the course, i.e. computer literacy, research skills, writing skills, communication skills, and/ or familiarity with software?
- What kinds of formal and informal assessments will you use to monitor student progress?

6- Course Policies

- What is expected of the student in terms of: attendance, participation, contribution to group work?
- How will you deal with students who come to class late, miss assignments, turn in late work, or fail exams?
- Do you have a policy on extra credit?
- How can you clearly explain DU’s policies concerning academic dishonesty or plagiarism?
- How will you address classroom management issues, cell phones and/ or excessive absences?

7- Assessment, Grading, Evaluation

- How will the students’ work be assessed, graded and evaluated, i.e. number of tests, proportion of each assignment toward final grade?
- How is the final grade determined? Will you drop the lowest grade for homeworks or quizzes?
- How do students receive timely feedback on their performance? Will you use self-assessment?
- Will you provide students with opportunities for improvement? Will you give ungraded assignments?
- How will the students be informed about their progress and grades?

8- Texts/Resources/Readings/Supplies/ Materials

- Is the assigned textbook appropriate for the course? (check for difficult words/concepts, use of instructional aids, typographical organization, provision for self-testing, clarity, awareness of cultural, religious, and gender issues)
- What kinds of materials will be used during the course?
- What kinds of instructional media will be used?
- What kind of learning space will you have (e.g. classroom, lab, fixed desks or movable chairs, media equipment)?

9- Course Calendar

- You will need to use DU’s academic calendar as your planning guide, as well as taking into consideration holidays and special events.
- In what sequence will the content be taught?
- Will there be some flexibility built into the syllabus in case students need more time to understand certain concepts?
- When are major assignments due?
- When are the quizzes and exams?
- Have you indicated other important dates such as guest speakers and the last day for withdrawal?

10- Study Tips/Learning Resources

- What resources are available for the student and where?
- Will you keep past quizzes and tests on file for students? Will you provide study guides or lecture notes?

Adapted from:

- ❖ Altman & Cashin. (1992). *Writing a syllabus*. IDEA Paper No. 27. Kansas State University.
- ❖ Grunert, J. (1997). *The course syllabus. A learning-centered approach*. Bolton, MA: Anker.
- ❖ http://www.cte.cornell.edu/campus/teach/faculty/course_design_materials.html

III - Teaching Strategies

What the best teachers do

- Begin by understanding what students know, then adding new information in manageable steps, carefully grafting new concepts onto existing ones rather than focusing on planting brand new ones;
- Relate course learning objectives to authentic and intriguing questions and problems that the course (or individual class or assignment) will help students to understand and resolve;
- Relate course learning objectives to issues which are relevant to students' lives;
- Create assignments that train students to reason, evaluate, and apply evidence to make decisions and defend their conclusions;
- Structure assignments in a step-by-step manner to create a "scaffold" that leads students to develop increasingly advanced abilities;
- Structure their courses to provide very frequent, useful feedback on student work that helps them focus their effort where it is most needed, in an environment where they can safely repeat a cycle of trying, failing, receiving feedback, and trying again;
- Create the challenge with encouragement that makes high demands on their students while at the same time providing continuing opportunities for feedback, revision, and improvement;
- Define the obligations associated with choosing to be in the class in ways that engage students to be feel a commitment to be attentive, thoughtful, and responsive;
- Provide opportunities for students to work collaboratively;
- Design assignments to deepen both discipline-specific and generalized abilities like critical reading and writing, information literacy, quantitative reasoning, and social, cultural, and environmental interdependence;
- Treat anything they say to their students, in any setting, as a conversation rather than a performance;
- Give students a sense of control and responsibility for their own learning;
- Model with their own actions the specific reasoning processes germane to their disciplines;
- Combine the systematic with the kind of curiosity that lays the foundation for the sudden integrative insights that can come after deep involvement with a set of problems;
- Treat students fairly and hold them in positive regard with respect;
- Maintain a stimulating and safe forum for students to challenge and update their beliefs and assumptions. The deepest learning happens when students are driven by their own curiosity to make their own meaning from their experiences; and
- Devise grading systems that reward the deepest learning, discourage superficial learning-for-tests, and encourage students who lack confidence.
- Understand that grades are a less effective motivator than internal satisfaction for evoking challenge and curiosity.
- Evaluate student work based on clearly articulated standards, while also training students to develop the ability to assess their own work accurately to specific standards.

Active learning

- Active learning is an excellent way to meet all three kinds of learning goals (informational, idea-based, and skills-based). Active learning activities and assignments allow you to integrate your learning goals so that students understand the meaning and application of what they are learning.
- Active learning increases student investment, motivation, and performance. When you invite students to actively participate in the learning environment, they take more responsibility for their performance in the course.
- Small-group discussions help students understand and retain material while also serving the broader goals of developing their communication skills and increasing their awareness of their classmates as learning resources.

Lecturing

Lecturing is the most frequently used teaching technique. Over the years there have been claims that it encourages students to be passive learners. To some, lecturing does not lend itself either to class discussion nor critical thinking or problem solving. However, several have argued that if it is used in an appropriate manner, the lecture is a very effective technique.

When is it appropriate to lecture?

- When an instructor wants to give instructions or details which the students can not easily find elsewhere.
- When an instructor wants to present and organize the material in a certain way or for a specific purpose.
- When student involvement in the class is not necessary to achieve learning objectives.

What makes a good lecture?

There are some techniques one can use to steer towards a successful teaching and learning experience when using the lecture-style:

- Plan the lecture in advance.
- Establish objectives for the class and ensure that your lecture meets them. Present the objectives to students at the beginning of the lecture.
- Be organized and organize the material appropriately.
- Make eye contact with students; move around if you can; use gestures.
- Be loud and clear and ensure everyone can hear and understand your lecture
- Enliven the lecture with concrete examples, personal anecdotes, or references to today's news.
- Capture interest at the beginning of the lecture with a question, a powerful or popular quotation, or a dramatic or startling statistic. Start by asking a question associated with something they should have read – not a recall question, but perhaps one on a controversial topic.
- Build suspense into the presentation as a way to maintain class attention. To aid memory, use visual illustrations during a lecture. Visual illustrations are remembered longer than verbal information, and they can aid the recall of information that is associated with them. Many

classrooms are equipped with technology that will help you add other dimensions to your lecture.
- Ask students questions as your progress to check for comprehension.
- Ask the students if they have any questions on the material.
- Vary teaching methods and try not to lecture for the entire class.
- Summarize the main points at the end of every major section of your lecture.
- During the next class, ask students to summarize the lecture; reinforce and repeat the points you want to emphasize.

Case Study

Cases challenge students to analyze critique, make judgments, speculate and express reasoned opinions. Above all, although information can be real or invented, a case must be realistic and believable. The information included must be rich enough to make the situation credible, but not so complete as to close off discussion or exploration. Cases can be short for brief classroom discussions, or long and elaborate for semester-long projects. Cases are important for bringing real world problems into a classroom or a workshop—they ensure active participation and may lead to innovative solutions to problems.

Designing Case Study Questions

Cases can be more or less "directed" by the kinds of questions asked—these kinds of questions can be appended to any case, or could be a handout for students unfamiliar with case studies on how to approach one.

- What is the situation—what do you actually know about it from reading the case? (Distinguishes between fact and assumptions/critical understanding)
- What issues are at stake? (Opportunity for linking to theoretical readings)
- What questions do you have—what information do you still need? Where/how could you find it?
- What problem(s) need to be solved? (Opportunity to discuss communication versus conflict, gaps between assumptions, sides of the argument)
- What are all the possible options? What are the pros/cons of each option?
- What are the underlying assumptions for [person X] in the case—where do you see them?
- What criteria should you use when choosing an option? What does that mean about your assumptions?

Discussion Groups

Discussion is important to learning in all disciplines because it helps the students process information rather than simply receive it. The students are active learners who have the opportunity to interact with peers, to listen and to teach. Effective small group discussion is guided by clear directions and asks students to share a product (a summary of discussion, a consensus view with minority report, or even a critique of the discussion prompt).

Designing Writing Assignments

- Research has shown that the more detailed a writing assignment is, the better the student papers are in response to that assignment. Instructors can often help students write papers that are more effective by giving them written instructions about that assignment. Explicit descriptions of assignments on the syllabus or on an "assignment sheet" tend to produce the best results. These instructions might make explicit the process or steps necessary to complete the assignment.
- Before you create an assignment, consider the kind of writing you want students to produce. What do you want them to accomplish through this writing project? Do you want them to learn course material through writing, to write to demonstrate knowledge of course material, to practice or demonstrate writing conventions in your discipline? How does the assignment support the learning goals central to your course?
- Consider what thinking and writing processes you want students to undertake. How will your assignment create a rhetorical situation—audience, purpose, context, role of student writer, format or genre, and other parameters to guide students as they write?

Assignment sheets should detail:

1. the topic
2. the kind of writing expected (i.e. argumentation, description, comparison, analysis, evaluation, etc.)
3. the scope of acceptable subject matter
4. the length requirements
5. formatting requirements
6. documentation format
7. the amount and type of research expected (if any)
8. deadlines for the first draft and its revision
9. grading rubric

IV - Student Learning Outcomes

Student learning outcomes (SLOs) are statements that describe what students will be able to know, do, or value as a result of their educational experience. SLOs should be written in language that clearly implies a measurable behavior or quality of student work.

Course student learning outcomes should be clearly related to course topics, assignments, exams, and other graded work.

Types of Learning Outcomes

Most of us recognize that there are many different types of objectives. Some are easy, only requiring the simple recall of a definition. Others are more complex, requiring problem solving or evaluation.

One popular categorization scheme for types of objectives is Benjamin Bloom's (1956) Bloom's taxonomy provides a useful framework for identifying and describing the development of student learning from the acquisition of basic knowledge and skills to higher order thinking levels.

Taxonomy of Objectives for the Cognitive Domain (from Bloom)

- **Knowledge –** Primarily concerned with students' ability to memorize or recall certain specific facts.
- **Comprehension –** Usually involves the ability to interpret, paraphrase, and extrapolate, thus demonstrating students' basic understanding of ideas that they did not originate.
- **Application –** Includes activities in which the student applies concepts and principles to new and/or practical situations.
- **Analysis –** Concerned with breaking down a piece of information into its constituent parts, differentiating and denoting.
- **Synthesis –** Involves the blending of elements and parts to form a whole. Students should be able to create a structural pattern that was not previously present.
- **Evaluation –** At this highest level, students might judge the value of a work, the logical consistency of written data, or the adequacy of someone else's conclusions.

Higher-level vs. Lower-level Thinking

Research indicates that although most faculty members think they teach toward higher-level learning, in reality most instruction, even at the university level, favors only lower-level learning. The benefit of Bloom's taxonomy is that it allows instructors to focus attention on the higher levels of learning. That is, if they write their objectives at these levels, they are more likely to teach creative instruction that helps learners accomplish these outcomes.

Furthermore, most instructional specialists argue that effective learning outcomes (and well-designed courses) should always include some higher-order thinking and not center exclusively around retention and understanding. Yet it is understood that in most curricula there are foundational knowledge and comprehension requirements that must be achieved before higher-order objectives can be addressed.

“Forbidden” words in writing Learning Outcomes

Know - Understand - Learn - Appreciate

Using concrete “action” verbs such as ‘define,’ ‘argue,’ or ‘create’ to specify learning objectives is more helpful for assessment than vague terms such as ‘know’ or ‘understand,’ because they can be much more easily translated into observable, assessable outcomes. The action keywords in an assignment determine what kinds and levels of learning are being asked for and assessed. Comprehensive lists of keywords are available at many web sites, including: www.nwlink.com/~donclark/hrd/bloom.html.

V - Evaluation and Grading of a Course

Assessment of student achievement is an important part of the teaching and learning process. Given at the beginning of a course, assessments help you know where to begin and/or identify areas of remediation that must be addressed. Frequent assessments during the course help you and your students see the progress of learning and help identify problematic areas where students need more help or time.

Assessments should align with the course objectives or specified learning outcomes and the content and activities included in the class. The appropriate range of content should be assessed, as well as the key points covered during instructional activities. The assessment should allow the student to demonstrate his or her knowledge and skill in the subject area.

There are mainly two purposes for evaluation:

1. They can help to assess the degree to which students understand the course content
2. They can provide information about the effectiveness of the teaching methods.

"When the cook tastes the soup, that's formative;
When the guests taste the soup, that's summative." (Robert Stakes).

Formative evaluations

This type is intended to help instructors identify material which needs to be clarified or re-taught and should not be used to evaluate or grade students. Results of formative assessment can assist instructors to ascertain whether curriculum or learning activities need to be modified during a class session or before the next class meets. Formative evaluations are most effective when they are done frequently and the information is used to affect immediate adjustments in the day-to-day teaching and learning in the course.

Angelo and Cross in *Classroom Assessment Techniques* (1993) noted that formative assessment focused on improving the quality of learning as opposed to gathering evidence for evaluating and grading students. They suggested that instructors need to:

- Make goals and objectives explicit
- Gather feedback from students on the extent to which these goals and objectives were being met
- Provide feedback early and often to students, and
- Help students learn to self-assess their progress

Examples of formative evaluations are:

1. **Muddiest Point-** Similar to One-Minute Paper but only ask students to describe what they didn't understand and what they think might help.

2. **Application Article** -During last 15 minutes of class, ask students to write a short news article about how a major point applies to a real-world situation. An alternative is to have students write a short article about how the point applies to their major.
3. **Student-generated test questions-** Divide the class into groups and assign each group a topic on which they are each to write a question and answer for the next test. Each student should be assured of getting at least one question right on the test.
4. **Journals-** Ask students to keep journals that detail their thoughts about the class.

Example of instant student feedback: The "One-Minute" Questionnaire/ Paper

One-minute questionnaires are simple to design and quick and easy to administer (Cross and Angelo, 1993). Try one-minute questionnaires if:

- you have tried a new instructional technique
- you have covered a lot of difficult material
- you want the students to reflect on what they've learned

Procedure for the "One-Minute" Questionnaire

1. Write one or two questions on the board, on an overhead transparency, or have the questions ready on paper.
2. Tell the students to answer in one or two sentences.
3. Take the responses in and read them after class to get "instant" feedback on what the students got out of that day's class.

Sample Questionnaire

1. What was the most useful thing you learned in today's class?
2. What was the easiest thing about today's class?
3. What questions remain in your mind after today's class?

Summative evaluations

The goal of summative assessment is to measure the level of success or proficiency that has been obtained at the end of an instructional unit, by comparing it against some standard or benchmark. These usually include tests of various types.

Every effort must be made to prepare students for examinations. This process starts by informing students at the beginning of the class of the testing procedure, when tests will be given, and the criteria upon which they will be evaluated.
Ideally, tests are given to:

- reveal to students their areas of strength
- reveal to the instructor the students' progress

- provide motivation for students
- help instructors evaluate their teaching
- provide a basis upon which grades are determined
- evaluate students in terms of their professional and career goals

General Advice on Writing Tests and Exams

There are some general tips to write effective tests and exams (Ory and Ryan. 1993).
Test directions should include statements about:
- how much time is available
- how to record answers
- whether to show work on problems
- total points on different items
- whether there is a penalty for guessing
- whether texts, class notes or calculators can be used during the test
- whether student scan make notes or write comments in the test booklet

Test assembly - Does your exam or test look professional?
- Check for misspelled words and misnumbered items or pages
- Check for typographical errors
- Is there a text question that has been split between 2 pages?
- Is the exam format consistent throughout the exam?
- Are there any formatting errors?
- Is there ample blank space for "constructed response" items (In cases where student must write down their answers, fill in the gaps, make check-marks, etc).
- Are directions provided throughout the exam?

Alternative Types of Assessments

There are assessment devices, other than tests, that can be used
to provide measures of student performance, including:

- Term papers
- Research reviews
- Reports
- Case studies
- Portfolios
- Projects
- Performances
- Peer evaluation
- Mastery
- Simulations

Grading

It is important to develop a sense of academic standards, explain them at the beginning of the course, and apply them consistently throughout the term.

Basic Rules of Grading

- *Communicate criteria*. Advise students of the grading criteria at the first or second-class session.
- *Include criteria other than test scores.* If it is important for students to communicate or express ideas, then class participation should be a part of the grading criteria. If a project or laboratory demonstration is part of the course, their values, as part of the grade for the course, should be made known.
- *Avoid irrelevant factors.* Including attendance and tardiness in the grading criteria may be unwise. Many experienced teachers feel that if students possess the knowledge and show they have reached the objectives of the course, they should be evaluated accordingly.
- *Weight grading criteria carefully.* Weight criteria according to their importance in fulfilling the objectives of the course.
- *Grade students on their own achievements, not those of other students.* Grading should be based upon criteria of the course and not upon other students' scores. Grading on a curve distributes all students on a curve, determining that a certain percentage of students will receive A's, B's, C's and so on. This system places students in competition with each other. Criterion-based grading evaluates each student independent of other students. So, if all students reach the objectives of the course, they all should receive passing grades.

Choosing a Testing Method

Test Type	Advantages	Disadvantages
Essay	• In-depth coverage of material • Quick and simple to prepare • Allows maximum utilization of student capabilities in responding • Easily changed from class to class • Students less likely to guess • Stimulates more study • Allows students to demonstrate ability to organize knowledge, express opinions, show originality.	• Restrictive in breadth of subject matter • Time consuming for students • Weigh specific part of course too heavily • Tendency to lean toward subjectivity in evaluation and potentially unreliable scoring. Research shows that a number of factors • can bias the scoring: • Different scores may be assigned by different readers or by the same reader at different times. • The higher the essay is in the stack of papers, the higher the score assigned. • Burden of spelling, vocabulary, and grammar upon student • Difficult to grade- Time consuming to score. • Can limit amount of material tested, therefore has decreased validity.
Multiple Choice	• Cover a broad range of content in a short period of time • Minimum of writing for student • Measure ability to recognize responses rather than recall facts • More valid than true / false tests • Students can be tested for analysis and synthesis • Easy to grade	• Difficult to construct good test items. Tendency to construct responses for knowledge only • Questions time consuming and difficult to develop • Provide opportunity for guessing • Rely primarily upon recall and memory • Difficult to come up with plausible distracters/alternative responses

True / False	• Ability to ask large number of diverse questions • Simple to develop • Valid if only two possible answers • Non-threatening and familiar to students • Knowledge level content • Evaluating student understanding of popular misconceptions • Easy to score • Can test large amounts of content • Students can answer 3-4 questions per minute	• Encourages guessing. Students have a 50-50 chance of getting the right answer by guessing • Difficult to construct brief, complete statements • Not appropriate for elaboration and discussion • Tests the lowest level of knowledge • It is difficult to discriminate between students that know the material and students who don't • Typically low in validity and reliability. Needs a large number of items for high reliability.
Matching	• Maximum coverage at knowledge level in a minimum amount of space/prep time • Valuable in content areas that have a lot of facts	• Time consuming for students • Not good for higher levels of learning
Short Answer	• easy to construct • good for "who," what," where," "when" content • minimizes guessing • Encourages more intensive study-student must know the answer vs. recognizing the answer.	• May overemphasize memorization of facts • Take care - questions may have more than one correct answer • Scoring is laborious
Student Portfolios	• Can assess compatible skills: writing, documentation, critical thinking, problem solving • Can allow student to present totality of learning. • Students become active participants in the evaluation process.	• Can be difficult and time consuming to grade.

Tips for Constructing Different Kinds of Tests

Testing Method	**Tips**
Essay	• Provide reasonable time limits for thinking and writing. • Give definitive task to student-compare, analyze, evaluate, etc. • Use checklist point system to score with a model answer: write outline, determine how many points to assign to each part • Score one question at a time-all at the same time. • Avoid the use of optional questions on an essay test. When students answer different questions, they are actually taking different tests. If there are five essay questions and students are told to answer any three of them, then there are ten different tests possible. It makes if difficult to discriminate between the student who could respond correctly to all five, and the student who could answer only three. Also, students may not study all the course material if they know they will have a choice among the questions. • Indicate for each question the number of points to be earned for a correct response. If time is running short, students may have to choose which questions to answer. They will want to work on the questions that are worth the most points.
Multiple Choice	• The stem should present a single, clearly formulated problem. • The stem should be in simple, understood language; delete extraneous words. • Avoid "all of the above" which can be answered based on partial knowledge (i.e. if one is incorrect or two are correct, but the student is unsure about the third). • Avoid "none of the above." • Make all distracters plausible/homogenous. • Don't overlap response alternatives (decreases discrimination between students who know the material and those who don't). • Don't use double negatives. • Present alternatives in logical or numerical order. • Place correct answer at random (An answer is most often). • Make each item independent of others on test. • To judge a good stem: students who know the content should be able to answer before reading the alternatives • List alternatives on separate lines, indent, separate by blank line, and use letters vs. numbers for alternative answers. • Have more than 3 alternatives, 4 is best.
Matching	• Use 15 items or less. • Give good directions on basis for matching. • Use items in response column more than once (reduces the effects of guessing). • Use homogenous material in each exercise. • Make all responses plausible. • Put all items on a single page. • Put response in some logical order (chronological, alphabetical, etc.). • Responses should be short.

True/False	• Avoid double negatives. • Avoid long/complex sentences. • Use specific determinants with caution: never, only, all, none, always, could, might, can, may, sometimes, generally, some, few. • Use only one central idea in each item. • Don't emphasize the trivial. • Use exact quantitative language. • Don't lift items straight from the book. • Make more false than true (60/40) as students are more likely to answer true.
Short Answer	• When using with definitions: supply term, not the definition-for a better judge of student knowledge. • For numbers, indicate the degree of precision/units expected. • Use direct questions, not an incomplete statement. • If you do use incomplete statements, don't use more than 2 blanks within an item. • Arrange blanks to make scoring easy. • Try to phrase question so there is only one answer possible.

VI - Feedback on Your Teaching

There are several ways to get feedback about your teaching: student feedback, self evaluation, peer observation, viewing a videotape of your teaching if possible, consultation with a faculty colleague, or a consultant from the Center for Teaching and Learning. The more information you gather about your teaching the more you can improve the quality of the instructional experience for your students.

Characteristics of Effective Teaching

- Knowledge of and enthusiasm for the subject matter and teaching
- Good organization of subject matter and course
- Effective communication
- Positive attitudes toward students
- Fairness in evaluation and grading
- Flexibility in approaches to teaching

Research for the past 15 years on student perceptions of teaching in higher education courses shows that students consistently select eight factors that are important to them in rating teaching effectiveness. Students tend to remain consistent in their judgments of instructors not only from term to term, but also from year to year. Student ratings of teaching effectiveness are strongly correlated with their ratings of how much they learned in a course but only moderately correlated with how much they say they liked the instructor. Finally, student evaluations correlate highly with ratings given by faculty peers and teaching consultants (See Appendix B).

Appendices

A- Checklist for Course Design

Instructor Information	Identify people responsible for the course: • Name, Title • Office Location • Phone number • E-mail address • Office hours
Course Information	• Class time • Class location
Course Description	Description should be similar to what is found in DU catalog, include: • Course delivery style (lab, discussion, and other) • Identify pre-requisites and their significance regarding success in this class • Include positive statements about the course
Course Objectives	Identify what the student will know or be able to do as a result of successful completion of this course. Objectives should: • Be aligned with the content of the course • Be measurable through a test of performance/portfolio • State the conditions under which the student will be evaluated (i.e., resources available during testing, time restrictions, etc.)
Course Policies	Explain all policies related to the class such as: • Academic dishonesty • Attendance • Late assignments • Make-up tests • Class contributions • Cell phone use • Incompletes
Course Resources	List: • Required texts • Recommended texts • Readings and location • Handouts • Web sites, Software
Course Assignments	• List all major assignments • List any evaluation criteria • Explain if additional handouts are necessary to convey the requirements of the assignments • Give the due dates for each major assignment. • Clarify is assignments are to be done alone, in pairs or in groups

Student Evaluations	Describe in detail how the student will be evaluated: • If you use a point system, describe how points are earned • If you use a percentage system, explain in detail the exact value of each assignment. You may also want to identify the last day that the student can withdraw from the course and the procedures for withdrawing.
Schedule of Lectures, Labs, Guest visits, Field Trips, Performances, Class Presentations and Assignments	Include a calendar of your course plan for: • Course lectures • Laboratoires • Performances (quizes, tests, etc.) • Assignments • Class presentations • Reading assignments • Cite deadlines for projects and papers to: - Allow learners to see grand scheme of things - Help learners set goals and organize time

B- Characteristics of Effective Teachers

Organization and Clarity
☐explains clearly
☐is well prepared
☐makes difficult topics easy to understand
☐uses examples, details, analogies, metaphors, and variety in modes of explanation to make material not only understandable but memorable
☐makes the objectives of the course and each class clear
☐establishes a context for material

Analytic/Synthetic Approach
☐has a thorough command of the field
☐contrasts the implications of various theories
☐gives the student a sense of the field, its past, present, and future directions, the origins of ideas and concepts
☐presents facts and concepts from related fields
☐discusses viewpoints other than his/her own

Dynamism and Enthusiasm
☐is an energetic, dynamic person
☐seems to enjoy teaching
☐conveys a love of the field
☐has an aura of self-confidence

Instructor-Group Interaction
☐can stimulate, direct, and pace interaction with the class
☐encourages independent thought and accepts criticism
☐uses wit and humor effectively
☐is a good public speaker
☐knows whether or not the class is following the material and is sensitive to students' motivation
☐is concerned about the quality of his/her teaching

Instructor-Individual Student Interaction
☐is perceived as fair, especially in his/her methods of evaluation
☐is seen by students as approachable and a valuable source of advice even on matters not directly related to the course

Taken from: *Teaching at Stanford: An Introductory Handbook for Faculty, Academic Staff and Teaching Assistants*, revised 2007, Center for Teaching and Learning at Stanford University (copyrighted) p.7

C- Checklist for Effective Lecturing

Be Prepared

☐Outline clear objectives for your lecture—both what students should know after the lecture and why it is important.
☐Develop a lecture outline and any audiovisuals.
☐If you are nervous about the lecture, write out your introduction and rehearse it.

Keep Your Focus

☐Limit the main points in a lecture to five or fewer.
☐Create effective visuals, analogies, demonstrations, and examples to reinforce the main points.
☐Share your outline with students.
☐Emphasize your objectives and key points in the beginning, as you get to them, and as a summary at the end.

Engage Your Audience

☐Focus attention early on using a quote, a dramatic visual, an anecdote, or other material relevant to the topic.
☐Integrate visuals, multimedia, discussion, active learning strategies, small-group techniques, and peer instruction.
☐Link new material to students' prior knowledge, such as common experiences or previous coursework.
☐Show enthusiasm for the topic and information. Remember, you are modeling your discipline.
☐Give students time to think and genuine opportunities to respond.
☐Plan for diverse learners. Use verbal, visual, and kinesthetic approaches such as hands-on exercises and simulations.

Get Feedback

☐Observe students' non-verbal communication: note taking, response to questions, eye contact, seating patterns, and response to humor. Are they "with" you?
☐Use the "minute paper" or other assessment techniques.
☐Ask students to respond in one or two sentences to the following questions: What stood out as most important in today's lecture? What are you confused about? Do this every few lectures—it will take you about 15 minutes to review the responses and you'll learn an enormous amount about your students.
☐Give quizzes periodically on lecture objectives, not obscure material. Are they getting it?
☐Conduct midterm teaching evaluations or simply ask the students for suggestions and comments at the midpoint of the quarter.

Taken from: *Teaching at Stanford: An Introductory Handbook for Faculty, Academic Staff and Teaching Assistants*, revised 2007, Center for Teaching and Learning at Stanford University (copyrighted) p.28

D- Designing Homework and Assignments: Some Considerations

1. ALIGNMENT: How well does the overall course assessment schedule really assess the student learning outcomes of the course?

2. WEIGHTINGS: How is your assessment schedule weighted? What counts for more % scores? How will you determine a “participation” grade, if appropriate? How have you weighted formative and summative assessments?
    a. Formative assessments are smaller, regular assessment such as low stakes homework assignments that give students feedback on their learning.
    b. Summative assessments are high stakes, final assessments (exams, presentations) that typically draw on knowledge and skills covered during the entire course.
    c. Check for overlap with other courses? eg. Are a number of parallel courses also requiring reflective journals?

3. When DESIGNING SPECIFIC ASSIGNMENTS, keep in mind:
    a. Validity: Does this piece of assessment (this exam, project, paper, quiz etc.) actually elicit and assess what it is intended to assess?
    b. Reliability (internal & external): Will the items in this quiz or test, elicit consistent responses across different classes and cohorts doing the same quiz or test? Will similar items in the quiz or test elicit consistent responses?
    c. Feasibility: Consider “time on task” and workload for the student. Instructors: consider the time involved in designing and setting up the assessment, and then the time needed to grade it! You will need adequate time for giving constructive feedback too.

4. What kind of FEEDBACK will you give students on the assessment, and how will it help improve your students’ learning? i.e. numeric or letter grades, longer comments (How long?). What approach will give helpful, constructive feedback to each student?

5. WHO ASSESSES?
    a. Instructor? Other students (= peer assessment)? The individual student (= self-assessment)? An “expert” or third party?
    b. How does the instructor oversee and manage grading by others and the reporting of final grades?

6. What about AUTHENTIC ASSESSSMENT? What is authentic assessment in your discipline? Are there particular texts, genres and/or discourse that must be mastered in your discipline and, if so, how will you model, teach and grade those? How “real” can an assessment be? (Is it then an act of research?). What about longer projects? And publishing student work?

E- Checklist for Designing Writing Assignments

There are certain questions we must clearly answer when designing a writing assignment that promotes learning as an objective:

1. **Purpose**
   - Have I fully explained why I made this assignment?
   - What course objectives are addressed by this assignment?
   - What intellectual tasks are required of the student in completing this assignment?
     - How can students show mastery of information and concepts?
     - How will this assignment help students explore what they know and think about topics?
     - How will this assignment show who students have done the homework and/ or have been in class?
     - How will the assignment help students learn to argue a point or persuade an audience?

2. **Assignment**
   - Have I specifically explained what the students are to do?
   - Have I considered the kinds of thinking I want students to do?

3. **Topic**
   - Is the topic something that the students have an interest in and have knowledge about?
   - What is the topic or subject matter of the assignment?
   - What do we expect our students to know about this topic or subject? What do we want them to find out?
   - Will they know where and how to look for the information they need to complete the assignments?

4. **Genre**
   - What form(s) of writing is (are) acceptable? Have I made the ground rules clear?
   - Is the audience for this assignment the instructor, other students, or a specific imagined audience?
   - How familiar is the writer's audience with the subject and material being presented?
   - Does the reader hold a viewpoint different from the writer's?
   - Are there conditions regarding an imagined audience--such as age, sex, or nationality-- that should influence the writer's presentation?

5. **Voice**

   What language expectations do I have for this assignment? (e.g., is the use of "I" acceptable? Are contractions OK?)

6. **Length and Deadline**
   - Have I explained how long the paper should be? (e.g., one page single-spaced? no more than two pages, double-spaced? at least ten pages, double-spaced?)

- Is length an important consideration in completing this assignment? How long would an ‘ideal’ response be? What form should it take?
- Is there a time limitation? If so, is the format matched to the time allowed?
- Is the student-writer familiar with the format?
- What is the final deadline? What interim deadlines are there -- for a draft, for example? Have I provided specific, firm dates?

7. Models

Have I provided models of the kind of writing I expect for this assignment?

8. Drafts

Will I look at writing in process? What stages are due? A proposal? A draft? A final version? What are the expectations for each stage?

9. Documentation

Is a specific form of documentation required? Which one? Have I been specific?

10. Style

What are my expectations for manuscript preparation?

11. Resources

- Are there special resources that students should know about? Research data bases, primary/secondary sources, electronic media, observation sites, interview or survey subjects

12. Skills

Are there skills the students need to have before they can complete this assignment properly? If so, have I provided instruction in those skills? (For example, if I expect the students to compare and contrast, do they know how to do that?) Have I provided them with models?

13. Response

- Have I explained what kind of response to their writing students can expect?
- Will they participate in peer response groups?
- Will they have an opportunity to discuss their work in conference with the instructor?
- Will they have an opportunity to revise their work?
- How will their writing be evaluated for a grade?
- Which features of the paper should be given the most weight?
- What specific content is expected?
- How heavily, if at all, will criteria other than ideas (content) count?
- How will grades of A, B, C, D, and F be determined?

These guidelines are suggested by Donald Murray in *A Writer Teaches Writing* (1985).

To ensure students understand course writing assignment require *Assignment Paraphrase*. Ask students to write a 3-4 sentence paraphrase of the assignment. Several students can read them aloud, and the class can discuss the degree to which it reflects the work they've been asked to perform.

F- Examples of short, special purpose writing assignments

Type of Writing Assignment	Description
Summary	A summary is a brief description of the main idea and key supporting points of something students have read, heard, experienced, or had as an assignment.
Position Paper	A position paper is a short paper in which students take a *for* or *against* position about an issue, theory, or event. Students must justify their positions by using supporting evidence. An instructor, as an example, asks students to write a position paper on a specific global issue.
Description	A description paper provides a verbal picture of a person, place, or thing. The details used in this type of writing usually involve the use of the five senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. This type of writing has many uses. It can be used, for example, to write reports for a class through the eyes of a journalist or news reporter, to describe an experiment for a class in science.
Narrative	Narrative writing is telling a story to make a point. In this type of writing, students usually answer the journalist's questions: Who? What? When? Where? and How? Answering these questions simply tells what happened at a particular event. Most narratives, however, also answer the question Why? In these narratives, students go beyond merely reciting events. They also discuss the motives that underlie the events.
Compare-Contrast	Comparison examines the similarities among things; contrast examines the differences; comparison-contrast examines both similarities and differences. The purpose of compare-contrast writing is to have students understand things more clearly, and at times, to make judgments about them. Students, for example, may be asked to analyze two scientific theories for a science class or to compare and contrast two different types of personality disorders and their effects on long term relationships for a psychology class.
Process Analysis	Process analysis writing explains how something is made or done. To analyze a process effectively, students must know it thoroughly and be able to divide it into steps.
Cause and Effect	Cause examines the reasons why actions, attitudes, events and conditions exist. Effect examines their consequences. Instructors may assign cause essays, effect essays, or cause-and-effect essays. For example, an economics instructor may ask students to write about the causes of inflation or a nursing instructor may ask students to write about the causes and effects of smoking.

Argument- Persuasion	Argument-persuasion is writing that has students take a position on an issue and then requires them to defend that position with supporting evidence with the purpose of persuading someone to accept the position. Argument relies on logic and reasoning to convince the reader, while persuasion appeals to the reader's emotions, values, and beliefs. Although argument and persuasion are slightly different, writers usually combine the two to produce an essay that has both reason and emotional appeal. For this type of essay, instructors usually make statements and have students take a position for or against the contents of the statements. Education instructors, on the other hand, may ask students to react to the statement, "Peer tutoring is not an effective method of instruction for low-achieving students."
Classification- Division	Both classification and division are writing that sorts things by placing them into categories or groups. Classification takes a number of items and groups them into various categories. Division takes one item and breaks it down into its parts. A computer instructor may, for example, ask students to classify computer language and determine appropriate applications for each group. A banking and finance instructor, as another example, may ask students to categorize different investments according to risk.
Definition	Definition writing goes beyond the dictionary definition of a term. In this type of writing, students are asked to write an entire paper to explain a term. This type of writing is called, "extended definition." Students must present a clear, basic definition of a term and support it with facts and examples. A human resource management instructor may, for example, ask students to define collective bargaining, or a math instructor may ask students to define the Cartesian Coordinate System.
Reaction Paper	In a reaction paper, students are asked to offer personal insights about the meaning and significance of an issue that may have many different perspectives. A business instructor may, for example, ask students to react to the policy of eliminating affirmative action as an issue in hiring practices. • what were the strongest and weakest points in the assigned reading and why; • what was interesting, relevant, and connected to other readings and why; • what seemed off the topic, irrelevant, or inconsistent with other readings and why; • what assumptions seemed explicit and/or implicit in the reading and why; • what opposing viewpoints to the reading seem important and why; • what are the advantages and/or disadvantages of agreeing with the reading and why?

Journal	A journal is a written account or record of some occurrence or event. This record includes students' personal analyses of the event. An education major, as an example, may keep a journal of student teaching experiences. An aviation management major, on the other hand, may keep a journal of flying experiences.
Case Study	Students who do case studies perform an analytical study of a particular event, situation, or process. They must perform an in-depth analysis of the topic they have chosen. An education major, for example, may do a case study of the effects of teacher expectations on student learning.
Critical Analysis	A critical analysis is a paper in which students examine, critique, and evaluate an event, situation, or issue. Students must support their analyses with evidence from outside sources. A criminal justice major may critically analyze the gun control issue in our country. A nursing student may critically analyze the issue of euthanasia within the medical profession.
Instruction Manuals	Students write a step-by-step explanation of a process.

G- Writing a Critique (Critical Analysis)

A critique is a careful analysis of an argument to determine what is said, how well the points are made, what assumptions underlie the argument, what issues are overlooked, and what implications are drawn from such observations. It is a systematic, yet personal response and evaluation of what you read.

Opening Notes

Ask yourself:

1. What is the nature of the piece?
2. Who wrote it, why, and what are his/her qualifications?
3. What is the significance of the piece?
4. What are its objectives? How well are they achieved?
5. What is the design or method for the piece?
6. Does the design help the piece achieve its objectives?
7. What is the particular appeal or lack of appeal?
8. What assumptions underlie the piece? Are they offensive? Obvious?
9. How do the assumptions and biases affect the validity of the piece?

Organization

1. Introduce the subject of your critique – the reading under analysis.
2. Review the background facts or issues that must be understood before the point of the reading can be appreciated: significance, design, appeal, and so on.
3. Review the assumptions in the reading that must be understood before you take a position.
4. Make your position statement clear: what is your evaluation? On what basis are you making it, given what you have stated in #2 and #3?
5. Review the author's ideas in light of the position you identified and elaborate on each point that relates to your central position.
6. State your conclusions, reminding the reader of the points you have made and your reasons for making them.

Adapted from Behrens and Rosen, *Writing and Reading across the Curriculum*,
Little Brown, 1982.

H - Sample Checklist for Assessing Assignments

Content

The paper...
- Addresses the topic or question
- Accurately presents assigned authors' viewpoints
- Provides sufficient textual evidence to support the argument

Structure

The introduction...
- Is present in the paper
- Includes a clearly stated thesis
- Indicates how the paper is organized

The body...
- Contains a complete discussion and support

Each paragraph...
- Includes a topic sentence
- Develops one main idea
- Has a transition sentence linking it to the next paragraph

The conclusion...
- Recaps the thesis statement and the essay's main points
- Presents a closing statement of the writer's position

Organization and Development

The entire composition
- Is logically organized
- Has a solid argument with supporting evidence

Main points
- Are relevant to the thesis statement
- Are discussed without too much repetition

Style

- Is concise and precise
- Is free of misspellings
- Is free of grammatical mistakes
- Lacks incomplete sentences
- Uses correct punctuation
- Includes subject/verb agreement
- Uses pronouns correctly
- Is free of jargon and clichés
- Cites references correctly

I- Exam Checklist

Are students prepared for the exam?
- Make old exams available to students, if possible.
- Make clear before any test what material you consider important. Make sure students have practice with the kinds of questions/problems on the exam.

Does the exam reflect your goals for the course?
- Compare material in the test to the major topics listed in your syllabus, lecture outlines, and the textbook, to make sure you've been consistent.

Is the exam of reasonable length?
- Take the exam yourself. You should generally be able to finish in one-fourth the time it will take the students.
- Keep time-consuming number-crunching to a minimum.

Are the directions and the format clear and well organized?
- Ask a colleague to read over the instructions to help you spot any ambiguities or misleading statements.
- Make sure the print is clear and that if there's space left for problems/ essays, it is of suitable length.

Is it clear how much credit each question is worth?
- Make sure that the value of each question is clear, so students can decide how much time to spend on each part of the exam.

Is it free of double jeopardy?
- Do students need an answer from one part of the exam in order to understand or solve another?

Does it begin with questions or problems that will build, rather than undermine, student confidence?
- Have compassion for students' test anxiety and start an exam with questions that are reasonably easy for a prepared student.

Are the questions/problems interesting?
- Try to include interesting applications or combinations of material that show the value of the material students are being tested on. Make sure to challenge, but not to confuse, your students.

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