



Evaluating Student Progress



Welcome

Welcome to the Evaluating Student Progress module.

With the advent of on-line instruction, evaluating students' progress has created many new challenges and opportunities. This module will address such challenges and provide opportunities to overcome such challenges. Faculty are encouraged to complete each section prior to advancing to the next section. We hope you find the information included in this module informative and applicable when evaluating students progress.

After completion of the Evaluating Student Progress module, faculty will be able to:

- recognize new challenges and possible opportunities to overcome such challenges
- identify a variety of available tools
- create assignments and assessments that address multiple dimensions of learning
- evaluate grading practices and policies
- assess student progress.



Evaluating Student Progress



Evaluating Student Progress

Please click the link above to take the quiz.



Supplemental Resources (Optional)



New Challenges & Opportunities

This segment will address challenges that should be considered with possible opportunities for overcoming such challenges.



Challenges

Challenges with Evaluating Student Progress in an Online Environment

- Accomplishing the same outcomes as in a traditional face-to-face course
- Recognizing when students lack understanding (e.g. blank stares in the classroom)
 - Recognizing a student's level of understanding may be achieved through short writing assignments, brief quizzes, or synchronous interaction such as web conferencing sessions (e.g., Centra, Skype, Chat in Blackboard).
- Utilizing tools that enhance learning instead of distracting from learning
 - Avoid utilization of a tool with an elevated learning curve, which may cause the student to spend an abundant amount of time focusing on how to use the tool versus the concepts and content being presented.



Opportunities

Tools that promote active learning by increasing student engagement:

- Discussion Boards
- Virtual Classroom
- Assignment Tool
- Journals
- Blogs
- Wikis
- Groups Tool

Utilize Learning Modules: a "Table of Contents" interface:

- Assures that students complete required items before moving to the next.
- Intertwines lectures, assignments, discussions, tests, etc. in a sequential manner.
- "Package" content and materials in a subject-related manner.

Learning Module or "Table of Contents" View

The screenshot displays a Blackboard Learning Module interface. On the left is a 'Table of Contents' sidebar with a tree view showing sections like 'I. Elements and Design of an...' and 'II. Compare and Contrast'. The main content area is titled 'Methods of Communication' and contains the following text:

It's very important to list all methods of communication that will be utilized throughout the course.

Have at least two methods of communication listed (a primary and secondary method).

- Identify what type of communication will be used for different activities.
- May consider having a general Q&A/FAQ discussion forum. Students can ask general question answers to the whole class.
 - **Result:** Reducing similar e-mails from multiple students.

Consider alternative communication methods. Web conferencing tools and social media that may provide additional conveniences to students trying to reach you. For example, if you use Skype, provide your Skype user name on the syllabus (if you choose to do this create a list of what social media your students use, consider using a short Blackboard survey to use those in the online class.

Create a "mix" of assignments that address multiple dimensions of learning. Try utilizing more reflective activities versus traditional tests, such as:

- Case Studies using the blog and/or wiki tools
 - Wikis are considered an effective tool for engaging online students in collaborative group work.
- Private reflection or journal entries using the journal tool
 - **Example** of a Journal assignment: "Describe three meaningful experiences from week one of your internship. How will those experiences help you as you anticipate starting your new career?"
 - **Faculty**, when using the Journal tool in Blackboard, can open entries within the Journal link, read and grade journal entry, then immediately go to the next entry without leaving the current page.

Journal Entry from Instructor's View

The screenshot shows a Blackboard journal interface. At the top, there is a header for 'Internship' with a dropdown arrow. Below the header, a note states: 'If a Blog or Journal can be graded, a grade assigned to an individual member is applied only to that individual. [More Help](#)'. A yellow button labeled 'Create Journal Entry' is visible. The main content area shows an entry titled 'Week 1, Internship' posted by Cynthia Bowers on Thursday, July 7, 2011 at 7:58:28 AM EDT. The entry text is a placeholder: 'Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipisicing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat. Duis aute irure dolor in reprehenderit in voluptate velit esse cillum dolore eu fugiat nulla pariatur. Excepteur sint occaecat cupidatat non proident, sunt in culpa qui officia deserunt mollit anim id est laborum.' Below the text, there is a 'Comments: 0' link and a 'Comment' button. On the right side, there is a sidebar with 'About this Journal' (Author: Cynthia Bowers, Entries: 1, Comments: 0), 'More Journals' (Show Empty Journals), 'Cynthia Bowers (1)', and an 'Index' section showing 'July 2011(1)' with a link to 'Week 1, Internship'. At the bottom right of the sidebar, there are three icons: a blue star for 'Indicates New Entries', a blue speech bubble for 'Indicates New Comments', and a green person icon for 'Indicates Not Graded User'.

Increase student engagement with discussion boards, group work, wikis, and blogs.

- By utilizing such activities, reflective Journal posts and discussion board threads may account for a greater portion of a student's final grade.
- In turn, traditional tests may become a smaller part of a student's grade by encouraging more student interaction through other activities.

Other suggestions include progressive Interviews with students (more practical in smaller classes).

- Such interviews may start with basic knowledge and continue through more complex comprehension of the subject matter.
- The grade depends upon the level/complexity at which the student can continue to discuss the subject matter. Instead of giving a weekly quiz, have students compose weekly "reflective thinking" journal entries.
- Replace (when applicable) traditional tests with other activities such as case studies.



Course Practices, Policies, & Expectations

In this segment you will find suggestions for developing and conveying course practices, policies, and expectations.



Grading Practices and Policies

Grading Practice

- Provide feedback to students after assignment submissions.
 - Easily utilize "comments field" in the Blackboard grade center.
- Make sure students are clear on the meaning of grading practices; clearly state the grading criteria in the syllabus.
 - In the syllabus, provide a tentative time frame as to when students can expect their grades to be posted.
- Consider adding a rubric to assignments and projects (rubric tool available in Blackboard).
- Consider using color coding schemes to track students' progress in the course (visible only to instructor)

Full Grade Center

This page is static and grades may be entered on the Grade Details page accessed by selecting the table cell for the grade. Use the arrow keys or the tab key to navigate through the Grade Center and the Enter key to submit a grade. [More Help](#)

Accumulated Column	Manage	Reports	Sort Columns By																		
4.00	80.00	100.00	100.00	40.00	100.00	5.00	5.00	40.00	--	--	81.67	60.00	--	--	80.00	60.00	4.00	--	--	--	--

The 'Manage' dropdown menu is open, showing the following options:

- > Grading Periods
- > Grading Schemas
- > Grading Color Codes
- > Categories
- > Smart Views
- > Column Organization
- > Row Visibility
- > Send Email

Grading Policies

- Grading policies should reinforce activities and assignments.
 - **Example:** Include participation as part of the grading scheme if online discussions are utilized in the course.
 - **Example:** Deductions or consequences should be clearly defined for students who go over time limits for tests, submit late assignments, and allocate penalties for plagiarism.
 - **Example:** "If you exceed to the allotted time limit, you will receive a one point deduction for each minute that exceeds the allotted time".



Course Expectations

Communicate Expectations

- Develop specific grading guidelines.
- Articulate the appropriate responses within any online forum. Address etiquette sensitivity to personal and cultural differences
- Grammatical and spelling expectation
- Clearly articulate policies and procedures for taking tests at onset of course. Such policies and procedures may include:
 - Proctoring guidelines
 - Time allowed for tests
 - Unacceptable test-taking practices and associated consequences
 - **Example:** "If it is determined that a student has used notes and/or the course text while taking an exam, the student will automatically receive a failing grade for the course".



Assessment Methods

Assignments

As mentioned in the "Creating Effective DE Syllabi" module, guidelines for how assignments should be submitted, and if late assignments would be accepted should be clearly communicated. The instructor should also provide students with a time frame that feedback will be provided. This practice may assist in reducing the amount of extra correspondence between students and instructor pertaining to feedback for submitted assignments.

Tests

When creating and deploying tests you should be vigilant of the potential for cheating. Many of the consequences for students suspected of cheating should be described and communicated to students within sections of the syllabus that cover course expectations and policies. However, the instructor may wish to address the following when developing tests and guidelines:

- randomize test questions
- display one question at a time
- use of a proctor

Surveys

Providing students with surveys can give instructors a variety of ways to collect pertinent data.

- Pre-test survey allows faculty to test the students' knowledge prior to implementing a particular instructional lesson.
- The Post-test survey will provide faculty with the data to determine if there was an incremental change based on the lesson provided. This method is very useful when determining if an instructional strategy has been effective.
- End-of-Term Surveys allow instructors to gather data on student perceptions of the course, or faculty, and it can also base it on qualitative reflective practices to determine if the course met the stated objectives.



Proctoring Information

- **ECU Proctoring Center**

- The ECU DE Proctoring Center is located at Arlington Crossing, 1914 Arlington Blvd, in Greenville, North Carolina (next to the K&W Cafeteria). Parking is FREE, and spaces are available in front of the building. If there are no spaces available, overflow parking is provided behind the building.
- Proctoring services provided by the ECU DE Proctoring Center are free of charge.
- Hours of operation are Monday-Thursday 9:00 am - 7:00 pm and Friday 9:00 am - 1:00 pm. *Please note:* All exams must be scheduled!
- For more information [click here](#) to visit the Proctoring Center's website.

- **UNC Online Proctoring Network**

- This portal administers an exam proctoring system to accommodate students, faculty and qualified proctors for scheduled proctored exams.
- This portal allows students to search for approved proctors throughout the region and nation.
 - Information about the approved proctors include contact information, associated cost, location, etc.
 - If proctor is not available in a student's area, they can submit a proctor for approval. Approval is handled by portal personnel and must meet certain criteria prior to approval.
- Faculty are responsible for informing their students about the necessity of needing a proctor within the first week of classes. This can be done by providing information on the syllabus and a brief orientation to the system. Furthermore, faculty members are also responsible for providing any conditions of the proctoring location, which might include: the length of exam, if a computer is required, or if the need for close and constant supervision is required. This communication is imperative to ensure students have ample time to make the necessary arrangements.
- For more information [click here](#) to visit the UNC Online Proctoring Network.



Analyzing Student Performance

In the final segment of this learning module, you will be introduced to different tools and methods for analyzing student performance in online courses.



Monitoring Student Progress

Methods for Monitoring Student Progress Using Blackboard Tools

Reports

- can be easily generated for individual students, groups of students, or all students
- can be used to compare students' results
- can be used to quickly and efficiently provide a report to students who desire a progress report.

Early Warning System

- Create rules for assignments and assessments.
- Send emails to students when criteria are met.
- For more information on the Early Warning System, please watch the following video:



Watch Video

Early Warning System

Duration: (3:53)
User: demodules - Added: 7/14/11

[Click here](#) for a closed caption enabled version of the video above.

Performance Dashboard

The performance dashboard allows you to view:

- the last time the course was accessed
- days since student last accessed the course
- >the Review Status (when enabled), allowing tracking of "self-reported" student review of specific content items
- discussion board participation and grades
- any "Early Warning Notifications sent to a student.

Starfish

- Starfish is an early alert tool that works via Blackboard to support student academic success at ECU.
- Faculty can inform students of their academic performance within a course, connecting students to appropriate support resources by:
 - automatically raising flags for a student based on grades, assignment tardiness, and on-line activity
 - sending real-time e-mail notifications to the individual(s) who have specification based on the type of flag raised and the recipients' role in relation to the student
 - notifying a student immediately when the institution has concerns about their academic progress.

For more information about Starfish please contact John Trifilo at trifiloj@ecu.edu.