

Assessing prior learning and performance

The group discussed the importance of assessing prior learning and various ways they accomplished this from self-assessments to more formal assessments. Melinda shared how she has students act out what they like and don't like in public speakers. I shared activities I did early in the semester for self-assessment and goal setting. These are included in the Section 1 ancillaries – see reading reflections, classroom activities, and assignments. Karen discussed her more formal assessment of prior learning and the need to include a fee to the students to cover the time spent doing this.

We discussed how students were not always able to adequately and honestly assess their performance, nor could they provide one another constructive criticism. Teaching how to do this and applying it were discussed as an important goal. See the Section 4 ancillaries – Evaluation Classroom Activity. Also see Section 4 Student Feedback sheets – these are anonymous.

Many instructors include opportunities for self-assessment and reflection throughout the semester, these include:

- goal-setting and regular self-assessments related to what students want to learn, how they feel, and skills they want to attain
- regular, open-book assessments that in addition to knowledge questions ask for one sentence answers to what was their “aha moment” (something they learned) and/or what is still their “muddiest point” (something they still don't understand)
- journal entries online periodically throughout the semester with prompts such as the aha moment and muddiest point, or sets of 5 questions that ask the intern or student to reflect on a rotation (or assignment, etc.)
- 3 self-evaluations during internship (or course) – beginning, midway, and end that reflect on goals, strengths, areas for growth, etc.
- Individual calls with students/interns to discuss progress
- Journaling about competencies/aha moments including what they were doing when learning took place
- One-on-one meetings mid-term

Ideas for assessing performance and progress:

- It was agreed that well crafted grading rubrics are essential. The ancillary materials include numerous examples that can be adapted to other point systems, etc.
- Again, setting clear expectations is critical.

- Providing feedback beginning with what a student did well, being specific, and using phrasing like “areas for improvement” for what missed the mark, are all important.
- Preventing procrastination is a common struggle, especially with group projects.
- The group discussed frustrations with having students work in pairs and groups and how to overcome common problems. Evaluation in these settings can be more challenging. Peer evaluations are commonly done but often don’t seem to be honest even when the instructor has had feedback regarding problems.
- We agreed that all of us, including students, often learn as much or more from our mistakes or when things don’t go well as when they are successful, so to remind ourselves and them of that truth.