STUDENT SELF-ASSESSMENT

3 big ideas to get you started

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Today:

- Why ask students to self-assess?
- What kinds of self-assessment are most helpful?
- Three ideas you can implement:
  - Journal prompts
  - “I can statements”
  - Post-exam self-assessment
Why self-assessment?

■ Self-assessment promotes:
  - Realistic expectations
  - Interim goal-setting and planning
  - Targeted requests for assistance and support

■ Self-assessment can help students:
  - Identify specific areas for improvement as well as strengths
  - Understand how individual assignments or exams represent progress towards larger course goals
Most helpful self-assessments?

- Criteria for self-assessment are clear and rely on concrete student work
- Criteria for self-assessment are linked to progress towards course goals/outcomes
- Self-assessment is linked to planning for improved knowledge and skills, and achievement of goals
Idea #1: Journals

- Periodic short assignments that require students to reflect on their experiences and learning
- Can be included as part of an assignment, or be a separate assignment
- Can be completed in a notebook, as individual assignments, or in Moodle
- Less specific and more reflective than “I can” statements or post-exam self-assessments
- Best for: all levels, but can require a lot of work from faculty in large classes
Before the course begins, decide:

- How many “journal” entries you want students to do
  - How many will be helpful to them? How many do you want to look at?

- What format you want to use
  - Will this be part of a larger assignment? A separate assignment? A journal in Moodle?

- When self-assessment will be most valuable to students
  - Self assessment should be timed to help students understand the importance of key assignments and exams

- How much credit students will get for completing self assessments
Types of journal prompts:

■ Reflection: What did you learn? What do you understand now that you did not before (completing this assignment, having a practical experience etc.)? What are your personal reactions to this experience?

■ Self-assessment: What are your strengths and weaknesses based on your performance on this assignment? Where do you need to improve the most to meet expectations for this course?

■ Planning: What would you do differently next time? What resources or support can you use to improve your performance?
Some resources and ideas for journals:


- Types of reflective assignments: https://student.unsw.edu.au/examples-reflective-writing

- Examples from a language course: http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Arciniegas-LearnersJournals.html

Idea #2: "I can" statements

- Students are given a list of specific statements describing the ability to do certain things that they have practiced/demonstrated during an assignment, homework, or in-class activity.
- This approach is good for introductory or skills-based courses.
- Examples:
  - “I can identify cell structures from a diagram/image.”
  - “I can produce the past tense of the following list of verbs: see; fly; draw; slide; light”
  - “I can evaluate a problem and decide which information is relevant or necessary to solving it.”
How do “I can” statements work?

■ “I can” statements are goals for specific skills, stated in a positive way

■ These statements clearly identify specific skills or knowledge students should have at this point if they are ”on track” to meet course outcome

■ Students can identify areas where they are unsure of their skills or their skills are lower than expected and focus specifically on those areas
“I can” statements tutorial

- https://www.sophia.org/tutorials/i-can-statements-2
Idea #3: Post-exam self-assessment (also called “exam wrappers”)

- When students receive graded work, the professor includes a self-assessment sheet that students fill out and turn in.
- The self-assessment sheet asks students to review and reflect on their work and make a plan for improvement.
- Often the self-assessment sheet will summarize common errors or areas for improvement across the whole class.
- Best for: All levels, with more narrative components helpful at higher levels.
Why use post-exam self-assessments?

- Students often focus on their grade, but do not look at their strengths and weaknesses
- Students often see an exam grade as “fate” or “luck” instead of recognizing that the grade reflects specific strengths and weaknesses
- Self-assessment requires students to review how they prepared, what results they achieved, and what their performance can tell them about their progress
- Some faculty ask students to review their exam wrapper prior to the next assignment/exam
Parts of an "exam wrapper"

Provide information on exam sections/common errors and ask the student to answer questions such as:

- How did the student prepare?
- What errors did the student make? Can they identify trends?
- Based on this reflection, what can the student do to improve? What would the student do differently on the next exam or assignment?
Some examples and resources for post-exam self-assessments:

- [https://teachingcommons.stanford.edu/teaching-talk/exam-wrappers](https://teachingcommons.stanford.edu/teaching-talk/exam-wrappers)

- [http://www.duq.edu/about/centers-and-institutes/center-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-and-learning/exam-wrappers](http://www.duq.edu/about/centers-and-institutes/center-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-and-learning/exam-wrappers)

- [https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/designteach/teach/examwrappers/](https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/designteach/teach/examwrappers/)
Some other self-assessment ideas:

- Online practice tests/quizzes that are similar in format to questions students will have on an upcoming exam
- Online or physical flash cards or other practice mechanisms that help students identify strong/weak areas
- Personal-goal setting and tracking by students
- Surveys that ask students to reflect on their own performance (e.g. on a group project)
- Learning logs that help students track important ideas/knowledge/skills – can be used for group discussion and reflection as well
Summary:

- Self-assessment helps students understand how well they are doing relative to course goals and helps them identify specific areas for improvement.

- Self assessments can help remind students that review materials or help from the faculty member is available.

- Self-assessment trains/encourages students to take responsibility for their own learning.
QUESTIONS?