

YU Assessment Tip of the Month!
August 2016

Please share with your faculty:

Assessment Question: What is the difference between *grading* and *assessment* of learning outcomes?

Grading and assessment are closely related, but differ in some important ways. Grading involves evaluating individual student learning and performance. Grades are often based on more than just students' attainment of learning outcomes. For example, additional criteria in grades many include student's attendance, participation, effort, and preparedness. Assessment, on the other hand, involves gathering evidence about the extent to which learning outcomes have been attained among a group of students. The purpose of assessment is to gather data pertaining to particular learning outcomes for the purpose of improving student learning and instruction. Grades often correlate with assessment outcomes, especially if the grade is largely dependent on student's attainment of the learning outcome and/or factors relating to the attainment of that outcome. Although grades and assessment information are often correlated, it is important not to confound the two. To prevent doing so, it can be helpful to decompose a student's grade on assignment to identify the particular learning outcomes being assessed by the assignment. Using analytic scoring rubrics to objectively assess students' achievement of specific learning outcomes can be a useful way to prevent equating grades with assessment of outcomes. Another way to prevent confounding grading and assessment is for person(s) other than the person assigning the student's grade in a class or on an assignment to collect assessment information. Remember that assessment works best when it is a collaborative process. Organizing faculty to collectively gather assessment information from students other than the ones they teach and grade can be useful to ensure the assessment information is not biased, or confounded with students' grades.

Check Out!: The following two sites from Carnegie Melon provide additional useful information on how to tease apart grading and assessment:

<https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/assessment/basics/grading-assessment.html>

<http://www.cmu.edu/teaching/assessment/howto/basics/grading-assessment.html>

Please share examples of ways in which your program engages in collaborative assessment processes, and/or effectively prevents confounding grading and assessment. If you have examples that you would like to share relating to this topic, please email me and I will post them on [YU's Learning Assessment Website](#).