Zero-Based Evaluation

Reflective Practice Series #5

Welcome to the next installment of our Reflective Practice series! This series gives you a variety of ways to become more of a reflective practitioner.

“Zero-Based Evaluation” helps us take a fresh look at the way our evaluation system for a particular course fits with the course’s learning outcomes. Having to provide yourself with a rationale for each type of evaluation often exposes areas that need changing or adapting. An added benefit is that you will have a solid rationale that you can give to students for all evaluated assignments, which will help make your assignments more “transparent” (see The Practical Professor No. 17 on Transparent Assignments).

Here is the process:

- Select a course.
- Wipe out every evaluation method you use.
- Examine the course outcomes, and if the course is an explicit component of a program or degree, the program or degree outcomes.
- Build an evaluation system that measures only those things that are explicitly identified in the outcome statements – nothing else. Write a clear rationale specifying exactly how each type of evaluation is the best way to measure student progress toward a specific outcome (or outcomes).
- Ask a kind and trusted colleague to honestly review your material and ask skeptical questions (for example, if course outcomes include critical thinking but all of your tests are multiple choice/true-false …) to help clarify your thinking and approaches.

Thanks for your interest! Have a great day!

In the next The Practical Professor: Ask The Practical Professor Series #4
Also available!

Teaching

A series of practical and innovative teaching tips for college faculty

The Top 10…

No. 1 – The All-Important First Day of Class  
No. 2 – Ways to Make Your Teaching Life Easier  
No. 3 – The Crucial Second and Third Classes  
No. 4 – Ways to Show Students that You Respect Them  
No. 5 – Promote Effective Student Study Skills  
No. 6 – Components of a Well-Planned Class  
No. 7 – Observe Your Teaching Tendencies  
No. 8 – Ways to Keep Your Students Learning  
No. 9 – Ways to Get Feedback on Teaching from Students  
No. 10 – Using Short Writing to Assess Learning  
No. 11 – Getting More (and Better) Student Questions  
No. 12 – Mixing Things up Mid-Semester  
No. 13 – Engaging Different Input Preferences  
No. 14 – Helping Students Stay the Journey  
No. 15 – Ways to End Your Course  
No. 16 – Resources for Learning and Teaching  
No. 17 – Create a Memorable AND Functional Syllabus  
No. 18 – Ways to Build Your Students’ Self-Efficacy  
No. 19 – Practical Study Tips to Share with Your Students  
No. 20 – Laddering Thinking Skills  
No. 21 – Learning Based Ways to End Lessons  
No. 22 – Ways and Reasons to Be Vulnerable While Teaching  
No. 23 – Using Student Groups  
No. 24 – Components of a Complete Learning Experience  
No. 25 – Ways to Use Visuals for Learning  
No. 26 – Students’ Locus of Control  
No. 27 – Help Students with Rigorous Writing Assignments  
No. 28 – Ways to Shake Up Your Teaching  
No. 29 – Teaching to Inspire  
No. 30 – Paths to Mindfulness

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