

# Assessment Basics in Law School

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By the end of this session, you will

- Be able to use the basic vocabulary of assessment
- Be able to differentiate evaluation, grading, and related concepts from assessment and recognize the significance of those distinctions
- Be motivated to deepen your understanding of assessment for improving student learning.

# WORDS TO KNOW

- *Assessment*
- *Learning outcomes*
- *Measures*
- *Results & Data*
- *Validity and reliability*
- *Grades*
- *Testing*
- *Evaluation*



Authentic  
assessment is  
designed to **improve**  
**student learning**

It is simply what good teachers do

- Decide what you want students to learn
- Discover if they are learning
- Make changes to improve that learning

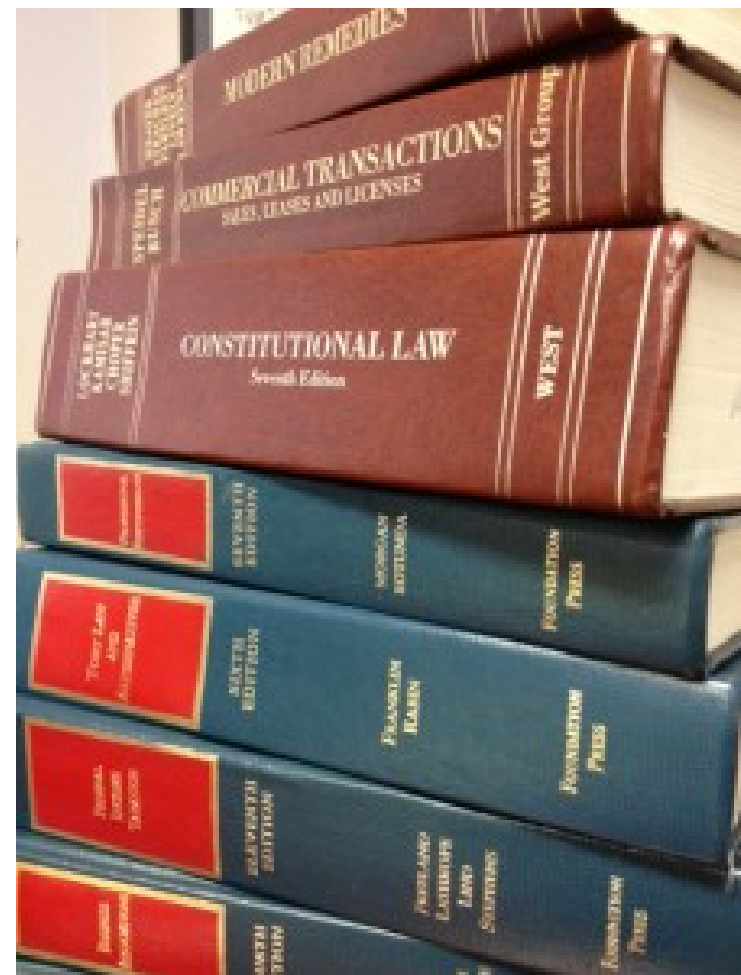




# Learning Outcomes

- **What** do you want students to be able to know, do, believe, or value?
- **How well** do you want them to accomplish this learning?
- **When** do you want them to be able to show their learning? At the end of the class, the unit, the course, or the program?

# The Curse of “Coverage”



- It's not what you cover, it's what they learn
- What do you want them to learn?
- How long do you want them to know it, once learned?

# Measurement

- **How** will you know whether and how well the students have accomplished the learning outcomes you have targeted?
- **When** do you measure student learning?
  - Before learning begins (*diagnostic*)
  - During the learning process (*formative*)
  - At the end of the learning process (*summative*)





# Results & Data

- The purpose of measurement is to **improve learning.**
- Results require interpretation, investigation, and response.
- Not all results need to be quantitative



# Evaluating Results (Validity & Reliability)

- Are the results valid and reliable? That is, do the results actually measure what you intend them to measure? How likely is it that the results would vary with differences in context?
- Summarize results in a meaningful way (percentages, categories, narrative)
- Involve students in analysis; Compare results with others

# Sharing Assessment Results (Feedback)

- Specific, positive and constructive
- Descriptive
- Timely
- Identifying specific next steps to improve performance





# Grades

## What does a grade mean?

| <b>Letter Grade</b>        | <b>Numerical Equivalent</b>                |
|----------------------------|--|
| A - Excellent              | 94 - 100                                   |
| B - Good                   | 86 - 93                                    |
| C - Satisfactory           | 78 - 85                                    |
| D - Passing                | 70 - 77                                    |
| F - Failing                | Below 70                                   |
| W - Official<br>Withdrawal | See Cancellation and<br>Termination Policy |



# Turning exams into assessment measures

- Design exams with outcomes in mind
- Describe varying levels of performance on that question/performance (Rubrics)
- Keep track of student performance as you grade

# Tests

- Assessment does not require a “test”
- Assessment can be based on
  - observation of student performance of skills in simulated or actual practice
  - surveys, interviews or focus groups gathering the opinions of peers or others who have information about the students’ learning.
  - student reflections on their experience or learning

# Reflection and Self- Assessment

- What did you do? What did you learn? How well did you learn? (provide criteria) What will you do with what you learned?
- Reflection can not only provide self-assessment but can teach independent learning skills (“metacognition”)
- Include opportunities for feedback

# Evaluation

- Assessment is designed to improve student learning
- Evaluation is designed to improve the processes, programs, and people who provide that learning.



# Self Assessment Quiz

- *Assessment*
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## Some Closing Thoughts ...

- There is no perfect approach to assessment
- Assessment is always a work in progress, and it's ok if things don't go perfectly
- Assessment is about *lessons learned* in the efforts to enhance learning/teaching

