

Christa Brown
Speech Communication Department
Capstone Project for CETL Teaching Certificate
Presented on April 20, 2005

Classroom Assessment Techniques

In the December meeting we discussed different classroom assessment techniques in addition to the usual mid-term, final exam and year-end course evaluations. I felt this was an area which the students and I could really benefit. While the peer review is something I must have done every year, I find that I get little to no actually helpful feedback and the teaching evaluation coming from my students who see me everyday makes more sense anyway.

I am teaching 4 Public Speaking courses this semester and found a few effective ways to assess what the students are learning in the course. My students write reflection papers at the end of the semester about their speeches, what they have learned and how they have evolved or improved based on what we learned in class. They have to watch their first and last major speeches to actually see the process and changes in their presentations.

My students are also doing a more in depth evaluation of the course and my teaching than just the end of the year standard one. In the more in depth evaluation they answer questions such as *Are you learning something new? Do you like this class? Do you think this class will help you in the future? How would you grade yourself? Etc.*

Knowing that many students don't read their textbook before class or even up until they are cramming for the upcoming exam, I implemented an assessment technique which has worked very well. I tell students in preparation for the next class's lecture, they must at least skim the chapters to be covered and come to class with at least one discussion question for each chapter we will discuss. I have had great luck with this and find that the students are actually finding interesting things to talk about in regards to the chapter being discussed. I tell them they can bring a question, an issue they want to address, or an experience or something they would like to share relevant to the topic matter.

Another assessment tool I implemented is the idea of the *Muddiest Point*. I found this idea to be intriguing when we discussed it in our meeting. I usually do some activities following my lecture to allow students to apply what they have just learned from some part of the lecture. But I like the idea of asking the students to write a paragraph or so about the part of the lecture which was most difficult to understand so we can discuss it further in the next class period. Students seem to be learning more and aren't so afraid to tell me what areas they might not have fully understood when they write it on paper. There are no repercussions from other students if the question or need for clarification seems stupid or silly.

All in all, I found this to be just one of many areas I have implemented from my experience in the CETL Teaching Certificate Program. My students seem to be doing better and I really enjoy the feedback. I am able to make changes throughout the semester instead of waiting for the end of the year evaluations when it is too late for the current students who can benefit from the changes.