258  Do grades reflect student learning? K. Machinmes*, Patton College of Education, Ohio University, Athens, OH.

Student learning has always been assessed by grades but what do grades really measure? Do grades measure if students can apply their knowledge or if they can transfer their learning from one other scholarly environment to another? Instructors may not be able to eliminate the need to assign grades, but transforming the assignment is crucial. It is critical to teach students to be lifelong learners capable of transferring knowledge and skills from one condition to another. This session will focus on the development of projects that embrace experiential learning and enhance transferability of learning.

259  Are “learning styles” real and do they impact learning assessment? T. Kitchel*, The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH.

For decades, there has been much discussion over the role of learning styles in the teaching and learning process. Critics of the learning styles movement would say it’s stereotyping learning and learners in a way that is not helpful for student learning. Champions would say the area of learning styles helps teachers understand their students better and therefore assists in the process of tailoring teaching to student needs. But, what does science say and what does practice support? In this session, we will unpack learning styles and its role in the teaching and learning process. In particular, we will talk about different ways learning styles have been operationalized, ways learning styles have been espoused to be use, and the connection, if any, to student learning. And, we will answer the question, if not learning styles, then what do we use?

Key Words: teaching, learning, assessment

260  Why do we assess? D. Guberman*, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN.

Most of us rely upon a multi-interval grading schema (A, B, C, etc.), but there is little consensus regarding what these symbols mean. Three common views include: a measure of student learning and growth, a representation of student achievement, and a comparison of achievement between students. Currently, our grading systems are opaque, transcripts give no indication of a particular class’s grading philosophy, and few instructors openly discuss their philosophies with their students. In this presentation, I seek to spark a discussion about this core artifact of student achievement and assessment, focusing on 3 points rooted in existing scholarship: (1) Research on teaching and learning has highlighted the importance of transparency for student success. While these discussions have often focused on the level of individual assignments, I hypothesize that the same is true at the level of courses and grades. I ask that we self-reflect on what we want to communicate with grades and how we can share this message with our students. (2) Current grading systems can cause harm, as evidenced in research on stereotype threat, social belonging, and growth mindsets. Thus, these practices contribute to achievement and completion gaps that disproportionately impact underrepresented students, first-generation students, and students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. (3) There are alternatives to current grading systems, such as competency-based systems and developmental feedback systems. I offer concrete ideas for how we can structure entire classes without grades, as well as how we can create “ungraded” structures within current systems. Current grading schemes are symbolic of the banking system of education, in which instructors deposit knowledge into students, students regurgitate that knowledge on demand, and the relationship ends when the students are sorted into an order based on their regurgitational prowess. By moving to other systems, we find opportunities to embrace higher education as more than feeding facts and skills. Education becomes a practice of freedom, which will leave students empowered to make meaningful decisions in complex situations throughout their lives, while contributing productively to a democratic society.

Key Words: pedagogy, assessment, inclusion

261  Methods of assessing learning utilized by university faculty in animal and dairy science programs. A. J. Carpenter*1, E. L. Karcher2, and C. C. Williams3, 1Department of Animal Biosciences, University of Guelph, Guelph, ON, Canada, 2Department of Animal Sciences, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN, 3School of Animal Sciences, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA.

Educators have a wide variety of assessment styles available to determine whether students are achieving the stated learning outcomes for a course, and the assessment chosen by an educator may be determined by several factors, including the educator’s teaching style, the course content, the course level, and the size of the course. An electronic survey was distributed to members of the American Dairy Science Association to collect feedback from dairy and animal science educators in post-secondary education on the methods that they use for assessing student learning. Questions were asked to determine level of education and experience, teaching load, course expectations, methods of assessment, and attitudes toward using technology for assessing student learning. Educators may benefit from hearing about the various assessment strategies used by their peers and learn new ways of evaluating their students’ knowledge.

Key Words: learning, education, assessment