

Blending Evaluative and Formative Assessment

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Evaluative Exercise

- Quiz
 - problems similar to exam problems, but half as many
 - 30 minutes under exam conditions
- Stop – reflect
- Surprise: opportunity to revise responses
 - consult peers (20 min)
 - discuss as a class (10 min)

Background

- Linear Algebra class: transition to upper level
- Previous semester:
 - course structure:
 - practice problems (homework)
 - written work: homework problems, short reports on in-class activities, 2 modeling projects
 - 2 midterm exams, final exam
 - mid-semester feedback: more guidance for exam preparation
 - practice quizzes (optional, outside of class)
 - organized student-led review sessions for exams

Goals for new evaluative exercises

- guide students through transition to upper level
 - reflection, self-evaluation
 - resist the urge to provide more and more review materials
- clearer expectations for exams
- cover same material
 - less time on first pass
 - more time for synthesis/review
- significant learning experience

Structure

- 3 quizzes on syllabus, each like half an exam
- 10% of overall grade
 - from written, which was reduced from 50% to 40%
- opportunity to revise answers was a surprize (not essential)
- individual/groups/whole class (30/20/10 min)
- final product is graded as if it were an exam

The Quiz, In Practice

- many students unfinished after first 30 minutes
 - 1st reality check
- lively discussion among peers
 - worked out most questions
- hardest/subtlest questions discussed as a class
- median scores: 88, 89, 88 (%)
 - 2nd reality check

Outcomes

- improved exam scores
 - medians: + 15, + 4, + 7 (Exam 1, 2, Final)
- students considered them helpful
- I was pleased
 - significant in-class learning
 - provide two “reality checks”
 - low grading burden