The Curious Aggies project

UC Davis Undergraduates Ask Provocative Questions About Learning

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Mahalia White, Assessment Research Fellow
What is the purpose of assessment?
We believe...

Assessment promotes equity and inclusivity through inquiry.

• What do you want to know? Why?
• What will you do with what you learn?
• Do your students know what you want them to learn?
Why clarity matters

Students’ “perceived ability to reach goals” (Thibodeaux, Harapnuik, & Cummings, 2019 p. 52) influences their sense of ownership of their own learning.
Why clarity matters

Titsworth, Mazer, Goodboy, Bolkan, and Myers (2015) explain that “higher levels of clarity are associated with higher levels of student learning” (p. 394).
Whose voices are missing?

Montenegro and Jankowski (2020) recommend that assessment practitioners engage meaningfully with students “as opposed to trial and error, or implementing ‘what worked for me when I was a student’” (p. 10).
How do we engage meaningfully with students?

Ask them.
We were curious about...

• How students know what teachers expect from them?
• How students find out teachers’ learning expectations?
Pilot logistics

• Data collection
  • In-person interviews; survey
  • Challenges

• Data analysis
  • Content & thematic analysis
What did we learn from the pilot?

Create an opportunity for students to ask students questions about how they know what faculty expect them to learn.
What is the Curious Aggies project?

“A student-led project that invites students to actively participate in conversations about student learning.” – Mahalia
The Curious Aggies projects engages students in efforts to promote transparency and inclusivity in campus discussions about how to improve student learning. --Kara
Why do we think this is important?

We need to be the change we want to see within our education systems, and that begins with answering these types of questions. – Laura
Why do we think this is important?

Participating in this project validates students’ experiences and can inspire a change to improve student learning experiences at UC Davis. – Mahalia
Our current plan

Student Assessment Research (StAR) Fellows co-designed the revised survey & interview protocol; and developed recruitment plan, leveraging their networks to reach as many students as possible.
We're curious about *how* you find out what you are expected to learn in your courses.

In how many of your courses **THIS QUARTER** are the following statements **TRUE**?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0 courses</th>
<th>1 course</th>
<th>2 courses</th>
<th>3 courses</th>
<th>4 courses</th>
<th>5 or more courses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I read the syllabus, which described what I was expected to learn.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I found the expectations for my learning on CANVAS.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My instructor(s) explained what I was expected to learn in the class.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) TA(s) explained what I was expected to learn in the class.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions on the exam(s) clarified what I was expected to learn.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions in the homework clarified what I was expected to learn.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Practice tests clarified what I was expected to learn.

The instructor’s slides stated what we were expected to learn.

I found out the learning expectations during office hours.

Other students in the class told me what we were expected to learn.

Other (please describe)
We are curious about when you found out what you are expected in your courses this quarter.

In how many of your courses **THIS QUARTER** are the following statements **TRUE**?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1 course</th>
<th>2 courses</th>
<th>3 courses</th>
<th>4 courses</th>
<th>5 or more courses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I found out what I was expected to learn in Week 1.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I found out what I was expected to learn in Weeks 4-6.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have not yet found out expectations for learning.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We’re curious about potential strategies you use to find out the learning goals / expectations in your courses.

*In general*, when you *DO NOT KNOW* what you are expected to learn in a course, how frequently do you do the following?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I do nothing</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I ask the professor(s).</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I ask the TA(s).</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I ask other students.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I look into resources on CANVAS.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I read the syllabus.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I participate in study groups.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I figure out what the learning expectations are by attending the lectures.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I find out what the learning expectations are once I take the first test/exam.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please describe)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We are curious about how confident you are that you know what you're expected to learn in the courses you are taking this quarter.

In how many of your courses **THIS QUARTER** are the following statements **TRUE**?

- I am NOT confident that I know what I am expected to learn in...
  - 0 courses
  - 1 course
  - 2 courses
  - 3 courses
  - 4 courses
  - 5 or more courses

- I am SOMEWHAT confident that I know what I am expected to learn in...
  - 0 courses
  - 1 course
  - 2 courses
  - 3 courses
  - 4 courses
  - 5 or more courses

- I am VERY confident that I know what I am expected to learn in...
  - 0 courses
  - 1 course
  - 2 courses
  - 3 courses
  - 4 courses
  - 5 or more courses
And now we wait...

Project under review by Institutional Review Board

See you at the WSCUC Academic Resource Conference to hear our results!
Kara
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Mahalia
https://assessment.ucdavis.edu/people/mahalia-white