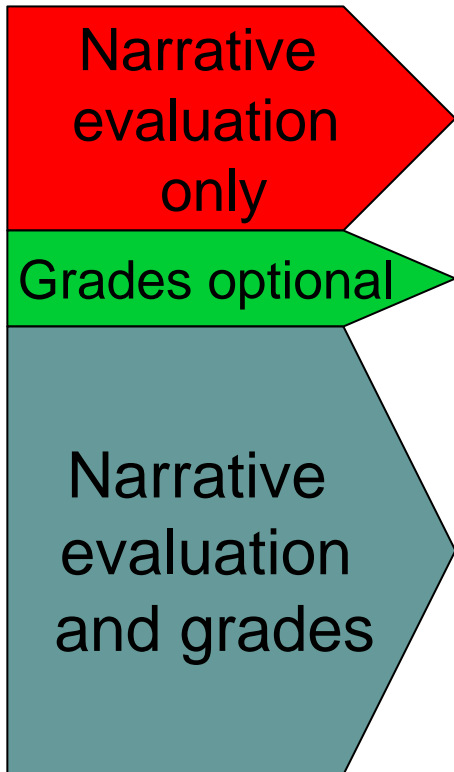


Alternatives or additions to grades

- The narrative evaluation
 - A written summary of performance in the class
 - A critical review for improvement and assessment
- Alternative or complementary to grades

Schools using narrative evaluations



- [·New College of Florida](#), 1960, 750 students
- [·Fairhaven College of WWU](#) 1967, 400 students
- [·Hampshire College](#) 1965, 1350 students
- [·The Evergreen State College](#) 1971, 4500 students
- [·Bennington College](#) 1925, 671 students
- [·University of California, Santa Cruz](#) 1965. 15,000 stud.
- [·Sarah Lawrence College](#) 1926, 1,260 students
- [·St. John's College](#) 1696, 900 students
- [·Antioch College](#) 1852, 500 students
- Other schools have some form of pass/fail, grade and narrative evaluation system in place for a portion of their curriculum.

1 in 2000 American undergraduates earns only evaluations

Pros and cons

Benefits

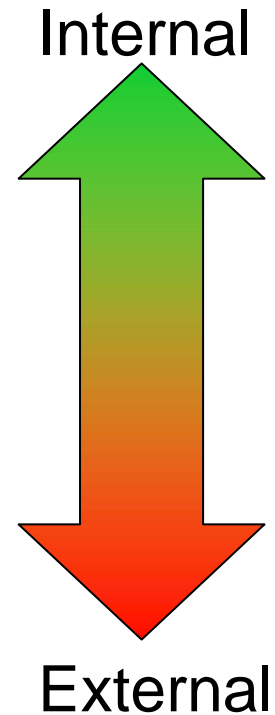
- Learning for its own sake
- More feedback
- Explore new subjects
- Attracts the self-motivated
- No grade inflation
- Scholarly engagement
- Improvement
- Students can fail

Drawbacks

- Time consuming
- More costly to administer
- Not good for large classes
- Not universally accepted
- Difficult to evaluate overall performance
- Results depend on student quality

No carrot or stick?

- Work is done for personal learning
- Social norms encourage “extra learning”
- Evaluations are very important
- All a student has is a reputation
 - Among students
 - Among faculty



But how do you get into ...?

- Recommendations
- Standardized tests
- Work experience and research
- Good essays
- The reputation of the school's graduates

Example

Name

Biochemistry: I

satisfactory unsatisfactory incomplete

Course description

and function,
plication

information

in this
arly and
id
etwork

y assignment

critique

“You did a satisfactory job on the first exam. You did well on questions involving protein folding, primary structure determination, and the relationship between ΔG and pK_a . You could improve on your knowledge of amino acid charges, properties and pK_a 's, compensating mutations, protons and buffering, and allosteric binding.”

Using narrative evaluations

- Can be used at any school to supplement student learning
- Know your audience: student vs. employer
 1. Assess each assignment
 2. Form a summary
 3. Organize

General forms

Skills

- Most common
- Notes skills demonstrated in each assignment

Developmental

- Student as learner and their growth

Project

- Uses 1 or more projects as a demonstration of how student thinks and what was accomplished

Common elements:

1. course description
2. learning objectives
3. summary paragraph

Writing useful evaluations

- **Organize.** Headings and structure let students know what you are evaluating.
- **Be specific.** Cite examples and critique performance after giving an overall summary of performance.
- **Make suggestions.** Tell the student how to improve their weaknesses.