

University of Northern Iowa CQI Report for 2025-2026

This page offers a summary of the assessment strategies used during the 2025–2026 academic year. The following pages share the types of course enhancements made by faculty, along with examples of assessments and related activities from selected courses.

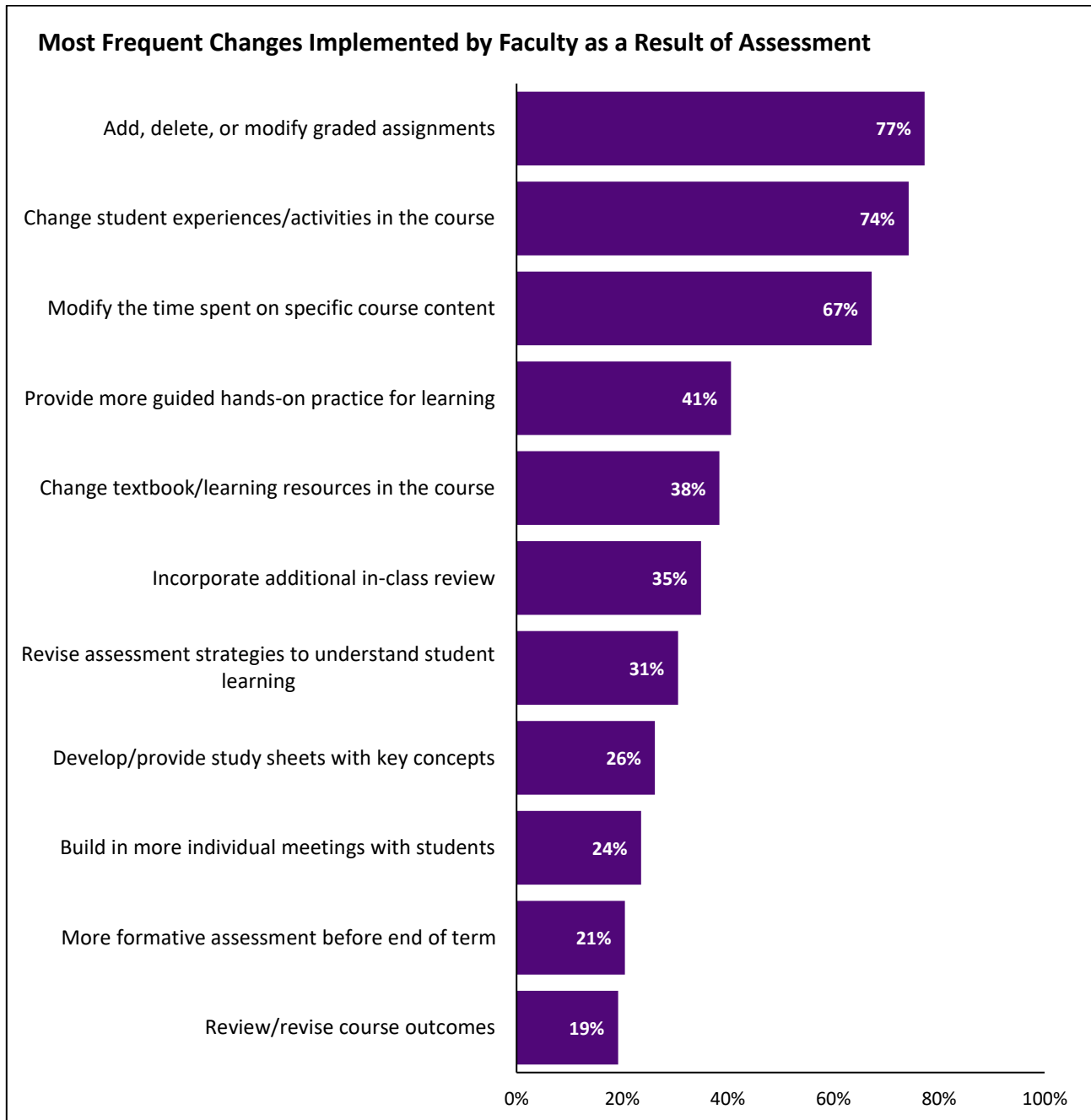
Continuous Improvement in University of Northern Iowa Courses	
<i>May 2026</i>	Report Date
<i>Summer 2025 – Spring 2026</i>	Report Period
Number of Courses, Students Enrolled	
<i>92 courses 449 sections</i>	Total Number of Courses Offered (enrollment > or = 100 students) Total Number of Sections Offered in 2025-2026 (enrollment > or = 100 students)
<i>84,588</i>	Total Student Enrollment in Courses
Number of Courses ¹ Utilizing Continuous Improvement Strategies and Percent of Respondents Reporting	
173	Graded homework assignments (76%)
164	Locally developed tests or quizzes (72%)
134	Observation of students doing in-class activities (59%)
126	Student understanding of content and concepts as revealed in class discussions (55%)
107	Written or oral student reflections on their experiences and/or learning (47%)
105	Rubrics or evaluation forms for individual project(s) (46%)
84	Specific questions on tests or quizzes (37%)
74	Discussion in individual meetings with students (32%)
57	Formative (non-graded) assessments over the term (25%)
52	Rubrics or evaluation forms for culminating project(s) (23%)
50	Faculty assessment of presentations or projects (22%)
50	Journaling, discussion boards, blog (22%)
49	Review of midterm and final grade distributions (21%)
44	Comparison of course syllabi and/or assignments across sections (19%)
41	Surveys of student perceptions of learning (18%)
38	Evaluation of student performance in simulations activities (17%)
38	Faculty discussion of student performance across sections of course (17%)
36	Peer assessment of presentations or projects (16%)
24	Clicker questions or polling activities (11%)
23	Evaluation of student performance in subsequent courses (10%)
21	Field experience evaluation forms (9%)
18	Department/program monitoring of DFW rates (8%)
18	Conduct pre- & post-tests (8%)

¹ Total number of strategies in use is greater than the total number of courses because many courses employ more than one continuous improvement strategy.

Other responses for assessing student learning included: supplementary written assignments, presentations, review of lesson plans, feedback on presentations and projects, participation in in-person community of practice events, observation of student teaching, and self-guided lab activities.

Overview of CQI Activities at UNI

In the Qualtrics survey distributed in April and May 2026 to faculty teaching courses with 100 or more students per year, one question focused on the types of changes faculty were implementing as they collected assessment data and pursued continuous improvement. The table below provides a summary of faculty responses.



Selected Examples of Assessments

The Qualtrics survey responses for the 2025-2026 academic year included many examples of the efforts made by faculty to keep their courses current and engaging and to support student learning. The examples below are just a very small sample of those provided.

Criminal Justice Systems (CRIM:2022): I use discussions, applied assignments, experiential learning, and written assessments to evaluate student understanding of the criminal justice system. Through early assessments, I found that while students could describe components such as law enforcement, courts, and corrections, they often struggled to apply concepts and relied on personal opinions rather than evidence-based reasoning. In response, I incorporated more structured, scenario-based activities and case analyses that require students to apply concepts such as discretion and due process to real-world situations. I also revised assignment expectations to more explicitly require the use of course terminology and supporting evidence. Additionally, I integrated experiential learning through a jail tour, followed by a structured reflection assignment that requires students to connect their observations to course concepts related to corrections and institutional practices. I also increased the use of low-stakes, in-class activities to allow students to practice applying concepts before completing higher-stakes work, which helps identify gaps in understanding early. As a result of these changes, students demonstrate stronger engagement and an improved ability to connect theory to practice in both discussions and written work.

Development and Learning in Sociocultural Contexts (EDPSYCH:2068): The assessment tools used in this course have evolved over multiple semesters. In earlier offerings, a combination of short quizzes/tests and large group projects was implemented; however, these formats did not consistently foster meaningful student interaction. To promote peer teaching and exposure to diverse perspectives, the course now incorporates multiple in-class group activities throughout the semester. Students work collaboratively to discuss and respond to guided questions that address topics such as the influence of early developmental contexts on later outcomes, reflections on personal metacognitive knowledge and strategy use, and theory-based approaches for supporting multilingual learners. These revisions provide students with continual opportunities to recall and apply previously learned concepts while integrating new material, thereby supporting the development of a strong and coherent foundational understanding over the course of the semester.

Family Relationships (FAM SERV:1020): I utilize a variety of instructional methods and assessment techniques. Students get hands on learning and application of theory through interviews with friends and family. They are assessed through weekly quizzes on textbook materials. This gives me frequent feedback and allows for quicker intervention and support of it is found students struggle with particular content areas. The final presentation/paper has been modified to allow students to either submit in a paper format or a presentation to best allow for them to demonstrate their learning in a method that they resonate with and works for them.

General Physics I (PHYSICS:1511): I employ a variety of active learning strategies to foster conceptual understanding. In my General Physics courses, I use Mastering Physics assignments and analyze student performance data to identify areas of difficulty. I employ clicker-based think-pair-share questions to diagnose misconceptions in real time and adjust instruction accordingly. After implementing this method, the percentage of students correctly answering conceptual exam questions increased significantly. In group settings, students collaboratively solve problems on whiteboards or engage in workbook-based activities that require teamwork and verbal reasoning. I regularly incorporate in-class demonstrations, slow-motion video analysis, and PhET simulations to illustrate core physical principles. These approaches are particularly effective in large, mixed-major courses where student backgrounds vary widely.

Strategies for Academic Success (UNIV:1055): For this course, one key insight from our assessment was the value of structured peer support. We found the bi-weekly coaching sessions with peer coaches to be highly beneficial. During these sessions, students were more willing to open up and confide in their peers, and the peer coaches were able to provide helpful resources and guidance in a way that felt approachable and supportive. At the same time, we recognized a gap in our own connection with students. From an instructor perspective, there was a noticeable disconnect early in the semester, and we did not begin to build strong rapport with students until around mid-semester. Based on this realization, we made a change to the course in the following term. In the fall, we introduced intentional 1:1 meetings with students, meeting with each student twice a semester. These meetings were designed to get to know students more holistically, understand their experiences, and identify any potential barriers impacting their success. This proactive approach allowed us to provide more personalized support and foster stronger relationships earlier in the course, ultimately enhancing student engagement and learning.

Strategic Management (MGMT:4175): I use a combination of chalkboard work and skeleton notes, so students actively engage with the material during class rather than passively copying finished solutions. I have developed in-class worksheets with practice problems that give students hands-on experience applying concepts in real time, and I collect these for completion to identify areas where students are struggling so I can adjust instruction accordingly. I have also revised major assignments to improve student awareness of the strengths and limitations of AI by incorporating activities where students evaluate AI-generated responses for accuracy and bias, and I require a brief reflection on any AI tools used so students develop the habit of thinking critically about these tools rather than relying on them uncritically. Additionally, I provide structured study guides organized around learning objectives and practice problems to help students prepare more effectively for assessments.

Teaching Methods I: Elementary Curriculum (EDUC:2302): I use multiple forms of assessment to evaluate student's progress toward learning outcomes and to inform instructional adjustments. Students analyze lesson plans for key components and make targeted adaptations, then apply this learning by collaboratively designing and teaching a group lesson that incorporates effective lesson planning practices. These lessons are framed through the lens of diverse learners, encouraging students to consider how factors such as culture, language, and individual needs shape instruction. In addition, students complete eight low-stakes, UDL-inspired reflections in varied formats based on course texts. These reflections provide insight into the theoretical understandings students are developing throughout the course. Through these assessments, I have learned that while students can identify elements of effective lesson planning, they benefit from more explicit support in applying these components in practice. In response, I have refined assignment scaffolds and provided clearer connections between analysis and application tasks. I also plan to implement an end-of-semester student survey to gather more targeted feedback and continue improving the course to better support student learning.

Elementary Teaching (EDUC:4134): In 2025, a team of COE faculty and administrators conducted a peer review of comparable teacher education programs to determine best practices in supervising and evaluating student teachers. One of the outcomes was to create common weekly seminars for student teachers that support them through their experience. Through this work, the Student Teaching Coordinator team aligned student learning outcomes to the student teaching seminars, key assessments and assignments, and field experiences. This work is underway and expected to be implemented in the fall of 2026.