ASSESSMENT THEORY & PRACTICE
for Academic Librarians and
Information Literacy Outcomes

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Friday, December 16, 2016
Pre-Reading

Readings


Video

**My Terms**

- **Assessment:** the collection of information for the purpose of making a decision.

- **Evaluation:** the judgment of merit/value for a set of data.

- **Testing:** determining the upper and lower limits of a student’s knowledge, skill etc.
Assessments for....

- Program Planning
  - What to teach, how to teach
- Program Progress Monitoring
  - Progress toward learning outcomes
- Program objective/outcome achievement
  - Essential and Important Qs answered
Assessment Used to Answer Questions:

**Essential Qs:**
- Did students/How many students demonstrate targeted learning outcomes?
  - E.g., Find, Use, Analyze Information
- Did instructor use targeted teaching, grading, feedback, assessment strategies?

**Important Qs:**
- How quickly? How often?
- How thoroughly?
- Which aspects of targeted topic understood?
- Which students succeeded? Which did not?
- When/where were strategies used?
- How satisfied were students? instructors?
- ......

Two Forms of Assessment:

- **Formative**
  - Use data to inform, teach and modify future efforts

- **Summative**
  - Use data to evaluate right/wrong; achieved, not achieved targeted skills/knowledge; pass/no pass
Instructor’s Responsibility

1. **Engage** students in constructive learning
2. **Teach** with demos, examples, explanations, instructions, feedback
3. **Evaluate** what the students have learned and assign a grade to reflect the quality of that learning.
Recognize the Many Purposes of Assessment

Evaluate: judge
Communicate/Teach: feedback
Motivate/Engage: encourage
Organize: mark time
Clarify Your Purpose: Activity #1

To evaluate?

To Motivate/Engage?

To Teach? and provide opportunity for practice/feedback?
To Evaluate?  
To Motivate/Engage?  
To Teach?

1. Quiz: multiple choice Q/A  
2. Points for attendance  
3. Case study for online discussion  
4. Online simulation with review questions  
5. Critique a classmate’s essay or product  
6. 1500-word essay on assigned topic/question  
7. Report on outcome of first lab/field experience  
8. Weekly journal of applied experiences  
9. Power-point presentation of group’s project findings  
10. Outline for scholarly paper  
11. Weekly discussion contributions  
12. Abstract/summary of weekly assigned readings  
13. 1 minute paper on “what I learned today in class” to exit class session  
14. 1 paragraph paper on “what I learned in yesterday’s class” to enter.  
15. Final exam  
16. Completion of 20 practice problems  
17. Your example…….
Dilemma #1

Students want to be acknowledged (graded) for their efforts!

e.g., “But I worked for days on this!”

Q: Should we evaluate student outcomes or student efforts?
If **effort** is rewarded it should carry far less weight (+/- 0, 1, 2 pts) in Final Grade than outcome knowledge/skill

**for example:**

- Attendance
- # of Abstracts/Chapter Reviews
- Study questions
- Self-guided quizzes
- 1-minute papers
UNL Grading System

- **A+/A** = 4.0  
  Excellent

- **A-** = 3.67  
  Outstanding

- **B+** = 3.33  
  Expected/
  Acceptable

- **B** = 3.0

- **B-** = 2.67

- **C+** = 2.33  
  PASS

- **C** = 2.0  
  Gaps in knowledge or skill

- **C-** = 1.67  
  Passing grade

- **D+** = 1.33  
  Fail

- **D** = 1.0

- **D-** = .67

- **F** = 0

- **P** = Pass

- **N** = No Pass

- **I** = Incomplete

- **W** = Withdrew
Dilemma #2

Students take grading personally

(How can I be sensitive to this fact?)
Focus on the process/product, not the person

“The first paragraph lacks a clear topic”
  ◦ NOT: You don’t have a topic.

“It (the product) did not have enough detail.”
  -NOT: You were vague.

“The data in the graph do not suggest change as suggested in paragraph 5.”
  -NOT: Your data don’t support your statements
Make Assessments Instructional

Consider SOAP feedback

Use Grading Rubrics

(and share rubric with student before and after grading)
SOAP feedback

- Subjective comments on overall assignment
- Objective specific comments to support
- Assess/Assign a grade
- Provide strategies for improvement
Building a Rubric

1. Describe qualities/quantities associated with expected outcome by component or sections

2. Anchor with unacceptable product/performance by component or sections
   (e.g., missing, NOT X)

3. Fill in with 1-3 levels in-between by component or sections
   (e.g. Missing one element, acronyms without full titles, misplaced content)
Information Literacy Outcomes:

**Assessment Map**

<table>
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<th>Outcome</th>
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Online Resources on Assessment/Grading

Go to:
http://www.unl.edu/gtahandbook/evaluating-learning-and-assessing-teaching
Activity: Practice SOAP feedback

Read the Philosophy Statements. Select one (a) or (b) and write your feedback to the student using the SOAP method.
Activity: Use a Rubric
Activity: Building a Rubric

1. Describe qualities/quantities associated with expected outcome by component or sections

2. Anchor with unacceptable product/performance by component or sections
   (e.g., missing, NOT X)

3. Fill in with 1-3 levels in-between by component or sections
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SAMPLE

Reflection on Teaching
An example of how I use my teaching reflections in the Sped 860 course.
Sped 860: Issues in ECSE

- **Format**: Blackboard.unl.edu and phone/TV distance and on-campus students in same course

- **Enrollment**: 2002 = 10  2003 = 11  2004 = 14

- **Students**: Graduate-level ECSE, Ed Psych, Speech Path, Psych, ECE, SpEd;
I was amazed and embarrassed to discover that I had course objectives I never taught, I had course objectives I taught but never assessed, I had course objectives I assessed and never taught, and I had material I taught and assessed but never listed as a course objective.

By reorganizing the goals of my course, developing rubrics for evaluating student work, and assessing my classroom activities, I now have a focused approach for linking my teaching to my students’ learning.

- Dr. Chris Marvin, 2001
Adjustments Made for 2003

- Simplified Syllabus
- Linked Readings/assignments to objectives
- Clustered content into modules for independent study
- Reduced reading
  - Required research reviews
  - Assigned points for reviews and discussions
- Required two 1500-word essays and two critiques
  - Eliminated exams
  - Moved study questions into 10 repeatable quizzes
- Encouraged a philosophy statement
- Reduced number of broadcasts; increased phone contact
Inquiry #1 Findings:

- Increased student time commitments to class reading and activities
- Increased factual knowledge
- Low level critical thinking in essays
- Weak philosophy statements
- Change in student evaluations
  - Effective use of classtime, instructor responsiveness
- Increased Instructor satisfaction with delivery and outcomes
Adjustments Made for 2004:

- Rewrote Essay questions to better match course objectives (higher level)
- Required Philosophy Statement in 3 drafts before final submission
- Reduced # of readings
- Partnered students for discussions
- Increased essays to four plus four critiques
- Dropped broadcasts
Inquiry #2 Findings

- Increased cognitive complexity of instructor essay questions and student answers
- Increased cognitive complexity of online discussions
- Increased quality of students’ writing
- More complete and sophisticated philosophy statements
- Increased instructor satisfaction
Student Comments 2001-03

- “I have been more nervous about this class than others I have taken. I feel more unsure of myself.” -2001

- “I will say that the weekly meetings were so extremely helpful to me in bringing everything together.” -2002

- “Class discussions would be better if the instructor did some lecture type teaching. Everyone is not successful at reading the information.” -2003
“I appreciate the fact that there was no “busy work” … Grades were based on activities that really made you pull together and articulate your understanding of the core issues.” –2004

“I really enjoyed being able to retake the quizzes. This allowed my efforts to be driven by my desire to understand vs. my stress to get an “A”. “ –2004

“I am not a Special Education major. I feel like this class helped me understand early intervention and my role in supporting its use. I also feel like I know how to access more information in this area.” –2004
External Reviewer Comments

- Course objectives appear appropriate
- Syllabus appropriately outlines course expectations and intellectual goals
- Students’ performance appears appropriate for this course
- Linkage between teaching and learning appears evident
External Reviewer Comments

- Consider direct examination of recommended practices
- Reconsider choice of text
- Consider having students evaluate applied web-sites from theoretical or research perspective
- Assign points for philosophy statements
- Go beyond knowledge of laws to “recognize practices congruent or not with law”
- Check use of person-first language
- Consider student observation of ECSE setting/practitioner