Assessing Student Learning Outcomes

#Texas Tuning Event

Nancy Quam-Wickham, Ph.D.
Washington State University and Long Beach State University
Tuning’s Essential Question

1. What should your students know and be able to do upon completion of a course, certificate, minor, degree?
Tuning’s 2\textsuperscript{nd} (& 3\textsuperscript{rd}) Essential Question(s)

2. How do we, as instructors, help our students meet our expectations?
3. And how do we know when they have met our expectations?
Assessment:
What it is and why we do it.
Assessment of Student Learning is

- A **systematic** way to evaluate student achievement, with the goal of
- Improving student learning. And…
Assessment of Student Learning is

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- Improving student learning. And...
- A way to **strengthen course & curriculum**, by...
- Providing a space & opportunities for **faculty professional development**.
Assessment of Student Learning starts with a clearly and precisely stated set of Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs).

Precision in an SLO facilitates measurability.

The SLOs should also provide the language that students need to explain what they know and can do.
Assessment: Best Practices for Improving Student Learning in the Classroom
# Understanding Types of Assessments of Student Learning

## Formative Assessments

- Suskie: “Assessments of Learning Process”
- Assessments of student learning “midstream” -- while student learning is taking place

## Summative Assessments

- Assessments of Learning Outcomes
- Assessments of student performance aligned with SLOs, usually at end of course or program

Frequent use of *formative assessments* improve performance

- Provide students with multiple opportunities to practice essential skills and demonstrate knowledge
- Low-stakes assignments: “CATs” & ungraded work
- Peer- & self-evaluations: “Taking the pulse”
- Content: Encourage use of technology to reinforce content knowledge (e-flash cards, annotation tools, e-learning tools, online quizzes)
- **IDEA: Practice with Frequent Feedback**

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1Angelo and Cross, *Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers* (Jossey Bass)
Summative Assessments (end of course)

- **Active learning**: *Inquiry-driven* assignments (with a social component) have been shown to improve learning.

- **Performance tasks**: “Real-life” applications of skills and knowledge.

- **Clear & Transparent assignments**: TILT at UNLV -- Easy modifications to assignments (interventions) to improve achievement.

- **Be clear about expectations**: Research has shown that providing annotated examples of superior work helps all students perform better.

- **Be consistent in grading (rubrics)**.
Do’s and Don’ts of Creating Rubrics: Understand that Grading & Scoring are Not the Same

DO:

- Map your SLOs onto your rubric
- Use precise verbs for actions
- Distinguish different levels of achievement
- Use developmental rubrics for lower-level classes
- Employ clear language that students understand
- Build on the work of others: AAC&U, NILOA

DON’T:

- Concatenate SLOs into one category
- Use imprecise verbs to describe an action, i.e. “demonstrate an ability”
- Use adjectives to distinguish levels of performance
- Use deficit models (i.e., “lacks,” “fails”) in lower-level classes
- Use tiny font, colons, semi-colons
- Ignore best practices in higher education
Metacognitive* Activities: Reinforce & Improve Classroom Learning, by incorporating the following:

- Self-assessments of learning styles
- Reflection papers
- Creating calendars for or logging research activities
- Journaling about the learning process
- Revising papers in response to self- and peer-evaluations
- SLO-aligned self-assessments or demonstrations of achievement

Metacognition: Learning how to learn and managing your own learning based on your understanding of how you learn.
Assessment to improve student learning: Faculty Development

- Participate in professional development workshops, go to conferences
- **Assignment Design charrettes** -- assignments are where “rubber hits the road” in assessment
- Read SoTL & pedagogical journals & newsletters
- Write for SoTL audiences & assessment professionals (newsletters, journals)
Some Resources...
The American Historical Association’s Tuning Project

Tuning the History Discipline in the United States
The American Historical Association is coordinating a nationwide, faculty-led project to articulate the disciplinary core of historical study and to define what a student should understand and be able to do at the completion of a history degree program.

The updated map below shows institutions where faculty historians have been involved in the project. The blue locations were part of the first wave of AHA participants, beginning in 2012. The red locations joined the project in January 2015, as part of the second phase of implementation.

This project has brought together accomplished history faculty historians from a range of 2- and

https://www.historians.org/teaching-and-learning/tuning-the-history-discipline
Some More Resources:

1. **Classroom Assessment Techniques**
   - By Thomas A. Angelo and K. Patricia Cross
   - A Handbook for College Teachers
   - Second Edition

2. **Effective Grading**
   - By Barbara E. Walvoord and Virginia Johnson Anderson
   - A Tool for Learning and Assessment
To Imagine a Verb:
The Language and Syntax of Learning Outcomes Statements

Clifford Adelman
https://www.unlv.edu/provost/teachingandlearning
ASSESSMENT
CLEAR AND SIMPLE

A Practical Guide for
Institutions, Departments,
and General Education

BARBARA E. WALVOORD
For more information, contact nancy.quam-wickham@wsu.edu