Measuring What You Value: Assessing Student Learning

Elizabeth M. Williams ~ Appalachian State University Library ~ 2012
• Know why assessment of library instruction is important
• Learn about the kinds of assessment, Formative and Summative, and the purposes of both
• Understand the connection between pedagogy and assessment
• Know how to document student learning outcomes in your classes
Kinds of Assessment:
What/Who/Why are we assessing?

- **Formative**
  - Evidence of student learning
  - Used to improve the process
  - Student is involved
  - Feedback for student & teacher

- **Summative**
  - Part of the grading process
  - Student placement in the program
  - Student learning relative to course standards
  - Evaluates the effectiveness of programs
Assessment:
How will I know students have learned what they need to know?

Pedagogy:
What activities will facilitate learning?
Student Learning Outcomes:

What do you want the student to be able to do?

What does the student need to learn to do this well?
Every action has an outcome:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>active verb</th>
<th>end result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| The student will ___________ in order to ________________.

what the student will do >>>>> student learning achieved

• When planning an instruction session, begin with the **student learning outcomes** you hope to achieve.

• Then plan the **activities** that will result in the outcomes you hope to achieve.

• Then find a way to **measure** the student learning outcomes:
  – how many articles did the student find?
  – were the citations correct?
  – did the student write down the call number of a book?
  – did the student’s web page provide reliable information?
The student will choose a topic and develop some questions in order to construct a research thesis.

The student will build a search strategy and write key words and subject headings in order to search for information on a topic.

The student will search a library database in order to find two journal articles and will cite them using APA citation style.

The student will construct a concept map in order to expand the vocabulary used in the search for information on a topic.

The student will locate an article containing a case study of scholarly research in order to describe the research method used.

The student will select a web site in order to explain why it will provide reliable information on a topic.
Assessment Tools

**Formative**
- Written exercises in class
- Observing student engagement
- Group work & peer evaluation
- Student worksheets
- Grading rubrics

**Summative**
- Pre-tests and post-tests
- Grading an assignment
- Report cards
- Exams
- Surveys after class
- Consultation with professors
Assessment tools most commonly used to assess library instruction:

- **Fixed choice test**: i.e., Student and/or faculty evaluation of Library sessions

- **Performance assessment**: i.e., In-class exercises to measure student learning

- **Rubric approach**: i.e., Grading of library assignments that are integrated into a course

Student Evaluation of Library Instruction

• Librarian Name (Required)
• Class Number (Required)
• Teacher Name (Required)
• What information did you find most useful in this session? (Required) Check all that apply.
  • Tips on finding books in the Library Catalog
  • Library Research page with links to help, guides and "how to" pages
  • Tips on best electronic databases for finding articles
  • Hands-on exercises and handout
  • Tips on finding primary documents and good websites
Example:
Using in-class exercises to measure student learning

Evaluation of Internet Sites:

Who? What? Where? When?

Find three good web sites on your topic. For each one, answer the questions:
Who wrote it? What does it look like? Serious? Well-written? Biased?
Where is it coming from? Who/what sponsored it?
When was it written? Last updated?
Web site # 1:
Title: __________________________
Example:
Grading of library assignments integrated into a credit course

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals for Web Page</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Text of web page:</strong> Students will define their information needs: decide on a topic, find information on it, and synthesize it.</td>
<td>Asks a research question that addresses the topic and draws a conclusion.</td>
<td>Presents a topic with some issues about it and draws a conclusion.</td>
<td>Presents a topic but has no real research question or problem and no conclusion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sources: at least one book, one article, and one web page in the bibliography:</strong> Students will use a variety of sources to explore a topic in order to produce documented material from a reliable source.</td>
<td>Identifies several formats and types of information most likely to answer their research question.</td>
<td>Identifies one or two information sources.</td>
<td>Uses only one source of information.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Why bother?

Requires librarian to articulate goals: What are you doing? Why?

- Defines in terms of student learning to see the relationship to needs of students.
- Uses a variety of techniques to evaluate the best applications for particular settings.

Critical to program development: How will you know how the instruction program is doing?

- Establishes a learning-centered environment to inform instruction program.
- Uses multiple ways to gather evidence for program development.
- Determines the leadership role of the library in a collaborative effort across campus.
ILI Assessment Cycle
Adapted from Peggy Maki, PhD & Marilee Bresciani, PhD
By Megan Oakleaf, PhD

Identify learning outcomes
Create learning activities
Enact learning activities
Gather data to check learning
Interpret data
Enact decisions

(review learning goals (IL standards))