ASSESSMENT BASICS: PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION IN CONTEXT

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University of the Pacific
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Objectives of this session

- Familiarize ourselves with models of assessment that can be applied to arts and humanities disciplines
- Discuss the challenges of assessing the aesthetic, creativity in particular
- Familiarize ourselves with methods of assessment in creative disciplines
- Begin to create a program assessment plan
Outcomes

- Identify complementary, actionable forms of direct and indirect evidence.

- Identify possible responses to assessment results.

- Identify who might by involved in program assessment, why, and how.

- Consider audiences for program assessment reporting, including with whom results might be profitably shared.
Your level of familiarity with assessment...

- Novice
- Intermediate
- Competent
- Proficient
- Expert
What Are Your Objectives?

- What issues are important to you in assessment, based on your experiences at Pacific or at other institutions?
Collaboration is predicated on...

How you view the world

How you know what you know

Influences on how organized groups function
Ontology
How you choose to define what is real

Epistemology
How you form knowledge and establish criteria for evaluating it
Ontology (assumptions about reality)

Is there an objective reality out there, or is it subjective, existing only in our minds?

**Objectivists**

believe reality exists independently of those who live in it.

**Subjectivists**

believe that something exists only when your experience and give it meaning.
Epistemology (knowing how you can know)

Positivist
Knowing through categorization and measurement of phenomena, behavior, and systems; celebrates reason, truth, and validity.

Interpretive
Knowledge can only be created and understood from the point of view of individuals.
Multiple Perspectives
(on how groups are oriented and how they function)

- **Modern**
  - Ontology – Objective
  - Epistemology – Positivist

- **Symbolic interpretive**
  - Ontology – Subjectivist
  - Epistemology – Interpretive

- **Postmodern**
  - Ontology – Postmodern
  - Epistemology – Postmodern

Hatch & Cunliffe (2006)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modernism</th>
<th>Symbolic Interpretivism</th>
<th>Postmodernism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ontology</strong></td>
<td><strong>Ontology</strong></td>
<td><strong>Ontology</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectivism – belief in an objective, external reality whose existence is independent of our knowledge of it</td>
<td>Subjectivism – we cannot know an external or objective existence apart from our subjective awareness of it; that which exists is that which we agree exists</td>
<td>Postmodernism – the world appears through language and is situated in discourse; what is spoken of exists, therefore everything that exists is text to be read or performed</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Epistemology</strong></td>
<td><strong>Epistemology</strong></td>
<td><strong>Epistemology</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positivism – we discover Truth through valid conceptualization and reliable measurement that allows us to test knowledge against an objective world; knowledge accumulates, allowing humans to progress and evolve</td>
<td>Interpretivism – all knowledge is relative to the knower and can only be understood from the point of view of those directly involved; truth is socially constructed and shifts and changes through time</td>
<td>Postmodernism – knowledge cannot be an accurate account of Truth because of meanings cannot be fixed; there is no independent reality; there are no facts, only interpretations, knowledge is a power play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Groups are</strong></td>
<td><strong>Groups are</strong></td>
<td><strong>Groups are</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectively real entities operating in a real world. When well-designed and managed they are systems of decision and action driven by norms of rationality, efficiency, and effectiveness for stated purposes</td>
<td>Continually constructed and reconstructed by their members through symbolically mediated interaction. Meanings promote and are promoted by understanding of the self and others that occurs within the group context</td>
<td>Sites for enacting power relations, oppression, irrationality, communicative distortion – or areas of fun and playful irony. Groups are texts produced in and by language; we can rewrite them so as to emancipate ourselves from human folly and degradation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus of action</strong></td>
<td><strong>Focus of action</strong></td>
<td><strong>Focus of action</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Finding universal laws, methods, and techniques of organization and control, favors rational structures, rules, standardized procedures and routine practices</td>
<td>Describing how people give meaning and order to their experience within specific contexts, through interpretive and symbolic acts, forms and processes</td>
<td>Deconstructing group texts; destabilizing managerial ideologies and modernist modes of organizing and theorizing; revealing marginalized and oppressed viewpoints; encouraging reflexive and inclusive forms of organizing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Leadership

“...a subtle process of mutual influence fusing thought, feeling, and action. It produces cooperative effort in the services of purposes embraced by both leader and led.”

(Bolman & Deal, 2008)
References


Context: within and beyond our control

- Increasing demand to prove educational effectiveness.

- We are being asked to develop a new approach that incorporates expert-based judgment as well as providing transparent, replicable assessment across students.

- Criteria for arts and humanities assessment needs to understand student performance on an individual, collective, and on an aggregate basis.
The Curious History of the Credit Hour

- Andrew Carnegie’s pension system for faculty was used to leverage high school reform – participation in the system was contingent on the use of the “standard unit” for admitting students to college.

- The Formula: 1 hour of faculty-student contact time per week in a 15 week semester.

- The credit hour, however, was never intended to be a proxy for student learning.
“... the system of units and credits, which, useful as it was, is not good enough for American education today. ... American higher education appears to be well on its way to another stage of development in which promotion, at least in college, will be based upon “the attainments of minds thoroughly stored and competent.”
More Familiar Thoughts…

http://thecolbertreport.cc.com/videos/kiwt0s/bill-gates
In Practice, What Is Assessment?

- It is a body of knowledge and practice intimately connected with teaching and learning that helps us obtain information about:
  
  - How and what students are learning and how that relates to what we expect them to master
  
  - Evidence we have for students developing the competencies we expect them to
  
  - How to use the information we obtain to individually and collectively reflect on our practice and determine what we may want to adjust in teaching practice, program intent, institutional education environment.
Complementary and actionable forms of direct and indirect evidence.
Problem Statements

- Questions around the appropriate unit of analysis for assessment.
- Artist divinely inspired vs. artist existing within a context
- Which judgments of competency should be rendered, how they should be rendered, and by whom
- Perceived reductionism of assessment
Begin with the End in Mind

Note: Itten’s (1923) description of the Bauhaus basic course of instruction
The Best Assessment Methods Are Those That Enable Us to Connect the Dots
Student Learning Outcomes in a Tasteful Context
What are our expectations for a great apple pie?

What criteria would we use to ascertain if our expectations are met?

What would be some good methods for us to check and see if our expectations are being met?

What point(s) would be a good time to do so?

What would we call success? What would it look like?
Describing Our Pie Expectations...

- What’s one criterion for a good pie?
  - *It’s baked all the way through.*

- How can you tell if it’s baked?
  - *Direct method: taste test.*
  - *Indirect method: color of crust.*

- When would we check this out?
  - *End of baking cycle.*

- What would success look like?
  - *First bite melts in mouth (direct measurement).*
  - *Crust is golden brown color (indirect indicator).*
Learning Domain Taxonomies

- Cognitive
- Affective
- Psychomotor
- Intrapersonal
- Interpersonal
- Conative
Teaching and Learning...

- Principles from Dialectical Constructivism
- Scaffolding
Direct Assessment Opportunities in Creative Disciplines: Examples

- Performance assessments, such as a theatrical, musical, or dance performance
- Portfolios and e-Portfolios
- Research projects
- Reflective journaling
- Sketchbooks/Design Books
- Externally juried design or performance competitions and charrettes
- Individual and group projects/presentations, for example senior studio projects
- Peer assessments
- Licensure exams
Indirect Assessment Methods: Examples

- Reflective journaling: Evidence of thought processes, evolution of ideas, development of critical reflection ability
- Interviews with Individual Students
- Focus groups
- Surveys/Questionnaires
- Employer feedback and satisfaction studies
- Advisory board
- Job/grad school placement data
- Evidence of awards and/or recognitions in contests, competitions, or special programs
Using data from different sources to answer a question about student learning.
Matrix of Student Learning Outcomes to Possible Methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selection Criteria</th>
<th>Method 1: Rubric-based project assessment by panel of faculty</th>
<th>Method 2: Internship Supervisor Feedback</th>
<th>Method 3: Focus group of student perceptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scoring Key: 5 = highest rating; 1 = lowest rating</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevant</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Useful</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustworthy</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Quality</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Etc.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Score</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Developing Meaningful Assessment
Evidence of Learning

- **Authentic Assessment**
  - Assignments/assessments designed to replicate “real world” activities via relevant and meaningful questions, tasks, problems, and projects.

Examples?
Some Assessment Choices

- **Value Added vs. Absolute Learning Outcomes**
  Value-added outcomes propose to measure growth in student learning.

- **Student composition skills will improve as a result of Composition 101.**
Some Assessment Choices

- **Value Added vs. Absolute Learning Outcomes**

  Absolute learning outcomes establish an expectation for student performance at the completion of a course or a degree program.

  Students will use composition skills to compose for varied ensembles.
More Assessment Choices

- **Formative vs. Summative Assessment**

*Formative assessment*

- Information about student learning gathered during the learning experience (e.g. course, degree)
- Provides feedback to teacher and students about learning progress in relation to intended learning
- Is used to advance the learning of the cohort whose learning was assessed.
More Assessment Choices

- **Formative vs. Summative Assessment**

  **Summative assessment**
  
  - Information about student learning gathered at the conclusion of a learning experience (e.g. course, degree)
  
  - Summarizes student knowledge or abilities to that point.
  
  - Affirms student achievement and informs subsequent offerings of course or program
Signature Assignments

- A task, problem, case or project that can be tailored or contextualized in different disciplines

  - Signature assignments can be used within departments – multi-section courses
  - Or they can be used between departments – assessing a particular GE learning outcome across the campus

  - In both cases, signature assignments can be used to assess student learning, but also assess the degree of alignment of learning outcomes across the curriculum
Assessing Creative Work

- What can the Godfather tell us?

- Watch a clip from THE GODFATHER (1972)

- Gather in small groups and collaborate to complete the worksheet questions
Rubrics – What are they and why use them?

- A rubric is a scoring guide: a list or chart that describes criteria used to evaluate or grade student work. (Suskie, 2009)

- Rubrics contain a set of criteria specifying the characteristics of a learning outcome and the levels of achievement for each characteristic. (Levy, 2012)

There is no single way to write or format rubrics – they can be created and adapted for the circumstances and situations of your courses and programs.
Types of Rubrics

- Holistic
  - Describe how one global, holistic judgment is made; provides one score for a product or behavior. Checklist and rating scales are types of holistic rubrics.

- Analytic
  - Involves a series of judgments, each assessing a characteristic of the product being evaluated; provides separate, holistic scoring of specified characteristics of a product or behavior.
## Example: Holistic Rubric for Assessing Student Essays

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standards</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate</td>
<td>The essay has at least one serious weakness. It may unfocused, underdeveloped, or rambling. Problems with the use of language seriously interfere with the reader’s ability to understand what is being communicated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing competence</td>
<td>The essay may be somewhat unfocused, underdeveloped, or rambling, but it does have some coherence. Problems with the use of language occasionally interfere with the reader’s ability to understand what is being communicated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptable</td>
<td>The essay is generally focused and contains some development of idea, but the discussion may be simplistic or repetitive. The language lacks syntactic complexity and may contain occasional grammatical errors, but the reader is able to understand what is being communicated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophisticated</td>
<td>The essay is focused and clearly organized, and it shows depth of development. The language is precise and shows syntactic variety, and ideas are clearly communicated to the reader.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example: Analytic Rubric for Peer Assessment of Team Project Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Below Expectation</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Exceptional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project Contributions</strong></td>
<td>Made few substantive contributions to the team’s final product</td>
<td>Contributed a “fair share” of substance to the team’s final product</td>
<td>Contributed considerable substance to the team’s final product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leadership</strong></td>
<td>Rarely or never exercised leadership</td>
<td>Accepted a “fair share” of leadership responsibilities</td>
<td>Routinely provided excellent leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Collaboration</strong></td>
<td>Undermined group discussions or often failed to participate</td>
<td>Respected others’ opinions and contributed to the group’s discussion</td>
<td>Respected others’ opinions and made major contributions to the group’s discussion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Developing and maintaining the instrument

- Design assignments to elicit student demonstration of the criteria and standards of the rubric and expectations of learning outcomes.

- Envision possible results.

- Pilot the rubric by applying it to example work.

- Share the rubric with students to understand how they interpret it.

- Revise and continue to refine the rubric to increase inter-rater reliability and usefulness to students.
Levels of Assessment

Distinguishing the Appropriate Unit of Analysis
Levels of Assessment

- Individual Student – Level Assessment in the Studio
- Group – Level Assessment: Studio or Course Level
- Program or Curriculum – Level Assessment
- Institution – Level Assessment
Example: Assessment in the Studio

- Expert Evaluation
- Criterion Referencing
- \( n = 1 \): The artistic growth of the individual
- Goal Setting and assessment of the individual
- Measurement – educational development
### Example: Assessment in the Applied Studio, Voice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technical</td>
<td>Outcomes I, III</td>
<td>Neck tension; tongue tension; clearer, more forward vowel sounds; foster a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>brighter sound; bridge technical work to ease in upper register; develop more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>supple breath; divert governance of voice to the breath.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Outcomes I, II, III</td>
<td>Clearer, more forward feeling vowels related to technique; master expressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>techniques; Develop immediacy in German; Develop fluency in French; reps in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performing</td>
<td>Outcomes II, III, IV, V</td>
<td>Develop wider range of emotion; Use improvisation to explore characters;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Experiment with ‘opposite’ characterizations; ease of body language related</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>to technique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice technique</td>
<td>Outcome V</td>
<td>Consistent lesson summaries; audit practice technique/Intro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthesis</td>
<td>Outcomes I, V</td>
<td>Advanced development of holistic singing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Development</td>
<td>Outcome IV</td>
<td>Summer Programs? Long term goals; Graduate school? Mapping</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Assessing Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Level of Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introductory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical</td>
<td>Expanded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice Technique</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthesis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
External standards and mapping learning outcomes to ILOs and Core Competencies
Standpoint of the Disciplines

- The Council of Arts Accrediting Associations (2007) positions achievement and quality in the arts in terms of the work of individuals:

“Because so much of the source of quality is individual, it is extremely problematic to assume that what works in one case will work automatically in another: “in pedagogical approaches, there are no universal certainties” (p. 10).

- The National Association of Schools of Music argues for learning assessment that preserves disciplinary control in “…formulating ideas and conditions central to assessment on our own terms… and advocating and defending the validity of our assessment approaches” (Wait & Hope, 2007, p. 17).


Standards-based outcomes
Competency Summaries

Achievement and Quality: Higher Education in the Arts

Resource Documents

Basic Competency Index By Discipline and Specialization -- Undergraduate Degrees

Summary lists of specializations within each discipline are provided below. The detailed lists of specializations, along with their respective competencies, are available within this section of the Achievement and Quality: Higher Education in the Arts Web site. A list of specializations is available for each discipline, each of which has a parallel downloadable PDF enumerating detailed competencies for that specialization. In this way, users of these resources may download only the specific information of interest.

Please note: The lists of competencies are derived from accreditation standards for the professional and liberal arts undergraduate degrees in the arts field listed.

http://aqresources.arts-accredit.org/index.jsp?page=Basic%20Competency%20Index
Criteria for Criteria... Naturalistic Inquiry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positivist standards for rigor</th>
<th>Naturalistic standards for trustworthiness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internal Validity</td>
<td>Credibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Validity</td>
<td>Transferability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>Dependability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectivity</td>
<td>Confirmability</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other disciplinary standards?

- Examples of disciplinary standards?

- AAC&U VALUE rubrics [https://www.aacu.org/value-rubrics](https://www.aacu.org/value-rubrics)
Creative Learning Outcomes

- **Craft Outcomes**
  - Technique and technical skills and competency
  - More amenable to traditional evaluation and assessment methods

- **Aesthetic Outcomes**
  - Issues of artistic development – expression and voice
  - Introduces additional nuance and complexity compared to traditional evaluation and assessment methods
Assessing ILO’s (Creatively…)

- When, where, and how can the WSCUC Core Competencies be assessed in the major?

- WSCUC Standard 2.2a
  - Written Communication
  - Oral Communication
  - Quantitative Reasoning
  - Information Literacy
  - Critical Thinking
Core Competencies and Craft Assessment

- Group Brainstorm:
  - How do craft-oriented outcomes relate to WSCUC Core Competencies?
  - Comparison of skills
  - Mapping competencies – craft and core
The Sixth Competency

- Written Communication
- Oral Communication
- Quantitative Reasoning
- Information Literacy
- Critical Thinking

- CREATIVITY – Creative Thinking
Bringing it all together: multi-level blueprint for assessment
Basic Approach: Beginning Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

- Faculty define student learning outcomes
- Take inventory of what’s already being done
- Faculty define measurement selection process
- Procure and/or develop instrumentation and approaches
- Pilot test and refine
- Implement
- Reflect on results, reconsider approaches and recalibrate as necessary, and start the next cycle.
Inventory Current Activities

- What do units/departments do already?

- What is locally done? Institution-wide?

- What internal examples of best practices can be adapted and/or adopted?

- Centralize activities where feasible for economies of scale; use everybody’s input.

- Examples of good assessment inventories:
  - Sharron Ronco, Florida Atlantic University (http://iea.fau.edu/inst/air00.pdf)
At What Depth Do We Document?

- Start simple and go for the low-hanging fruit.
- Keep it focused and central to the core courses of the curriculum.
- Explore higher order and unique outcomes as assessment experience is gained.
- Systematic, ongoing process in place.
- Document repeated cycles.
What Do We Document and At What Level?

- For each degree program:
  - The student learning outcomes faculty consider most important, whether collective or individual
  - How these outcomes are defined in practice
  - How these outcomes are assessed
  - What results are gained (summary level)
  - Based on results gained, what actions are being taken. How are we using the results?
SLO Example: Master’s in Music Composition

- **Outcome:** Master’s composition graduates will successfully synthesize the musical language of 20th Century composers in their work.

- **Some possible sources of evidence:** student portfolios, course portfolios which include student work.

- **Possible ways to measure:** 3 faculty raters use a simple rubric designed for this purpose to rate student work; panel of judges rates student compositions in live performances.

- **When to Measure:** end of 1st year; master’s performance of their works at end of 2nd year.

- **Possible Standard for Success:** successful synthesis (defined in rubric) of harmonic, rhythmic, formal and scalar materials into student’s compositional vocabulary. Evidence may include student work from selected courses, culminating experiences (e.g., exam/performance, composition portfolio).

- **Possible Uses of Results:** an instructor redesigns an assignment, the faculty restructures the sequencing of courses (adds a new course), the dean allocates resources for software (a new faculty line).
Assessment in Creative Disciplines: Background and Case Studies
Review Outcomes...

- Identify complementary, actionable forms of direct and indirect evidence.

- Identify possible responses to assessment results.

- Identify who might be involved in program assessment, why, and how.

- Consider audiences for program assessment reporting, including with whom results might be profitably shared.