Assignments

Using assignments to assist in assessment
GOAL:

Participants will evaluate learning outcomes, measurement tools and assignments for alignment.

Rationale: There is a mismatch in many programs of these items.
Why do assessment?

It’s required by accrediting agencies.

Why do they require assessment data?

Evidence-based decision making in teaching.

How do I know that my students are learning what I’m teaching?
Steps for authentic assessment

Craft authentic, measureable, realistic SLO’s

On a sheet of paper, write no more than 5 answers to this prompt; then share your responses with a neighbor. We will share responses in 5 minutes.

“In five years, I want graduates to be able to…”

Knowledge, skills, critical thinking, application of knowledge, etc
Steps for authentic assessment -- choosing the right tool for the job

Using one of the verbs you listed, pick a measurement tool. Measurement tools include anything that you, as the instructor, do to evaluate a student’s ability to do X.

What tools did the group come up with?
Steps for authentic assessment

Choose the appropriate assignment. Students do assignments, you do assessments using the appropriate measurement tool.

Map assignment to SLO. *This insures validity.*

What type of data will you collect?
HANDOUT: Analyze the following for alignment between the SLO, measurement tool, and assignment. Add your analysis comments to the bottom of the page, then swap with a neighbor. Review each other’s comments and discuss.

SLO: Graduating students are able to evaluate written material in a specific content area.

Measurement tool: Rubric that includes the following traits:
- Purpose, body, conclusion, audience, grammar, citations

Assignment:
Summarize three of the articles about X that we have read this semester. Follow these directions to write a good summary, demonstrating your comprehension of information and ideas. The purpose is to restate the main points of the article in your own words, focusing on the main point and the relationship between ideas.

1. Read the assigned passage(s) carefully.
2. Reread, but this time divide the passage into sections or stages of thought and label each section. Underline key ideas, terms.
3. Write one-sentence summaries on a separate sheet of paper, one for each stage of thought.
4. Write a one-sentence summary of the entire passage. Here you want to express the central idea of the passage as determined from the steps above.
5. Write the first draft of your summary by combining the topic sentence from step 4 with the information from step 3. Eliminate any repetition.
6. Revise. Make sure transitional words are provided (you can find these in a grammar and style handbook under “transitions”; they include words like: therefore, however, furthermore, and so on. Avoid series of short, choppy sentences. Check for grammar and punctuation.

Adapted from: http://www.hws.edu/academics/ctl/writes_assignments.aspx
1. Is the measurement tool appropriate for the SLO? Why or why not?
2. Is the assignment aligned with the measurement tool? Why or why not?

http://fairfieldindustrialsales.com/images/Cartoon-Rigging-Alignment-40.gif
3. Is the assignment aligned with the SLO? Why or why not?
What are some possible solutions?
Can the assignment be a multiple choice test or quiz?

Alignment is still key to authentic assessment

Both the stem of the question and the alternative answers should reflect the SLO.

Refer to the second page of the handout.
1. Which of the following is a true statement?

   a. Mitochondrial genomes are relatively constant in content (i.e., types of genes present)
   b. Mitochondrial genomes are relatively constant in organization.
   c. Mitochondrial genomes are relatively constant in size.

2. What characteristic is relatively constant in mitochondrial genomes across species?

   a. Content (i.e., types of genes)
   b. Organization
   c. Size
Which is most appropriate to the SLO? Why?

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A stem that presents a definite problem can directly focus on the learning outcome.
Which is most appropriate to the SLO? Why?

1. Mitochondria evolved from free-living bacteria that could carry out oxidative phosphorylation. For this reason, they have circular genomes that reproduce independently of the nuclear genome. What characteristic is relatively constant in mitochondrial genomes across species?
   
   a. Content (i.e., types of genes)
   b. Organization
   c. Size

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Irrelevant material decreases reliability and validity
Does the following question test the SLO? Why or why not?

1. The term hypothesis, as used in research, is defined as

   a. A conception or proposition formed by speculation or deduction or by abstraction and generalization from facts, explaining or relating an observed set of facts, given probability by experimental evidence or by factual or conceptual analysis but not conclusively established or accepted.

   b. A statement of an order or relation of phenomena that so far as is known is invariable under the given conditions, formulated on the basis of conclusive evidence or tests and universally accepted, that has been tested and proven to conform to facts.

   c. A proposition tentatively assumed in order draw out its logical or empirical consequences and so test its accord with facts that are known or may be determined, of such a nature as to be either proved or disproved by comparison with observed facts.
If your SLO requires higher level thinking, then your test questions should also.

You can present a problem that requires analysis, synthesis of course material, application of course material, and/or require multilogical thinking.

A nurse is making a home visit to a 75 yo male patient who has had Parkinson’s disease for the last 5 years. Which finding has the greatest implication for this patient’s care?

a. The client’s wife tells the nurse that the grandchildren have not been to visit in over a month
b. The nurse notes that there are numerous throw rugs throughout the patient’s home.
c. The patient has a towel wrapped around his neck that his wife uses to wipe her husband’s face.
d. The patient is sitting in an armchair, and the nurse notes that he is gripping the arms of the chair.
Think about your program SLO’s.

1. Answer the following on a sheet of paper

2. What measurement tools are you using? Are they appropriate and aligned with your SLO’s?

3. What assignments are you using? Are they appropriate and aligned with your SLO’s? Are they appropriate and aligned with your measurement tool?

4. What improvements, if any, do you suggest?
Authentic Assessment

Useful for getting the most out of teaching and learning, but requires careful thought about

- what you want students to gain from your program
- how you are going to measure whether or not students have accomplished the goals you set for the program
- the types of practice you provide for students, and the feedback you provide as they practice