Evidence: Program Assessment for Continuous Improvement

RUBRICS FOR ASSESSMENT
Summer Assessment Institute August 11 and 13, 2015

If you have ever said "tests do not measure the learning outcomes that are important to me," in your discussions about assessing learning, you will want to be at the assessment institute this summer. This summer we are all about rubrics!

The institute is for any faculty member who would like to learn how to modify or construct rubrics and develop a rubric for particular outcome or assignment.

Rubrics are excellent for formative as well as summative assessment. They provide clear expectations and criteria for students and they help to demystify assessment standards and expectations.

They also increase the reliability of the measurement of complex learning task such as presentations, performances, projects, portfolios, etc. Faculty who use rubrics can also engage students in peer review because the rubrics will have explicit descriptions of the expected level of performance for each rating. Rubrics help students to learn.
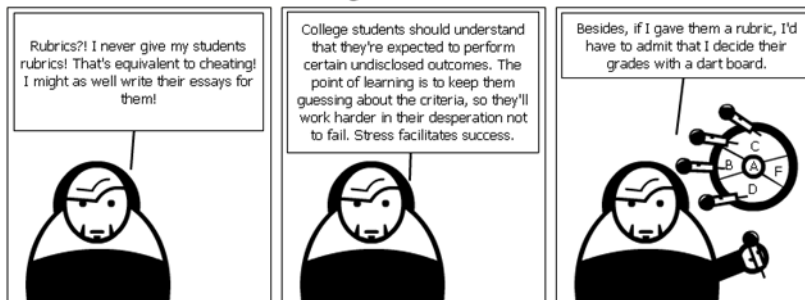
This year, Assessment Institute will be held from 9:30 - 3:00 on August 11 and 13 and for an additional day before September 1. The additional date will be set during the August meetings and it will be based on the availability and preferences of the participants. We will discuss the validity and reliability of rubrics and practice using a rubric to rate students' work.

Vincennes University (2012)

This institute is suitable for faculty in any career phase and the eight faculty participants will be expected to contribute to *Evidence* in the upcoming academic year.

Interested faculty should complete the application form and return it by April 6th.

<u>Only faculty who can attend all three sessions should apply.</u>

Participating faculty will receive a $900 stipend for completing background readings, as needed before August 11, participating from 9:30 - 3 on August 11 and 13, working on their rubrics on August 11 and 13, and attending our last day, TBD, before September 1.

Each participant will get $600 of the stipend at the end of the summer institute, and the remaining $300 when you submit a report for *EVIDENCE*, the assessment newsletter.

To see the overview and application for the institute, please visit the Summer Institutes page on the IFD website.

Information Literacy Skills in a Sample of First Year Students

In November and December of the fall semester (14), 144 first year students took the ETS *iSkills* test of information literacy as part of the assessment in the Essential Learning Outcomes (ELO) pilot project. The test engages students in simulation-based tasks that provide opportunities to assess their ability to think critically in a digital environment. Several scored responses are produced for each task. The overall score is the sum of all individual scored responses across all assessment tasks. The overall test score range is 0–500.

Our students had a mean score of 239 (median 240) with a standard deviation of 62. Their scores ranged from 100 to 390. The median score for the reference group of students, which includes students from 2-year and 4-year colleges, is 240. The Stockton first-year students are right at the mid-point for the reference group.

In 2013, a sample of 83 FRST students took the iSkills test and got comparable results. They had a mean score of 216 (median 210) with a standard deviation of 51. Their scores ranged from 110 to 340. The students in the ELO pilot showed slightly stronger information literacy skills overall although there were significant differences among the classes. Students in two classes did much better than the others, and one class did significantly less well than the group.

The figure below shows the performance of the students in the ELO pilot compared to the norm group performance. Immediately below are the descriptions of the iSkills test areas.

Figure 1: Stockton First year Students' performance on the *iSkills* Test
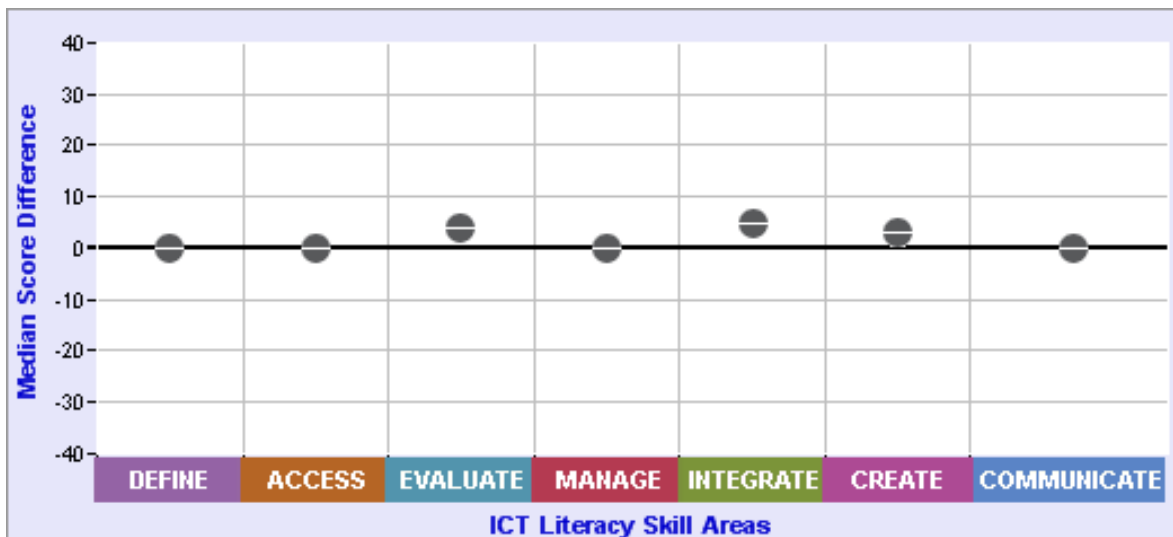
DEFINITIONS OF ICT LITERACY SKILL AREAS

Define	Understand and articulate the scope of an information problem in order to facilitate the electronic search for information.
Access	Collect and/or retrieve information in digital environments. Information sources might be web pages, databases, discussion groups, e-mail, or online descriptions of print media.
Evaluate	Judge whether information satisfies an information problem by determining authority, bias, timeliness, relevance, and other aspects of materials.
Manage	Organize information to help you or others find it later.
Integrate	Interpret and represent information, such as by using digital tools to synthesize, summarize, compare, and contrast information from multiple sources.
Create	Adapt, apply, design, or construct information in digital environments.
Communicate	Disseminate information tailored to a particular audience in an effective digital format.

Compared with a broad norm group our incoming students, are not deficient in their information literacy skills, it is up to us to determine if scores at the median are good enough. Among the test group there were some classes where students were better able to manage the test tasks and therefore got better results. We plan to invite those faculty members to share their strategies with faculty who will teach next year's freshman classes.

Hat's Off Corner

Hats off to Pam Cross, Coordinator of the Writing Center; Michael Frank, Professor of Psychology; Janice Joseph, Distinguished Professor of Criminal Justice; and Keith Williams, Associate Professor of Psychology for making time in their schedules to have their students pilot a new ETS test, HEIghten. Stockton University is partnering with ETS to pilot a new assessment in written communication and quantitative literacy. The pilot data will be used to ensure the validity and reliability of the assessments. The faculty will get their students' performance data approximately 8 weeks after the testing period. Without the generosity of faculty we do not have access to students for these important developmental steps in measurement.

Assessing Assessment

Sonia Gonsalves

On Friday last (3/20), I attended a Middle States workshop on assessing assessment. Dr. Jodi Levine from Temple University advocated strongly for assessment audits to give colleges, programs, and units feedback about the assessment process at the institution. The assessment audit approach goes beyond the philosophical debate about the usefulness of assessment, the limitations of what we can assess, and the questions of authentic or staged assessments. The audit is a 'practice what we preach' method to interrogate the process of assessment at our institution.

An assessment audit delves into the effectiveness, strengths and weakness of what we are doing, the adequacy of the resources both human and material, the nature and visibility of the support, and the usefulness of assessment. It has us holding the assessment process to the same standard of accountability that we hold academic programs and units.

Institutionally, we are due for an audit. Though the audit we will determine whether or not we are making progress towards our goal of getting all programs to use their assessment findings to make decisions about student learning. To quote Dr. Levine, "Assessment has no value if it is not shared and used."

Included in the presentation was a simple but useful self-assessment tools for programs (below). This would allow programs to judge their progress and to communicate that progress in summary form in their reports.

Just as with assessment, auditing assessment is based on both direct and indirect evidence. We can take into consideration what people ask about assessment and what they say about it as indirect indicators of how we are doing. More directly, the curriculum maps, plans, use data, and coordinator's reports are more direct pieces of information.

At the end of this semester programs may find the self-assessment tool (below) to be useful as a status synopsis of their assessment work.

Levine, J. (2015). Assessing out Assessment: How are we doing? MSCHE workshop in Philadelphia, PA.

Criteria	Program Assessment Audit		
	Exceeds Expectations	**Meets Expectations**	**Needs Improvement**
Implementation of Assessments	Planned Assessments were conducted during the academic year and the assessments were aligned with program outcomes and ELOs	Most assessments are conducted during the academic year; however some of the methods of assessment require further refinement or were not fully aligned with program outcomes and ELOs	Little or no assessments were reported during the academic year
Sharing Assessment Data	Assessments were shared and discussed with all program members	Assessment data were shared with some program members but there are others that should be informed of this information and/or assessment data were not fully shared or discussed in a way to allow effective use of findings	Assessment data were not shared or discussed
Use of Assessment Data	Program is using findings from the data for adjustment and improvement and have a coherent picture of student learning in the program	Program identified findings from the data; however, their plan for using the results is not clear	Program has not identified any findings and there are no plans to follow up on any assessment processes.