EVIDENCE

Program Assessment For Continuous Improvement

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ASSESSMENTS: PREPARING THE NEXT GENERATION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROFESSIONALS

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I taught at Stockton for many years as an adjunct before becoming a full time instructor 5 years ago. For most of those years as an adjunct, I used traditional assessments in my classes as well as traditional instruction methods.

When I created my criminal justice capstone course in 2011 I decided to use a different method of instruction rather than the normal lecture based pedagogy. I decided to deliver the course using a discussion based method where I asked challenging questions including scenarios in order to get the students to think about the real world challenges that they were going to face after graduation.

The course was well received and I was going along very happy until I attended the Assessment Institute this past summer. What a wake-up call I received! For the first time I really thought about assessment in my courses. My focus quickly narrowed to that capstone course as well as a new graduate course on criminal justice management that I was going to first deliver in the fall of 16.

In both courses, I use scenarios in the classroom, why wasn't I using them in my assessments? Because I never really thought about assessments other than those traditional ones that I experienced in my education. I have always strived in my upper level courses to get my students to not only think, but think outside the box, be innovative. Why hadn't I been innovative when it came to my assessments?

Now that's what I am doing. I am assessing those critical thinking skills that my years of experience in the field of criminal justice tell me this generation of criminal justice professionals will need.

The criminal justice system is very complex and we are charged with preparing our students for a variety of careers. They need to be able to sometimes digest somewhat complex scenarios and make a quick direct decision. It is not always easy. Giving them this experience in the classroom is one thing. Asking them to do it as part of an assessment is another. To simulate the stress of the real world, I presented the scenarios as part of a timed Blackboard assessment. No time to ponder, quick read, evaluate and take the best course of action.

While the first new assessment in the capstone course is not back yet, the first in the graduate class has been completed. I am delighted with the results. In discussing the assessment with the students, I found that they seemed to enjoy the challenge of the scenario assessment items.

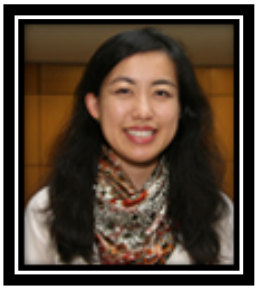
I see assessments in a new light and I look forward to challenging my students with these assessments in the future. We all may depend on the skills they develop.

Let's Talk

ASSESSMENT INSTITUTE EVIDENCE ARTICLE
CAREER EXPLORATION THROUGH ASSESSMENT

By: Kaite Yang, Assistant Professor of Psychology

Can an assessment be vivid, engaging, relevant, and itself an instrument of learning? One of the classes I teach, Industrial and Organizational Psychology, is the psychological study of workers, workplaces, and work. The subfield of industrial psychology focuses on identifying, categorizing, and measuring human attributes (e.g. knowledge, skills, abilities, and personality characteristics) needed in different jobs. This can come off as tedious-sounding, abstract, and filled with disciplinary jargon, even as this intellectual pursuit bears immediate relevance to what undergraduate students must consider as they deliberate their next steps after college. How do I teach the concepts of industrial psychology in a way that makes the information feel vital to college students' present lives?



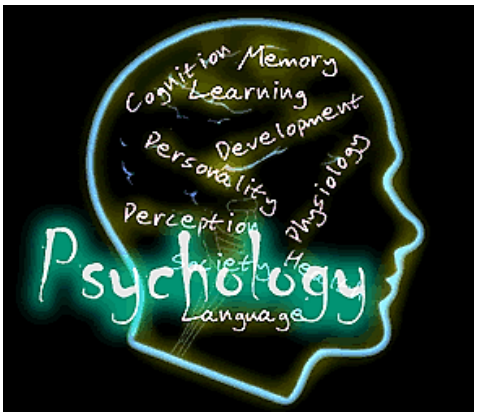
The solution was to use assessment to tie conceptual knowledge to a looming question for undergraduates, "*How am I gonna find a job*?" After receiving helpful feedback and inspiration from the 2016 Summer Assessment Institute, I created a suite of assessments to help students begin to answer this question. The assessments were a five-part Job Analysis Project wherein students identified and categorized human attributes while simultaneously exploring potential careers and reflecting on their own career-readiness. My hope was to use assessment as an instrument for intentional and fruitful career exploration, even as it served as a measure of more "traditional" uses of tracking students' understanding of the cognitive outcomes/declarative knowledge of the discipline (see Table 1 for a comparison of career-related and cognitive outcomes).

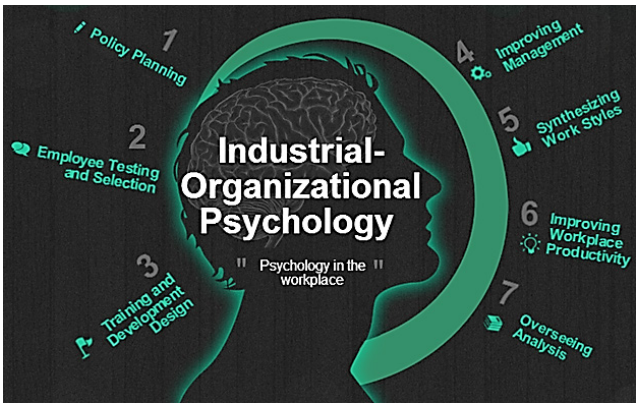
By the end of the first five weeks of the semester, students in I-O Psychology had written a resume, researched jobs using the O*NET occupations database, unpacked job requirements in internship listings, and conducted an informational interview of an adult with an established career. Furthermore, students practiced identifying their own knowledge, skills, and abilities that they can communicate to future employers. As they did this, students also mastered key cognitive outcomes of industrial psychology: understanding the methods and uses of a job analysis and categorizing human attributes along the dimensions of knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Students' response to this was overwhelmingly positive. Many in the class needed the nudge to write their first resume. Nearly all students indicated that they would consider applying for one of the internships they found for the project. In fact, students suggested a powerful extension of the assessment: make the informational interview transcripts available to all students in the class so they can learn even more about different jobs! Students were right: by engaging with this set of assessments, students made progress on their personal goals and created a compendium of information about various careers that could be valuable for others in their position.

Table 1. Elements of personal career exploration and corresponding course cognitive/knowledge-based learning goals in each phase of the Job Analysis Project

Assessment Phase	Cognitive Outcome	Career Exploration
Personal Worker Characteristics	Accurately identify human attributes that students have developed through prior work experiences –support assertion by thinking of an example of how the attribute was used on the job.	Identify the attributes that students possess –be able to communicate in concrete terms how student has used them on the job (useful for interview preparation).
Internship Listings	Infer human attribute requirements from active internship postings.	Effectively use online internship-posting websites to search for active listings in a career that is interesting to students. Inspect listings for information that is relevant to student's own worker characteristics.
Personal Resume	Accurately identify human attributes in a resume format.	Create a resume and engage in meaningful dialogue with the resume as a document that presents work experiences and attributes. Identify attributes that student lacks yet would likely need to develop for a future career.
O*NET Job Search	Accurately identify human attributes for job families listed in a comprehensive occupations database (onetonline.org, a resource from the U.S. Department of Labor)	Effectively use O*NET to research job families. Extract information about work task characteristics, worker attributes, and educational attainment for a job area of interest.
Subject Matter Interview	Accurately identify work tasks and human attributes from an informational interview of an adult with an established a career (one component of a job analysis)	Conduct an informational interview to learn about the pathways that others have taken to arrive at their current work. Reflect on this interaction by considering how this affects students' own career preparation.





ACHIEVING THE GOALS OF INTRODUCTORY PHYSICS INSTRUCTION THROUGH FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

By: Benjamin Agyare, Instructor of Physics

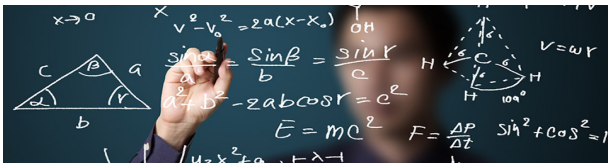
Students come to their physics classes with a remarkable amount of experience and understanding. Unfortunately, a great portion of this prior knowledge does not align with formal physics concepts and principles. When students are first introduced to a formal physics concept, they find it difficult to wrap their minds around the concept. Even when they think they have grasped the concepts, they do so in a limited context and in isolation from other closely related topics. In this document, I share my plan to use formative assessment to support my teaching and enhance students' learning in Physics for Life Sciences II lecture and Physics II laboratory.

Physics for Life Sciences II is a challenging algebra-based introductory course. One aspect of the essential learning outcomes is for students to acquire the capacity to demonstrate competence in applying their learning to everyday life, things, major field of study, and to understand how objects around us work. The learning objectives (over which assessment is conducted) are to

(i) compare the energy consumed between energy-saving and incandescent bulbs of the same luminosity and

(ii) apply knowledge of energy consumed by household appliances to understand the monthly electric company charges.

Both objectives consist of activities which require students to use their understanding of concepts to analyze and draw sound conclusion. For instance, 800 lumens of light can be obtained from an LED of 6 – 8 W, or Compact Fluorescents



(CFLs) of 13 – 15 W or an Incandescent lamp of 60W. Students will determine the energy associated with using these light bulbs for about 8 hours and draw inferences thereafter about which light bulbs can help them save money. This learning experience on the light bulbs will segue into analysis of how the electric company charges consumers for the quantity of electric energy consumed per billing cycle. In this exercise, students will analyze an electric bill and identify (i) the billing rate and (ii) the quantity of electric energy consumed in kWh. They will use these two items to calculate the cost associated with the energy. The bill will be attached to their work and turned in same day for grading.

Physics II laboratory is a calculus-based laboratory course designed to promote critical thinking and analytical reasoning by carrying out laboratory investigations, analyzing and interpreting experimental data. It also requires students to communicate a logical path through a written report from the data and draw a valid conclusion.

The assessment exercise requires students to follow a scaffold to determine the time constant of an RC Circuit. They then configure the circuit into a low-pass filter and further investigate its behavior. With these reasoning activities, students are nudged to immediately see the significance of RC circuits in electronic circuitry as timing circuits in the time domain, and filter circuits in the frequency domain. Students will write a comprehensive report using a format akin to what is mostly used in the physics community for writing papers. A grading rubric has been developed to assess students' work and give feedback.

ASSISTING STUDENTS IN DEVELOPING PERSONAL LEARNING OUTCOMES

Amy J. Hadley, Associate Professor of Communication Disorders

In August of 2016, the Communication Disorders (CMDS) program at Stockton University earned initial accreditation from the Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology. The accreditation process in grueling but also provides an opportunity for the program to assess its unique strengths and weaknesses. Through the accreditation process, the program realized that while we were engaging students in many learning opportunities to increase their cultural competence, we were limited in the measurement of students' affective growth in this area of the curriculum.

As a project developed in the 2016 Summer Assessment Institute, I developed a plan for one method to measure students' growth in the area of cultural competence. A new cohort of 32 graduate students began the CMDS program in September. In their first clinical practicum course, CMDS 5900: Clinical Methods Application, they were asked to complete two surveys. The first was the *Cultural Competence Checklist: Personal Reflection* developed for professionals by the American Speech-Language Hearing Association (2010). The tool can be accessed at: http://www.asha.org/uploadedFiles/Cultural-Competence-Checklist-Personal-Reflection.pdf. The second instrument used was the *Multicultural Sensitivity Scale* made available through the Center for International Rehabilitation Research Information & Exchange (2011). The instrument may be accessed at: http://cirrie.buffalo.edu/culture/curriculum/activities/scale.php.

Once the students completed the surveys, they reflected in writing about their current level of cultural competence. The students identified personal areas of strength and weakness as well as areas for growth in cultural competence. The reflections were a graded assignment for the Clinical Methods Application Course. The reflections will serve as baseline data for the faculty to measure the students' affective growth in this area. A rubric developed by the University of Rhode Island was used as a guide in assessing the quality of the students' reflections: http://web.uri.edu/assessment/.

During this first semester, students are being provided multiple opportunities to begin work in the areas for growth identified in their reflections. The opportunities are infused throughout the curriculum and all program faculty have included learning outcomes for cultural competence in their syllabi. Some of the activities to date include: observing at schools that serve diverse population, conducting communication screenings at a child care center in Trenton that serves at risk children, treating clients in the Speech and Hearing Clinic who represent the diversity of society, and engaging in a simulation activity (using the SimuCase program at: http://www.speechpathology.com/simucase/).

Later in the semester, the students will complete another survey to facilitate them in guided reflection: *Cultural Competence Survey: Clinical Service Delivery* (American Speech-Language Hearing Association, 2010. Available at: http://www.asha.org/uploadedFiles/Cultural-Competence-Checklist-Service-Delivery.pdf).

After completing the second survey, the students will draft three personal learning outcomes that they will monitor for progress over the next four semesters of the graduate program. Faculty will work with the students on refining the outcomes as needed. Students will provide evidence of progress on the objectives through electronic portfolio artifacts. Potential artifacts include but are not limited to: additional written reflections, essays, research projects, and treatment plans.

The American Speech-Language Hearing Association provides excellent resources for those seeking to infuse the issues of cultural competence and diversity into the curriculum. Specific resources for faculty may be found at: http://www.asha.org/practice/multicultural/faculty/mmi/. Additional information on cultural competence are found at: http://www.asha.org/Practice-Portal/Professional-Issues/Cultural-Competence/. Many of these resources will also be beneficial to programs outside of the discipline of Communication Disorders.

The program faculty are committed to developing cultural competence in CMDS students who will become competent professionals in a diverse society. We are looking forward to reviewing our students' growth in this area as well as developing additional opportunities for student learning and engagement.