From the LAC Chair

December 2018

Plan Spring Syllabi with Assessment in Mind

Dr. Caroline Seefchak

 It is finally the end of the semester, and all that remains, for many professors, is to compile student data collected through fifteen weeks of learning and assessing, and compute final grades. As we close the books on Fall 2018, it's a good time to review the means by which we measure student learning in our classes. Instructional effectiveness is not defined solely on the basis of what instructors do as professors, but rather on what their students are able to do. Clear, successful assessment information does not necessarily come from testing. There are many data sources that shed light on student learning, and research has shown that no single assessment can tell us all we need to know in planning curricula. Perhaps the most challenging assessments to create are research assignments.

The Learning Assessment Committee operates with three separate subcommittees: communication, general education, and professional development. The subcommittee for professional development has been working to present ways for faculty to design research assignments that work as solid assessments for classes. LAC member Jane Charles, along with colleague Arenthia Herren, have put together such a workshop. More information is contained in this issue of *DataVersed.* Look for scheduled times, next semester, through the TLC calendar.

Very best wishes to all for a smooth end of the semester and a restful break.

General Education

Investigate Rubric Available

Dr. Joseph van Gaalen

 For the past three summers, members of a Learning Assessment Committee task force have worked to create rubrics to align with the College's revised assessment of the General Education Program.

Throughout the process, the AAC&U Value Rubrics and one in-house rubric were utilized to score voluntarily submitted artifacts. The scorers, mainly members of the Learning Assessment Committee (LAC) General Education Sub-Committee, were asked to provide qualitative feedback on the functionality of the rubrics. They were asked to comment on the rubric dimensions, achievement levels, and appropriateness of the rubrics in relation to the submitted artifacts.

Investigate Rubric Available

Continuing with this evolution of assessment, the FSW Investigate rubric was developed by an 8-member task force of faculty and staff representing all five schools of the College and supported by the Office of Academic Assessment and the Office of the Provost during special sessions held on May 9, 31, and June 7, 2018. Task members, led by Joseph van Gaalen (Assessment & Effectiveness / Sciences) included: Jane Charles (Libraries), Rebecca Harris (English), Julia Kroeker (Education), Patricia Arcidiacono (Health Professions), Jennifer Patterson (Business), Caroline Seefchak (Education & LAC Chair), and Eileen DeLuca (Office of the Provost).

The school representatives used the Association of American Colleges and Universities Integrated Learning VALUE Rubric as a foundation for development, ultimately adopting only the dimensions (in part) and achievement levels (4-3-2-1) with a 0 if no achievement is met. The rubric defines the fundamental criteria for each learning outcome and outlines performance required to demonstrate levels of attainment through the use of Bloom's Taxonomic verbiage. Rubric achievement levels, in descending order: Capstone (4), Accomplished (3), Developing (2), and Deficient (1).

The intent of the rubric developers was to frame language such that the rubric is as inclusive as possible to any and all 'Investigate' assignments. Careful consideration was paid to providing descriptors detailed enough to score an artifact, but yet to remain in general terms as much as possible to allow for application to a wide assortment of assignment types and styles. In order to increase clarity, action verbs were utilized in each achievement level description. The developers also attempted to place emphasis on dimensions being mutually exclusive, such that users of this rubric can elect to omit any dimension not required of a given assignment. To ensure that non-traditional assignments are scored properly, artifacts representing a variety of modes and media should be utilized during the 'Investigate' Rubric Calibration Sessions prior to the scoring process.

INVESTIGATE	Capstone (4)	Accomplished (3)	Developing (2)	Deficient (1)
Connections to Experiences	Evaluates the relevance of connections among life experiences to illuminate concepts / theories / frameworks of fields of study.	Reflects on the relevance of connections among life experiences to illuminate concepts / theories / frameworks of fields of study.	Describes the relevance of connections among life experiences to concepts / theories / frameworks of fields of study.	Identifies limited connections among life experiences to concepts / theories / frameworks of field of study.
Connections to Discipline	Generates conclusions by combining examples, facts, or theories from more than one field of study or perspective.	Connects examples, facts, or theories from more than one field of study or perspective.	Describes examples, facts, or theories from more than one field of study or perspective.	Identifies examples, facts, or theories from a limited range of perspectives or fields of study.
Transfer of Knowledge	Adapts skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies gained in one situation to new situations to solve difficult problems or explore complex issues in original ways.	Applies skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies gained in one situation to new situations to solve difficult problems or explore complex issues.	Summarizes skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies learned from one situation to new situations to contribute to understanding of problems or issues.	Identifies skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies gained in one situation that relate in a minimal or limited way to another.
Transdisciplinary Problem Solving	Devises innovative solutions to systemic problems by drawing on multiple disciplines and/or collaborating with others.	Appraises current solutions to systemic problems by drawing on multiple disciplines and/or collaborating with others.	Summarizes current solutions to systemic problems by drawing on more than one discipline and/or collaborating with others.	Identifies a limited number of solutions to systemic problems by drawing on more than one discipline and/or collaborating with others.

Creating and Assessing Dynamic Research Assignments

Jane Charles
Faculty Librarian

Does introducing a research assignment incite dread among your students? Do they struggle with identifying and using credible sources, let alone starting a research project? Do you want to design research assignments that instill confidence in students' ability to engage in academic research? If so, the LAC has a new workshop for you, soon to be available in the TLC, and conducted by FSW faculty librarians who are also professors at the College.

As professors of history and art history, the presenters will demonstrate how they design and assess effective research assignments. As faculty librarians, the presenters will discuss how and why students struggle with a variety of research assignments from across the curriculum.

Look for more information on this dynamic workshop in the spring semester.

Warm wishes from the Learning Assessment Committee

Happy Holidata

May your winter break be filled with good cheer aligned with peaceful rest to recharge for a data-filled New Year

Caroline Seefchak, Committee Chair

Patricia Arcidiacono, D'ariel Barnard,
Andrew Blitz, Leroy Bugger, Jane Charles,
Marius Coman, John Connell,
Mary Conwell, Eileen DeLuca,
Thomas Donaldson, Renee Hester,
Julia Kroeker, Margaret Krueger, David Licht,
Fernando Mayoral, Lisa McGarity, Barb Miley,
Colleen Moore, Kristi Moran,
Jennifer Patterson, Katie Paschall,
Elijah Pritchett, Eric Seelau, William Stoudt,
Amy Trogan, Joseph van Gaalen,
Richard Worch, Denis Wright, Terry Zamor

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D'ariel Barnard	Academic Assessment & Effectiveness	Barb Miley	Accountability & Effectiveness
Andrew Blitz	Computer Science & Construction Tech	Colleen Moore	Health Professions
Leroy Bugger	Business & Accounting	Dr. Kristi Moran	Mathematics
Jane Charles	Library	Dr. Katie Paschall	Speech
Dr. Marius Coman	Science	Dr. Jennifer Patterson	Business & Tech
Dr. John Connell	Speech & Foreign Language	Dr. Elijah Pritchett	Humanities & Fine Arts
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Dr. Julia Kroeker	Education	Dr. Joe van Gaalen	Academic Assessment & Effectiveness
Margaret Kruger	Health Professions	Dr. Richard Worch	Criminal Justice & Public Safety
David Licht	Mathematics	Dr. Denis Wright	Health Professions
Fernando Mayoral	Foreign Language	Terry Zamor	Mathematics