



# Maybe They Know, and Maybe They Don't! Practical Adventures in Information Literacy Assessment

Cynthia Akers

Information Literacy Coordinator

ESU Libraries and Archives

KLA/MPLA Conference, April 3, 2009



## **What is assessment of student learning, in general?**

The Higher Education Commission (HLC) states:

“Assessment of student learning is a participatory, iterative process that:

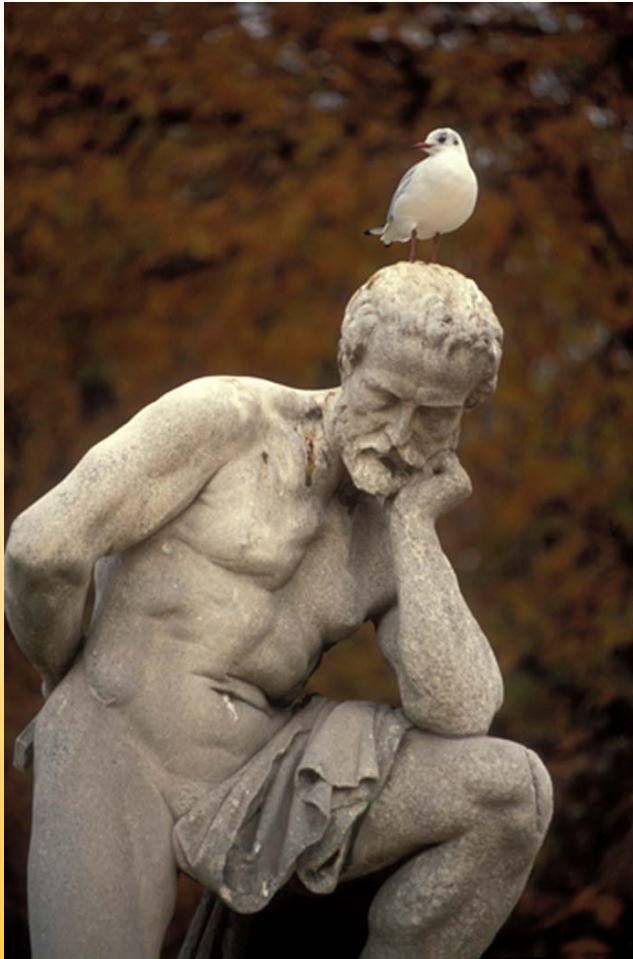
- Provides data/information you need on your students’ learning
- Engages you and others in analyzing and using this data/information to confirm and improve teaching and learning
- Produces evidence that students are learning the outcomes you intended
- Guides you in making educational and institutional improvements
- Evaluates whether changes made improve/impact student learning, and documents the learning and your efforts”

<http://www.uni.edu/assessment/definitionofassessment.shtml>



## **Another definition of assessment of student learning:**

“Assessment is the process of gathering and discussing information from multiple and diverse sources in order to develop a deep understanding of what students know, understand, and can do with their knowledge as a result of their educational experiences; the process culminates when assessment results are used to improve subsequent learning” (Huba and Freed, 8).



“Evaluation” and  
“Assessment”: There is a  
difference!

**Evaluation:**

- A reflective tool that gauges an individual’s overall impression after an event or experience

**Assessment:**

- Intentionally gathering evidence focusing on impact in order to judge or improve something

(From IIL Assessment Program,  
December 2008)

**Why is this way of thinking  
such a change for higher  
education?**

- Long-term impact/implications of the “No Child Left Behind” Act, 107<sup>th</sup> Congress, Public Law 107-110

• <http://www.ed.gov/policy/el/sec/leg/esea02/107-110.pdf>

- Movement away from traditional educational approach in colleges and universities (“Sage on the Stage”; lectures; individual work) and toward learning facilitated by instructors





## Further Distinction: “Formative” Assessment and “Summative” Assessment

### **Formative Assessment:**

- Gathers information about student performance and knowledge; provides feedback to the student on how well he/she has mastered the content, concepts, skills, etc.

### **Summative Assessment:**

- Relatively comprehensive; gathers information about the level of learning at the end of a program.

(From IIL Assessment Program, December 2008)



Parallels with librarians as teachers:

Library tours

“Bibliographic” instruction

Library instruction

Information literacy/mastery of information competencies



How, then, does information literacy fit in with learner-centered assessment in higher education?

Very well, as it turns out!

Carolyn Radcliffe notes several levels of information literacy assessment that can exist on college campuses (**Practical Guide**, 11-13):

•**Classroom Assessment or Course Assessment:**

Common with the type of library instruction we perform most often. “One-shot” or several sessions within a specific course; assessment can be done at the end of the session.

•**Programmatic Assessment:**

Learning goals for a course of study, or series of courses that comprise an academic program. (For example, higher-level information literacy competencies for a discipline or major field of study.)

•**Institutional Assessment:**

A broad overview of information literacy competencies across departments and disciplines; may be accomplished by administration of standardized pre-tests and post-tests.



# Learning More about Assessment: The IIL Assessment Program

- Sponsored by ACRL; outgrowth of the long-standing Institute for Information Literacy Immersion Programs for Teacher Track, Program Track, and Intentional Teacher Track
- Assessment Track was offered for the first time December 4-7, 2008, Scarritt-Bennett Center, Nashville, TN
- Application process took place in June 2008
- 40 people accepted out of approximately 120 applications
- Next application process should be available this spring:  
[http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/acrl/issues/infolit/professactivity/iil/immersion/Immersion\\_09\\_Invitat.cfm](http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/acrl/issues/infolit/professactivity/iil/immersion/Immersion_09_Invitat.cfm)



# When They Say “Immersion”... Take It Seriously!

Schedule started at 6:00  
p.m. Thursday,  
December 4

All day (and evening!)  
Friday, December 5 and  
Saturday, December 6

All morning until 2:00  
p.m. Sunday, December  
7



# What Did We Learn?



NOTE: Much information from the Immersion Programs is proprietary.

In general, though, we covered:

- Vocabulary and Philosophy of Assessment
- How to write student learning outcomes using the IOT formula (in order to)
- How to write rubrics and criteria for assessments of assignments, courses, programs
- How to develop an institutional plan for information literacy assessment
- And finally for every assessment: Start with the Outcomes!!



# Application of Learning: Spring 2009 and Beyond

## **Classroom Assessment**

Composition II:

Assessment of prior library instruction before any Comp. II library instruction takes place

UL100, Information Literacy and Technology

Pre-test of existing information literacy competencies

Planning a post-test at the end of Spring 2009 semester

Wrote a rubric for UL100 course assessment (to be implemented Fall 2009)

Revised student library instruction evaluation forms

## **Programmatic Assessment**

Revised library instruction statistics reporting forms to reflect more accurately the disciplines we are and are NOT currently reaching

## **Institutional Assessment**

Working with ESU Assessment Director for future implementation of Project SAILS as pre-test and post-test of ESU freshmen and seniors



## A Brief Sample of Standardized Tests:

CLA or Collegiate Learning Assessment (not specifically for information literacy skills but does tie in to critical thinking):

[http://www.cae.org/content/pro\\_collegiate.htm](http://www.cae.org/content/pro_collegiate.htm)

iSkills (Educational Testing Service; assesses information and communication technology literacy):

<http://www.ets.org/iskills>

Project SAILS (Standardized Assessment of Information Literacy Skills):

<https://www.projectsails.org>

WASSAIL (Web-Based Augustana Student Survey Assessment of Information Literacy):

<http://www.augustana.ualberta.ca/services/library/infolit/wassail>



## Bibliography

**ALA-ACRL Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education.** Retrieved 30 March 2009 from <http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/acrl/standards/informationliteracycompetency.cfm>

Best Practices Initiative, ALA-ACRL Institute for Information Literacy. **Characteristics of Programs of Information Literacy that Illustrate Best Practices: A Guideline.** Retrieved 30 March 2009 from <http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/acrl/standards/characteristics.cfm>

Huba, Mary E. and Jann E. Freed. **Learner-Centered Assessment on College Campuses: Shifting the Focus from Teaching to Learning.** Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2000.

Radcliff, Carolyn, et al. **A Practical Guide to Information Literacy Assessment for Academic Librarians.** Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited, 2007.



# My Contact Information

Cynthia Akers  
Associate Professor and Information Literacy  
Coordinator  
ESU Libraries and Archives

[cakers@emporia.edu](mailto:cakers@emporia.edu)

620-341-5480

(Friend Me on Facebook!)