



## Day 3

# 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)

**An assessment is** "an activity, assigned by the professor, that yields comprehensive information for analyzing, discussing, and judging a learner's performance of valued abilities and skills."

- Typically takes place over longer period of time
- Results in a project that will be judged and graded.
- Students both learn and reveal their learning via the assignment
- Learning requires feedback. (Huba and Freed)

**Performance assessments** require students to provide evidence of targeted knowledge, skills, and abilities by constructing a response, creating a product, or performing a demonstration. Since performance assessments generally do not yield a single correct answer, evaluations of student products or performances are based on judgments guided by criteria.

### Performance Assessment Process

1. Articulate assignment goals and student learning outcomes.
2. Design assignment to provide a performance assessment, or evidence of key learning outcomes related to research process as well as final product.
3. Integrate assessments into syllabus, planning sharing of evaluation criteria and time for structured feedback.
4. Develop and test criteria for evaluating student performance.

### Considerations in Determining Performance Assessment Approaches

- Will the final product of the research assignment provide evidence of the learning outcomes you selected, or will an intermediate product need to be created?
- What stages will assist the students in developing the skills/abilities necessary to complete the assignment successfully? At what points do you need to check students' knowledge/skills?
- What products might the students create at these points, and what mechanisms will you use to provide meaningful feedback?
- What adjustments will be feasible based on the information you collect about student learning?

### Planning Assessment over the course of the semester: how much is enough?

- Assessment requires significant class time: sharing learning outcomes, coaching, sharing criteria for evaluation, and providing feedback.
- Assessment requires instructor time for feedback: to improve student learning, instructors need to provide detailed feedback during the semester, rather than just a grade at the end.
- Assessment requires instructor time for reflection -- analyzing data collected and making changes in response.

### Using Rubrics to Evaluate Student Performance

A rubric is an articulation of the criteria against which student work will be judged.

- Lists categories of performance to be assessed via the research assignment.
- Describes different levels of performance in each category.
- Can be used to make public key criteria for developing, revising, and judging work.
- Criteria should be tested and a shared interpretation developed.

### Rules of Thumb

- Stage assessments to throughout the semester to improve learning.
- Only assess in areas where you are willing to make adjustments based on the information gathered.
- Assessment requires significant design time: articulating learning outcomes, designing assessments, and formulating criteria/rubrics. Consider starting small and simple.
- Carefully consider logistics of implementation in large classes.

Sources:

Assessment Forum, American Association for Higher Education. "Nine Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning." Online:  
<http://www.csus.edu/acaf/Assessment/prncpls.stm>, accessed June 2, 2006.

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