

DOING ASSESSMENT AS IF LEARNING MATTERS MOST

SIMPLE, PRACTICAL CLASSROOM AND COURSE-LEVEL APPROACHES

THE 2008 ASSESSMENT INSTITUTE IN INDIANAPOLIS

Materials for a Concurrent Workshop

2:15-3:30 PM on Monday 27 October 2008

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Build a shared language and concepts . . .

Directed Paraphrasing

In 1 or 2 concise sentences, define what high-quality higher learning—or, if you wish deeper learning—means to you. Write a definition below that will make sense to—and perhaps inspire—your colleagues and your students.

Higher (Deeper) Learning is . . .

Tri-national Background Knowledge Probe

Please answer each question below for all three countries: Australia (AUS), New Zealand and the United States. Guessing is encouraged and expected!

| | AUS | NZ | USA |
|--|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. Population? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 2. Area in sq kms? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 3. Capital city? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 4. Name of current head of national gov't | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 5. Name of most likely next head of gov't? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 6. % eligible voting in last nat.election? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 7. % Indigenous? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 8. % who are NESB*? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 9. % with Bachelors degree or above? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 10. Corruption ranking? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 11. Greenhouse gas per person ranking? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 12. %-age GDP to Defense? | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 13. %-age child poverty? | _____ | _____ | _____ |

* Non-English speaking background/ English not first language

Collaborative Learning Technique #1

Think-Pair-Share

Useful for stimulating engagement in discussions, checking students' understanding of concepts, and encouraging students to rehearse, express, and compare their understandings with those of others

Estimated Time and Effort Required for

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <i>Faculty to prepare this CoLT</i> | <i>VERY LOW</i> |
| <i>Students to use this CoLT</i> | <i>VERY LOW</i> |
| <i>Faculty to assess/follow up</i> | <i>VERY LOW</i> |

| | |
|------------------------|-----------------|
| <i>Complexity</i> | <i>VERY LOW</i> |
| <i>Risk of Failure</i> | <i>VERY LOW</i> |

Duration & Location *5-15 minutes/In class*

Group Size & Structure *Pairs or triads/Informal/No pre-organizing needed*

Description and Purpose:

The name of this CoLT, "Think-Pair-Share," captures the essential steps. In response to a question posed by the instructor, students think and perhaps write on their own for a few minutes, quickly pair up with classmates, and then share, discuss, and compare their responses in pairs before responding to the instructor or sharing with the entire class. This technique provides students with the opportunity to formulate responses and practice communicating them with their peers. Since *Think-Pair-Share* can dramatically improve students' willingness and readiness to participate, it's often used as a "warm up" or "step up" to a whole class discussion.

Procedure

1. Pose an engaging question to the class, giving students ample time to think about the question individually and to devise individual responses.
2. Ask students to pair with another student nearby to share responses and, if useful, to create a joint response by building on each other's ideas.
3. Ask the pairs to share their responses with the whole class. If time is limited and/or the class is large, randomly call on student pairs.
4. If appropriate, provide class with the correct or expert response, allowing them to check and, if needed, correct their individual and pair responses.

Why Assess Learning in Higher Education?

Formative purposes

- TO FOCUS LEARNERS' ATTENTION
- TO ILLUMINATE AND UNDERMINE MISCONCEPTIONS
- TO INCREASE MOTIVATION TO LEARN
- TO PROVIDE LEARNERS WITH FEEDBACK
- TO PROMOTE SELF-ASSESSMENT & MONITORING
- TO IMPROVE ACADEMIC SUCCESS
-

Summative purposes

- TO SORT LEARNERS
- TO COMPARE LEARNERS AGAINST EACH OTHER
- TO COMPARE LEARNING AGAINST CRITERIA
- TO CERTIFY COMPETENCY
- TO AWARD DEGREES AND OTHER QUALIFICATIONS
-

Evaluative purposes

- TO DETERMINE PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS
- TO IMPROVE PROGRAMS
- TO CERTIFY/ACCREDIT PROGRAMS
-

Seven Transformative Guidelines for Doing Assessment as if *Learning* Matters Most

1. **Build shared trust.** *Begin by lowering social, interpersonal, and personal barriers to change.*
2. **Build shared language.** *Develop a collective understanding of the new concepts (mental models) needed for transformation.*
3. **Build shared motivation.** *Collectively determine goals worth working toward and problems worth solving – and consider the likely costs and benefits.*
4. **Design backward and work forward.** *Design backward from that shared vision and long-term goals to develop coherent outcomes, strategies, and activities.*
5. **Think and act systematically.** *Analyze the opportunities and limitations presented by the larger system(s) within which we operate and seek connections and applications to those larger worlds.*
6. **Take a scholarly approach.** *Consult the theory and research literature. Use what has already been learned about individual and organizational learning, change, and assessment to inform, explain, and examine your plans and strategies.*
7. **Don't assume, ask.** *Make the implicit explicit. Use assessment to focus on – and only on – what matters most.*

Five Promising Pathways toward Learning-Focused Assessment

We can begin by focusing on . . .

Goals/Objectives

Examples: Pages 7 & 8

Principles from Research and Best Practice

Example: Page 9

Persistent Problems

Examples: Pages 11–13

Practice-based Hypotheses

Examples: Pages 14 & 15

Strengths/Successes

Example: Page 16

1ST Example of *Starting with Learning Goals* – *Goal Ranking & Matching Exercise*

What do you hope to get out of this workshop? Will it address your needs and expectations? This is a Classroom Assessment Technique (CAT) designed to help you identify your expectations and share them with the session leader -- and each other. You'll also review the presenter's goals are for this workshop, and see how well those goals match yours.

- 1. On the lines below, please list three or four goals you hope to achieve—things you hope to learn or questions you hope to answer—through participating in this afternoon’s workshop.**

Your learning goals for this workshop

2. Now, rank your goals in terms of their relative importance to you. Make the most important goal #1, the next most important #2, etc.
3. As you hear the presenter's goals, circle any of your goals which match those he mentions.
4. Prepare to talk about any important goals you have which are not included in the presenter's list of goals and/or to ask questions about those goals.

Reference: Angelo, T.A. & Cross, K.P. (1993). Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers, 2nd edition. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, pp. 290-294.

2nd example of *Starting with Learning Goals* –

FIVE DIMENSIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING

Approximate percentage
of the instruction *you* got
in your undergrad years in . . .

What percentage of their
instruction *your students*
need now in . . .

| | | |
|-------|--|-------|
| _____ | DECLARATIVE LEARNING Learning <i>What</i> Learning facts and principles | _____ |
| _____ | PROCEDURAL LEARNING Learning <i>How</i> Learning skills and procedures | _____ |
| _____ | CONDITIONAL LEARNING Learning <i>When and Where</i> Learning applications | _____ |
| _____ | REFLECTIVE LEARNING Learning <i>Why</i> Learning to understand one's self and others | _____ |
| _____ | METACOGNITIVE LEARNING Learning <i>How to Learn</i> Learning to direct & manage one's own learning | _____ |

Example of *Starting with Learning Principles* –

Introductory Statistics example *Background Knowledge Probe*

In response to each problem below, circle the number (1-4) that best represents your current knowledge. If you circle (4), please go ahead and solve the problem on the attached sheet.

- I. Suppose that you have a bag of M&M candies (plain, no peanuts) that contains 22 light brown, 20 dark brown, 18 yellow, 14 green, 12 orange, and 11 red M&Ms. If you draw one of these M&Ms out at random, what are the probabilities that it will be:
- (a) yellow? (b) red? (c) neither yellow nor red?
- (1) I have no idea how to solve this problem
(2) I once knew how to solve problems like this, but have forgotten
(3) I think I could solve it, given enough time
(4) I'm sure I can solve it right now
- II. In Smallville, 8% of all adults over 50 have diabetes. If a clinic in this community correctly diagnoses 95 percent of all persons with diabetes as having the disease, and incorrectly diagnoses 2% of all persons without diabetes as having the disease. What is the probability that an adult over 50 diagnosed by this clinic as having diabetes actually has the disease?
- (1) I have no idea how to solve this problem
(2) I once knew how to solve problems like this, but have forgotten
(3) I think I could solve it, given enough time
(4) I'm sure I can solve it right now
- III. In Lost Wages, Nevada, incompatibility is given as the reason for 60% of all divorces. What is the probability that three of the next six divorce cases filed in this city will claim incompatibility as the reason? (Use the attached table)
- (1) I have no idea how to solve this problem
(2) I once knew how to solve problems like this, but have forgotten
(3) I think I could solve it, given enough time
(4) I'm sure I can solve it right now

1st example of *Starting with Persistent Problems* – ***An Example of Grading Standards***

Freshman Writing Seminar

Grading Standards for Writing in Seminar Portfolios

- "A" work** (1) Responds fully to the assignment; (2) Expresses its purpose clearly and persuasively; (3) Is directed toward and meets the needs of a defined audience; (4) Begins and ends effectively; (5) Provides adequate supporting arguments, evidence, examples, and details; (6) Is well-organized and unified; (7) Uses appropriate, direct language; (8) Correctly acknowledges and documents sources; (9) Is free of errors in grammar, punctuation, word choice, spelling, and format; and, (10) Maintains a level of excellence throughout, and shows originality and creativity in realizing (1) through (7).
- "B" work** Realizes (1) through (9) fully and completely -- and demonstrates overall excellence -- but shows little or no originality or creativity.
- "C" work** Realizes (1) through (9) adequately -- and demonstrates overall competence -- but contains a few, relatively minor errors or flaws. A "C" paper may show great creativity and originality, but those qualities don't make up for poor or careless writing. A "C" paper usually looks and reads like a next-to-final draft.
- "D" work** Fails to realize some elements of (1) through (9) adequately -- and contains several, relatively serious errors or flaws, or many minor ones. A "D" paper often looks and reads like a first or second draft.
- "F" work** Fails to realize several elements of (1) through (9) adequately -- and contains many serious errors or flaws, and usually many minor ones, as well. An "F" paper usually looks and reads like a zero draft.

A SIMPLE ASSESSMENT/GRADING RUBRIC

Title of piece: _____ Author: _____ Date: _____

| | | | | | |
|--|------------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------|-------------|
| (1) Responds fully to the assignment | EXCELLENT | VERY GOOD | ADEQUATE | FAIR | POOR |
| (2) Expresses its purpose clearly and persuasively | EXCELLENT | VERY GOOD | ADEQUATE | FAIR | POOR |
| (3) Is directed toward and meets the needs of a defined audience | EXCELLENT | VERY GOOD | ADEQUATE | FAIR | POOR |
| (4) Begins and ends effectively | EXCELLENT | VERY GOOD | ADEQUATE | FAIR | POOR |
| (5) Provides adequate supporting arguments, evidence, examples, and details | EXCELLENT | VERY GOOD | ADEQUATE | FAIR | POOR |
| (6) Is well-organized and unified | EXCELLENT | VERY GOOD | ADEQUATE | FAIR | POOR |
| (7) Uses appropriate, direct language | EXCELLENT | VERY GOOD | ADEQUATE | FAIR | POOR |
| (8) Correctly acknowledges and documents sources | EXCELLENT | VERY GOOD | ADEQUATE | FAIR | POOR |
| (9) Is free of errors in grammar, punctuation, word choice, spelling, and format | EXCELLENT | VERY GOOD | ADEQUATE | FAIR | POOR |
| (10) Maintains a level of excellence throughout | EXCELLENT | VERY GOOD | ADEQUATE | FAIR | POOR |
| Shows originality and creativity in realizing (1) through (7) | EXCELLENT | VERY GOOD | ADEQUATE | FAIR | POOR |
| OVERALL EVALUATION | EXCELLENT | VERY GOOD | ADEQUATE | FAIR | POOR |

COMMENTS:

2nd example of Starting with Persistent Problems –

Discussion Draft Questions for an Undergraduate Course/Teaching Evaluation Form

Questions about yourself (1= Always, 2=Usually, 3=Sometimes, 4=Rarely, 5=Never, NA= Not Applicable)

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 1. I was self-motivated to learn this course material | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | NA |
| 2. I was well-prepared for each class session | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | NA |
| 3. I asked the instructor for help/guidance when I needed it | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | NA |
| 4. I invested enough time and energy to meet/exceed course requirements | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | NA |
| 5. I participated actively and contributed thoughtfully in class sessions | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | NA |
| 6. I attended class sessions and/or individual appointments | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | NA |
| 7. Overall, I gave my best possible effort to learning in this course | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | NA |

Questions about the course (1= Always, 2=Usually, 3=Sometimes, 4=Rarely, 5=Never, NA= Not Applicable)

| | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 8. The course was well-organized to help students learn | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | NA |
| 9. The objectives and criteria for meeting them were made clear | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | NA |
| 10. The assignments contributed to my learning | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | NA |
| 11. The assessments/evaluations were clearly connected to the objectives | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | NA |
| 12. The amount of work required was appropriate to the objectives | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | NA |
| 13. The level of intellectual challenge was high | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | NA |

Questions about the instructor (1= Always, 2=Usually, 3=Sometimes, 4=Rarely, 5=Never, NA= Not Applicable)

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 14. The instructor clearly connected the course objectives to course activities, assignments, and assessments | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | NA |
| 15. The instructor encouraged me to connect my experience to the course | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | NA |
| 16. The instructor provided clear and useful feedback to improve learning | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | NA |
| 17. The instructor inspired interest and excitement in the course material | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | NA |
| 18. The instructor was available and helpful when asked | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | NA |
| 19. The instructor communicated ideas and information clearly and effectively | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | NA |
| 20. The instructor evaluated and graded fairly | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | NA |
| 21. The instructor treated students and their ideas with respect | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | NA |
| 22. The instructor used required texts/other required materials effectively | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | NA |

Summary Questions: Compared w/ other courses: (1=extremely high, 2=high, 3=adequate, 4=low, 5=very low)

| | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 23. This course increased my desire to continue learning about this material | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | NA |
| 24. If a friend asked about taking this course, my recommendation would be | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | NA |
| 25. Overall, I would rate the quality of this course as | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | NA |
| 26. Overall, I would rate the effectiveness of the instructor as | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | NA |
| 27. Overall, I would rate the amount I learned in this course as | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | NA |
| 28. Overall, I would rate the value of what I learned in this course as | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | NA |

1st example of *Starting with Hypotheses* – *The Minute Paper*

Please answer each question in 1 or 2 sentences:

- 1) What was the most useful or meaningful thing you learned during this session?
- 2) What question(s) remain uppermost in your mind as we end this session?

Reference: Angelo, T. A. & Cross, K. P. *Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers*, 2nd edition. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1993, pp. 148-153.

A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy

(From Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001)

CREATE
Generate, Plan,
Synthesize,
Produce the New

EVALUATE
Critique or Judge based on
Explicit Standards/Criteria

ANALYZE
Break Down, Relate Parts & Whole, Organize

APPLY
Follow Procedures to Solve Problems
or Carry Out Tasks

UNDERSTAND
Connect New Learning to Prior Knowledge by
Interpreting, Classifying, Comparing, Summarizing, etc.

REMEMBER
Elaborate, Encode, and
Retrieve Information from
Long-term Memory

2nd example of *Starting with Hypotheses* –

Pro and Con Grid

DIRECTIONS: Considering everything you know about assessment at this point, what do you see as the most significant *pros* and *cons* -- or costs and benefits -- of using these approaches to assessment. List at least three important *cons* (costs) and at least three *pros* (benefits) below. Then list any unanswered questions you'd like to follow up.

Cons/Costs of _____

Pros/Benefits of _____

Unanswered questions to follow-up _____

An example of *Starting with Strengths/Successes* – *Applications Card*

DIRECTIONS: Please take a moment to recall the ideas, techniques, and strategies we've discussed – and those you've thought up – to this point in the session. Quickly list as many possible applications as you can. Don't censor yourself! These are merely possibilities. You can always evaluate the desirability and/or feasibility of these application ideas later.

*Interesting
IDEAS/TECHNIQUES
from this session*

*Some possible
APPLICATIONS of those
ideas/techniques to my work*

Reference: Angelo, T.A. & Cross, K.P. Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers, 2nd edition. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1993, pp. 236-239.

ANGELO'S SEVEN AXIOMS OF CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT

1. Don't ask if you don't want to know.
2. Don't collect more data than you can easily and quickly turn into useful information.
3. Don't simply adopt methods and techniques from others, adapt them to your subject and students.
4. Before using a CAT, always ask yourself:
How might responses to this question help me and my students improve learning? (If you can't answer that question, the assessment is probably not worth doing.)
5. Take advantage of the "Hawthorne Effect."
Let students know why you are using CATs and how you hope it will benefit them. You'll be more likely to find what you're looking for.
6. Remember: If an assessment is worth doing, it's worth teaching students how to do it well.
7. Make sure to close the "feedback loop" by letting students know what you've gleaned from their responses – and how you and they can use that information to improve learning.

Seven Common Misperceptions about Assessment and Seven Reasonable Responses

1. We're doing just fine without it.
 - *OK, then let's use assessment to find out what works, and to help us document and build on our successes.*
2. We're already doing it.
 - *OK, then let's audit all the assessments we already do to discover what we know and what we don't.*
3. We're far too busy to do it.
 - *OK, but since we're already doing it, let's use assessment to see where and how we can save time and effort.*
4. The most important things can't/shouldn't be measured.
 - *And not everything measurable should be measured, but let's see if we can agree on how we can tell when we're succeeding in these most important things.*
5. We'd need more staff and lots more money.
 - *Since we're unlikely to get more resources: how, what, and where can we piggyback, embed, and substitute?*
6. They'll use the results against us.
 - *They might. So, let's build in strong safeguards against misuse before we agree to assess.*
7. No one will care about or use what we find.
 - *To avoid that, let's agree not to do any assessments without a firm commitment from stakeholders to use the results.*

Three Definitions

Higher learning is an active, interactive, self-aware process that results in meaningful, long-lasting changes -- in knowledge, understanding skills, behaviors, attitudes, beliefs, opinions, and/or values -- that can not be attributed primarily to maturation.

Angelo, T. A. *A 'Teacher's Dozen': Fourteen General, Research-based Principles for Improving Higher Learning in Our Classrooms.* The AAHE Bulletin, 45 (8), April 1993, pp. 3-7 & 13.

Assessment is an ongoing process aimed at understanding and improving student learning. It involves making our expectations explicit and public; setting appropriate criteria and high standards for learning quality; systematically gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence to determine how well performance matches those expectations and standards; and using the resulting information to document, explain, and improve performance. When it is embedded effectively within larger institutional systems, assessment can help us focus our collective attention, examine our assumptions, and create a shared academic culture dedicated to assuring and improving the quality of higher education.

Angelo, T. A. *Reassessing (and Defining) Assessment.* The AAHE Bulletin, 48 (2), November 1995, pp. 7-9.

Classroom Assessment is a simple method faculty can use to collect feedback, early and often, on how well their students are learning what they are being taught. The purpose of classroom assessment is to provide faculty and students with information and insights needed to improve teaching effectiveness and learning quality. College instructors use feedback gleaned through Classroom Assessment to inform adjustments in their teaching. Faculty also share feedback with students, using it to help them improve their learning strategies and study habits in order to become more independent, successful learners. . . . Classroom Assessment is one method of inquiry within the framework of Classroom Research, a broader approach to improving teaching and learning.

Angelo, T. A. *Ten Easy Pieces: Assessing Higher Learning in Four Dimensions.*
In T. A. Angelo (ed.) Classroom Research: Early Lessons from Success. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, no. 46, Summer 1991, pp. 17-31

A FEW USEFUL REFERENCES ON ASSESSMENT

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AND ON IMPROVING TEACHING AND LEARNING QUALITY

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Mini-Evaluation Form

Tom Angelo's Monday 2:15 PM Workshop at the 2008 Assessment Institute

1. Please rate the overall quality of this session on the scale below:

| | | | | |
|-------|------|------------|------|-----------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| awful | poor | acceptable | good | excellent |

2. Please rate the overall usefulness of the session below:

| | | | | |
|---------|----------|----------|------|-----------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| useless | not very | somewhat | very | extremely |

3. What did you find most useful/helpful? (Please be specific.)

4. How could it have been improved? (Please be specific.)

Thanks for your time, consideration, and feedback.

Tom Angelo