

The Assessment Quarterly

Assessment URLs

Jeffrey Bathe, Psychology

- <http://www.mvcr.org/>
The *Making the Virtual Classroom a Reality* series offers an online assessment class. Registration will open 4/22/02 and the course begins 6/5/02.

- <http://ericae.net/edo/ED365312.htm>
This article discusses how technology can support new approaches to assessment (e.g., performance assessment, simulations, presentations, etc.)

- <http://home.rochester.rr.com/instech/rubric.html>
From "Instructional Technology Resource Teachers" site discussing the benefits of rubrics.

Editor's Note

Stephanie Kratz, English

Welcome to the first issue of Assessment Quarterly, the newsletter of the Heartland Community College Assessment Committee (AC)! When I volunteered to "spearhead" this newsletter at the February 2nd AC meeting, I didn't know the committee would decide that the first issue should come out within a few weeks! Ah, well, we're all busy, right? So, in the midst of creating quizzes, grading papers, and learning WebCT, I write this welcome to you.

The newly formed AC consists of eight faculty members and four administrators: Temba Bassoppo-Moyo (ex-officio), Jeffrey Bathe, Barb Borg, Samuel Clay, Tom Clemens (Admin.), Steve Herald (Admin.), Stephanie Kratz (Vice-Chair), John Muench (Chair), Allan Saaf (Admin.), Padriac Shinville (Admin.), Todd Simeone, and Steve Wedwick. The two-year terms will be staggered, and elections will take place in April. Four divisions will elect a new AC representative in April 2002: Human Services, Technology, Academic Support, and Social and Behavioral Sciences.

Kudos from the AC to those faculty who presented their classroom assessment strate-

gies at the first Best Practices Day on January 9: Jeffrey Bathe, Stacie Chismark, and Johnna Darragh. Feedback was positive with many faculty remarking that they enjoyed learning about what their colleagues are doing in the classrooms at HCC. It's this spirit of sharing ideas that keep us all fresh and challenged! You can look forward to the second annual Best Practices Day in January 2003.

Meanwhile, the AC hopes that this newsletter will serve as a forum for faculty to share ideas and learn about assessment-related resources. Think of it as a textual Best Practices Day. We invite – and will actively solicit – short articles about classroom assessment techniques; summaries of discipline-specific assessment discussions; reviews of assessment resources including books, articles, conferences, and websites; and any other assessment-related ideas that you would like to share. Here's to creating a healthy and helpful assessment environment here at HCC!

Sincerely,
Stephanie

Upcoming Assessment Events

Sixth Annual Assessment Fair at Prairie State College

Thursday, February 28, 8:15 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Keynote speakers are Timothy L. Roach and Ruth E. Benander who will speak on "Effective Assessment Across the Curriculum." Also included are three concurrent sessions, breakfast, lunch, and networking. Registration fee is \$30 before February 20 and \$40 thereafter.

A Day at Alverno College: Teaching and Assessing Student Abilities

Thursday, April 4, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Includes general presentations, small group sessions, and informal conversations that encourage discussion of specific problems and response to individual questions. Registration fee is \$150 before March 7 and \$185 thereafter. For more information: http://www.alverno.edu/educators/day_long.html

Contact a member of the Assessment Committee if you are interested in attending one of these events. Some funding is available.

The Evolution of a Classroom Technique

R. John Muench, Chemistry

While at Alverno College five years ago, I met with a Faculty member from that school who taught Biology courses. I asked if he gave his students exams and if so, how did he evaluate them. He replied that he did give the usual exams like any other biology instructor would give, would mark all of the items that were incorrect, and then returned them to the students without a grade. The students were then required to submit a detailed self-assessment on *how* they had performed on this examination. He explained that the students were often highly critical of themselves and the self-assessment provided an incentive to improve on future exams. In addition, the self-assessment provided valuable feedback for him as an instructor as to what students were and were not learning.

Over the next few weeks, I began to think, "Why can't I do this in my classes?" I had often felt frustration when a student did poorly on an exam, but had no clue as to why. Thus, I decided to have my CHEM 161 students complete a self-assessment on the first couple of exams the next semester. My initial design was to hand back the exam with all of the incorrect answers marked, but with no grade assigned. Then, I would explain the self-assessment exercise to the students and have them complete it. Lastly, I would tell them that, although this was an un-graded assignment, their input was very valuable to me as an instructor.

As with all new things, I got mixed results from the students. Some understood the assignment and gave great critiques of their efforts and provided some valuable insight on where I needed to strengthen

some lessons. Many others, though, wrote very little or nothing at all. Responses like, "I did bad because I didn't study enough," were all too common. Thus, I looked back at the instructions I had given. The answer was obvious - I hadn't given explicit instructions to the students as to what I really wanted.

As new semesters and new classes of CHEM 161 have come along, I have modified this assignment to make the instructions clearer to the students as to what I am looking for. For those students that still don't give much feedback, I write a note that asks for more or better clarification on the next self-assessment exercise. The final evolution came this past year as I decided to make this a graded assignment. Now, because of the grade implications, most students not only complete the exercise, but also provide the insight into their performance that I am looking for.

In conclusion, this article has two points to make. First, if you have never tried a self-assessment exercise before, then I would encourage you to consider it. Because all courses are different, you will need to think how it might best be used in your classes. Second, when trying something new, assume that it will only marginally work (if at all) the first time. Then, based on the results, determine what modifications need to be made to improve the feedback. Remember that the Classroom Assessment Techniques from Cross and Angelo are proven to work in the classroom by actual teachers, but require explicit instructions to the students in order to receive the information that is desired.

Some Thoughts on Assessment

Barb Borg, Nursing

I will assume that Heartland's faculty is committed to preparing students well for the roles they will fill after attending Heartland Community College. How to determine if we are succeeding in our efforts is where assessment comes in. Do we judge on how many students pass our courses or how many attain a certificate or a degree in a chosen field? Do we poll the students after graduation for successful employment? How do we determine if they learned how to critically think?

Shouldn't we assess ourselves as well as the students as part of the assessment process? Are we learning and growing in our roles as educators? Do we make an effort to learn new methodology or do we throw up our tired hands and arms and say, "We don't have enough time?"

It is a struggle to incorporate more into our busy schedules, but we must do it! It is important in our efforts to educate and to enable learning.

In nursing education we feel that critical thinking is a necessary part of competent nursing practice, part of our program accreditation, and a goal of nursing education. We try to use a variety of teaching methods to accomplish this; yet we also realize we must continue to learn more methods from our colleagues. We always need more education on teaching for critical thinking. We try to be open to innovative teaching strategies and not rely on the lecture format as our primary teaching method. We are happy to have the assessment committee working in our behalf arranging interesting presentations as the recent "Best Practices Day." Hope everyone else enjoyed it also.

Please share your CAT ideas, reviews of assessment resources and reflections on assessment with us. We are wanting to hear from you as we prepare for our second issue, which is to be published in early April. Contact Stephanie Kratz (ext. 8579) or Jeffrey Bathe (ext. 8416) if you are interested in sharing your ideas with your colleagues.

Inside Story Headline

This story can fit 150-200 words.

One benefit of using your newsletter as a promotional tool is that you can reuse content from other marketing materials, such as press releases, market studies, and reports.

While your main goal of distributing a newsletter might be to sell your product or service, the key to a successful newsletter is making it useful to your readers.



Caption describing picture or graphic.

A great way to add useful content to your newsletter is to develop and write your own articles, or include a calendar of upcoming events or a special offer that promotes a new product.

You can also research articles or find "filler" articles by accessing the World Wide Web. You can write about a variety of topics but try to keep your articles short.

Much of the content you put in your newsletter can also be used for your Web site. Microsoft Publisher offers a simple way to convert your newsletter to a Web publication. So, when you're finished writing your newsletter, convert it to a Web site and post it.

Inside Story Headline

This story can fit 100-150 words.

The subject matter that appears in newsletters is virtually endless. You can include stories that focus on current technologies or innovations in your field.

You may also want to note business or economic trends, or make predictions for your customers or clients.

If the newsletter is distributed internally, you might comment upon new procedures or improvements to the business. Sales figures or

earnings will show how your business is growing.

Some newsletters include a column that is updated every issue, for instance, an advice column, a book review, a letter from the president, or an editorial. You can also profile new employees or top customers or vendors.

"To catch the reader's attention, place an interesting sentence or quote from the story here."

Inside Story Headline

This story can fit 75-125 words.

Selecting pictures or graphics is an important part of adding content to your newsletter.

Think about your article and ask yourself if the picture supports or enhances the message you're trying to convey. Avoid selecting images that appear to be out of context.

Microsoft Publisher includes thousands of clip art images from which you can choose and import into your newsletter. There are also several tools you can use to draw shapes and symbols.

Once you have chosen an image, place it



Caption describing picture or graphic.

close to the article. Be sure to place the caption of the image near the image.

Heartland Community College

Primary Business Address
Your Address Line 2
Your Address Line 3
Your Address Line 4

Phone: 555-555-5555
Fax: 555-555-5555
Email: xyz@microsoft.com



Your business tag line here.

This would be a good place to insert a short paragraph about your organization. It might include the purpose of the organization, its mission, founding date, and a brief history. You could also include a brief list of the types of products, services, or programs your organization offers, the geographic area covered (for example, western U.S. or European markets), and a profile of the types of customers or members served.

It would also be useful to include a contact name for readers who want more information about the organization.

Back Page Story Headline

This story can fit 175-225 words.

If your newsletter is folded and mailed, this story will appear on the back. So, it's a good idea to make it easy to read at a glance.

A question and answer session is a good way to quickly capture the attention of readers. You can either compile questions that you've received since the last edition or you can summarize some generic questions that are frequently asked about your organization.

A listing of names and titles of managers in your organization is a good way to give your newsletter a personal touch. If your organization is small, you may want to list the names of all employees.

If you have any prices of standard products or services, you can include a listing of those here. You

may want to refer your readers to any other forms of communication that you've created for your organization.

You can also use this space to remind readers to mark their calendars for a regular event, such as a breakfast meeting for vendors every third Tuesday of the month, or a biannual charity auction.

If space is available, this is a good place to insert a clip art image or some other graphic.



Caption describing picture or graphic.