Designing Signature Assessments Workshop

May 16, 2024
1:00pm-4:30pm
BH 0444

Workshop Agenda	Packet Contents	
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Resource Links

Designing Signature Assignments • Links and Examples • Includes a digital copy of this packet	https://tinyurl.com/377pr4r6
What is the Inquiry Core Curriculum? • Overview of the Core • Designing a Course Tutorial	https://tinyurl.com/579sru5f

Overarching Goals

Overarching Goals describe what *students* should be able to *do* upon successful completion of the course. A quality overarching goal involves *higher-order thinking* and is *concrete* and *observable*.

What do you do?
• In the context of the course topic, what do *you* do as an expert in the field? What does interpretation, analysis, evaluation, creation, etc. involve? • What is unique about how your discipline approaches the world? • What do professionals in the field do? • What socially valuable activities does your discipline engage in or provide the resources to engage in?
Higher Order Thinking
How can students *apply* information, using it to *interpret*, *analyze*, *synthesize*, *evaluate*, or *create*? Emphasize verbs from the "higher" levels of Bloom's cognitive taxonomy, such as: Derive   Predict   Analyze Design   Interpret   Synthesize Formulate   Evaluate   Create
Examples of Overarching Goals
By the end of this course, students should be able to… • Visit an art museum and evaluate the technique of an unfamiliar work • Evaluate claims in the popular press involving genetically-engineered crops, stem cells, DNA testing, etc. • Design classroom activities that are consistent with educational theory and the science of learning • Analyze an unfamiliar epidemic to… • Evaluate the historical context of an unfamiliar event • Analyze a political debate into its underlying philosophical positions • Use data from recent Mars missions to re-evaluate pre-2004 hypotheses about Mars geologic processes and history
Goal Templates
By the end of this course, students should be able to… • Make an informed decision about a controversial topic, other than those covered in class, involving _____ • Collect and analyze data to _____ • Design models of _____ • Solve unfamiliar problems in _____ • Find and evaluate information/data on _____ • Predict the outcome of _____

Ancillary Goals

Ancillary Goals are those goals, typically associated with specific skills, that students must meet in order to successfully achieve the overarching goals

- If you expect students to make a prediction based on analyzing a data set, they will need to know how to analyze data sets
- If you expect students to bring research to bear on a question, they will need to know how to locate and evaluate the research
- If you expect students to present their findings, they will need to know how to construct and deliver a presentation
- If you expect students to report their findings, they will need to know how to write in the appropriate genre
- If you expect students to collaborate to produce the product or performance, they will need to know how to successfully collaborate

Developing Skills
- Skill development requires repeated practice and timely feedback, necessitating limiting the total number of ancillary goals.   - In core curriculum courses, you should not expect students to have already developed the skills required to achieve the overarching goals and so should build the course around developing those skills.   - The **CSU Core Competencies** are, broadly, a set of ancillary goals common to many courses/overarching goals and so can provide the framework for identifying the ancillary goals of any given course

CSU Core Competencies
- Written Communication   - Oral Communication   - Quantitative Literacy   - Collaboration   - Information Literacy   - Intercultural Knowledge & Competence   - Critical Thinking   - Digital Literacy   - Ethical Reasoning[1]   https://tinyurl.com/2ukmr3c9

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[1] Ethical Reasoning is expected to be embedded in major programs rather than necessarily through the core curriculum

Modes of Assessment

Authentic assessment can take many forms. The fundamental key is to break out of the artificiality of standard schooling assessment (recall exams, the 'research paper', etc.) and emphasize modes of assessment that carry weight in broader society, are things a person may do outside of a university setting, and/or provide students with an 'artifact' they can point to as something they created.

The list of ideas below is meant to be suggestive and not exhaustive.

Writing for an Actual Audience		
Action plan	Podcast narrative	Editorial
Presentation slides/notes	White Paper	Poetry
Magazine Article	Blog Post	Script for a skit
Technical document	Email	Brochure

Performances		
Conference presentation	Podcast	Role play
Debate	Newscast	Speech
Video Presentation	Panel discussion	Interview

Design of Products		
Blueprints	Diorama	Physical Model
Diagram	Drawings/sketches	Project Plan

Creation of Products		
Animation/video	Infographic	Sculpture
Assessment tool	Data display	Questionnaire
Survey	Artistic piece	Timeline

Other Types		
Experiment	Portfolio	Self-assessments
Peer review	Scrapbook	Work samples

Goal Alignment

Overarching goals dictate the *end goal(s)* of a course, while ancillary goals dictate intermediate goals, and both come together in the Signature Assignment(s). Below are some additional examples of alignment between overarching goals, ancillary goals, and the Signature Assignment.

Human Dimensions of Climate Change: "Students will be able to analyze the characteristics of past societies that made them vulnerable to climate change; predict what modern regions are most vulnerable to future climate change; formulate strategies to reduce these vulnerabilities."

- Information Literacy: Students will need to be able to appropriately interpret the scientific literature and data.
- Quantitative Literacy: Students will need to be able to interpret graphs and identify patterns in relevant quantitative data.

Signature Assessment: Students will select a modern region from a provided list, research it to identify climate change vulnerabilities, and propose at least one strategy to manage the vulnerability. This will be done in the form of a scientific white paper.

Ethical & Social Debates: "Students will be able to collaborate with others to formulate a position on controversial social and ethical issues; civilly engage with others in debate and discussion over controversial social and ethical issues."

- Collaboration: Students will need to be able to establish norms of collaboration and fairly distribute workload.
- Oral Communication: Students will need to know how to organize speeches and deliver them effectively.
- Critical Thinking: Students will need to take a stand on an issue and analyze the issue using appropriate ethical concepts and frameworks to defend their stance.

Signature Assessment: Students will engage in an *ethics bowl* class competition, being assigned the cases in advance to collaborate over their approach for either side of the debate. Each student will be expected to deliver at least one of the team's speeches and submit their critical analysis of the issue.

Audition & Spoken Language: "Students will be able to analyze pupil characteristics, classroom performance, and learning environments to design, implement, and assess lesson plans that will enhance spoken language learning.

- Written Communication: Students will need to know the genre conventions of a lesson plan and how to compose one.
- Critical Thinking: Students will need to be able to support their proposed lesson plan by appeal to appropriate concepts and theories

Signature Assessment: Students will construct a lesson plan aimed at enhancing spoken language learning for a particular hearing-impaired population. They will then write up a justification and discussion of their lesson plan.

Designing Reflections

Access the "Designing for Reflection" page of the Core Curriculum Handbook for frameworks and example prompts

Reflection Best Practices

- Provide students multiple opportunities to engage in reflection or metacognition to help them develop their abilities
- Provide structure: Don't just ask students to reflect on a prompt, provide them with an approach to engaging in that reflection or break the prompt down into smaller pieces
- Highlight the Reflection: Ensure students see the reflection as an important part of the work of the course – justify its purpose and embed it in the course in a significant way. If you design it to just be a "tag on" to an assignment, students will treat it that way.

Example Semester-long Reflection Protocol

1. **Initial Self-Assessment**. This course aims to develop your *collaboration*, *critical thinking*, and *written communication* skills. For each of these three skills, do the following: (1) Describe a past experience that involved the skill; (2) Describe what the skill means to you; and (3) Discuss your current comfort level or ability as it relates to the skill.
2. **Informal Reflections**. Throughout the semester, as specific (in or outside of class) activities aim to develop one of the core competencies, students are provided in-class opportunities for short informal reflections. For instance, after their first writing assignment is returned, they are prompted to (1) Identify their strengths as a writer, using the assignment as evidence; and (2) Identify where they most want to develop as a writer, using the assignment as evidence.
3. **Signature Assignment Reflection**. Upon completion of the signature assignment, students are prompted to:
   a. In class, but prior to submission of the assignment, conduct a guided self-evaluation of their own work, which is attached to the submission.
   b. After receiving feedback on the assignment, they are tasked with completing a reflection on the core competencies the assignment was aimed at assessing. This includes (1) describing what the skill means to them now, after developing and deploying it; (2) describing their comfort or ability level, as evidenced by the assignment and the feedback; and (3) Stating a specific plan of action for further development and improvement.

Refine & Align Protocol

As you review your draft signature assignment, use the following protocol to refine it and create grater alignment between learning outcomes and the assignment(s)

Which learning outcomes can the assignment develop and assess?
- Course/program outcomes
- OT-36 outcomes
- Core Competency learning outcomes

Rate the assignment across the characteristics of authentic assessment
- To what extent does the assessment activity *challenge* the student?
- Is a *performance*, or *product*, required as a final assessment outcome?
- To what extent does the assessment activity necessitate *transfer* of learning?
- To what extent does the assessment activity incorporate *metacognition*?
- To what extent is the assessment activity a product or performance that could be recognized as authentic by a client or stakeholder?
- To what extent is the assessment environment reflective of the real-world analogue?
- To what extent does the assessment activity require *discussion* and *feedback*?
- To what extent does the assessment activity require students to *collaborate*?
- To what extent is the assessment activity situated within society or explicitly communicate the value of the activity to society?
- To what extent is the *value* of the assessment activity embedded within it?
- To what extent does the assessment activity invite the student to engage in *transformative social change*?

Action Planning
- Identify the *strengths* of the assessment and consider how you can further emphasize those
- Identify the places in most need of *development* and create an action plan to developing those aspects of the assignment
    - What resources will you consult?
    - How will you change the broader course to align with changes to the signature assignment(s)?

TILT Assignment Template

This template was created as part of the Transparency in Learning & Teaching (TILT) initiative, originally by Mary-Ann Winkelmes.[2]

Assignment Name
Due date(s):

Purpose: *Define the learning objectives, in language and terms that help students recognize how this assignment will benefit their learning. Indicate how these connect with institutional learning outcomes, and how the specific knowledge and skills involved in this assignment will be important in students' lives beyond the contexts of this assignment, this course, and this institution.*

Skills:

The purpose of this assignment is to help you practice the following skills that are essential to your success in this course / in school / in this field / in professional life beyond school:

Terms from Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives may help you explain these skills in language students will understand. Listed from cognitively simple to most complex, these skills are:

- *understanding basic disciplinary knowledge and methods/tools*
- *applying basic disciplinary knowledge/tools to problem-solving in a similar but unfamiliar context*
- *analyzing*
- *synthesizing*
- *judging/evaluating and selecting best solutions*
- *creating/inventing a new interpretation, product, theory.*

Knowledge:

This assignment will also help you to become familiar with the following important content knowledge in this discipline:

- ...
- ...

Tasks: *Define what actions the students should take. Bloom's Taxonomy Action Verbs may be helpful. List any guidelines or a recommended sequence for students' work. Specify any mistakes to be avoided. If there are sound pedagogical reasons for withholding information about how to do the assignment, protect students' confidence and sense of belonging with a purpose statement something like this: "The purpose of this assignment is for you to struggle and feel confused while you invent and test your own approach for addressing the problem..."*

Criteria for Success: *Define the characteristics of the finished product. Provide multiple examples of what these characteristics look like in real-world practice, to encourage students' creativity and reduce their incentive to copy any one example too closely. Engage students in analyzing multiple examples of real-world work before the students begin their own work on the assignment. Discuss how excellent work differs from adequate work. This enables students to evaluate the quality of their own efforts while they are working, and to judge the success of their completed work. It is often useful to provide or compile with students a checklist of characteristics of successful work. Students can also use the checklist to provide feedback on peers' coursework. Indicate whether this task/product will be graded and/or how it factors into the student's overall grade for the course. Later, asking students to reflect and comment on their completed, graded work allows them to focus on changes to their learning strategies that might improve their future work.*

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[2] Winkelmes, Mary-Ann. "Transparency in Teaching: Faculty Share Data and Improve Students' Learning." *Liberal Education* 99, 2 (Spring 2013); Winkelmes et al, "A Teaching Intervention that Increases Underserved College Students' Success." *Peer Review* 18, 1/2 (Winter/Spring 2016).