Assessment Can Be Easy Via Blackboard

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Why assessment and why now?

- Assessment, and in particular, outcomes-based assessment, is a pressing concern in education today.

- Perform a search in ERIC with the keyword “assessment” and you will retrieve a whopping 95,211 articles.

- NCLB has mandated assessment and accountability in public education.

- In higher education, we are also experiencing this urgency to assess our programs in a meaningful way.
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Why Blackboard?

- Encouraging colleagues and students to participate in an information literacy assessment would be dependent on making the assessment as easy, convenient and integrated into the general course progression as possible.

- Using the campus’ course management system was essential for the assessment’s success.
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Today’s presentation

- We’ll provide background the climate of assessment at UNO that necessitated the need for an on-line information literacy assessment.

- We’ll describe the development of the first on-line information literacy assessment via Blackboard at the Criss Library at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

- We’ll share why we selected Blackboard and we’ll demonstrate how to use the assessment module of Blackboard.

- We’ll share some of the future developments and upgrades in Blackboard.
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- Assessment at UNO--impacting every level

- Institutional level—development of an electronic portfolio (called myMAPP) to measure campus-wide outcomes and to aid in the accreditation process

- myMAPP electronic portfolio is the digital repository for all college, program, faculty, staff and (eventually) student performance
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- What do we know about assessment and how do we learn more?
  - ACRL--three-week on-line training course in assessment

- We used our information literacy instruction in ENGL 116 (Freshmen Composition) as an example for designing an assessment

- We gained theoretical knowledge, practice and confidence
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- Assessment resources on campus
  - Internal grant funding to develop assessment projects on campus
  - Campus experts in assessment (faculty in Psychology, Education and English)
  - Graduate students (Computer Science and Psychology)
  - ITS Support
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- Drafting the Assessment
  - What type of assessment?
  - How would it be administered?
  - When and where would it be given?
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- What did the assessment need to measure?
  - How effective is information literacy instruction for students in our first year English Composition course, ENGL 116?
  - Are students learning anything?
  - How best do we measure that learning?
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- What is the best way to measure the effectiveness of our information literacy instruction?

- We wanted to measure students’ information literacy skills *prior* to library instruction.

- We wanted to measure students’ information literacy skills *after* library instruction.

- And the next question was...
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☐ How would we deliver the assessment?
   ■ On-line would be essential

☐ Criteria we used to make our decision about an on-line assessment software program included:
   ■ Cost
   ■ Ease of use
   ■ Convenience
   ■ Accessibility
   ■ Autonomy
   ■ Technical support
We investigated three different assessment software products:

- **Respondus** — not responsive enough, and no free trial

- **Perception’s Questionmark** — compatibility problems with Blackboard

- **Blackboard** — assessment module available and already in place on campus
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Throughout the planning and development of the Criss Library Assessment Project we were continually challenged to think about how using an on-line assessment product would impact:

- Institutional interests
- Program interests
- Librarian interests
- Student interests
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- We discovered that this project development was making us assess several things at once:
  - The *questionnaire* itself (what type of questions to include)
  - The *on-line assessment software* and how it performed in our environment
  - The *students* in our ENGL116 library instruction sessions
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- How would using Blackboard for our assessment intersect, impact or influence:
  - Institutional interests
  - Program interests
  - Librarian/classroom instructor interests
  - Student interests
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- **Institutional Interests**
  - Compatible with myMAPP
    - On-line assessment would be essential for myMAPP
  - Reinforces UNO Strategic Plan
    - Student Focus
  - Strengthens collaboration with the English Department and Faculty Consultants
    - Build on the success of the current Info. Lit. program
    - Utilize experts on campus to learn about assessment
    - Work with English faculty to clarify and prioritize key concepts
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- Program Interests

- What can we do to improve the library instruction curriculum?
  - Focus on key concepts
    - Return to original curriculum developed several years ago
    - Add collaborative and active learning exercises

- Use data gathered from assessment to inform discussions about the information literacy program in ENGL116
  - We now have empirical data to show what students are learning
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Librarian Interests

What can we do to improve our individual instruction?

- We focused on content and delivery:
  - Librarians reinforced key concepts
  - Librarians consistently introduced handouts
  - Librarians introduced more collaborative learning exercises

- We now have real data to evaluate instruction

  - Librarians can see pre-test scores immediately and adjust from instruction session to session
  - Aggregated scores can reveal trends in performance per question so we can adjust instruction or the way a question is written
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Classroom Instructor interests:

- Returned to curriculum developed collaboratively several years before—reinforced solidity of original partnership.
- Classroom faculty are “leaders” in Blackboard so they have access to student scores immediately.
  - Faculty can see who has taken the assessment and they can assess how well their students and their class as a whole is doing.
  - They can track semester by semester assessment scores to see improvement.
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☐ Student Interests

- What can we do to improve student learning?
  - Provide students with immediate feedback from the questionnaire.
  - Provide students with an opportunity to compare the pre and post questionnaire results.
  - Provide librarians with feedback from the survey so they can be responsive to student comments.
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- What we did and how we did it...
  - We created and administered an on-line pre and post questionnaire measuring students’ information literacy skills via Blackboard.
  - We administered surveys to students and to ENGL 116 faculty to assess our effectiveness in delivering library instruction.
  - We gathered data from first semester pilot to review performance (students’ and Blackboards’).
  - We used data to make improvements in the questionnaire and the survey for upcoming semesters.
Now we will show you how Blackboard’s assessment module functions...
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- Forty-three easy steps to building a test in Blackboard
  - Build a pool or add question to pool
    - Different resources for questions
  - Build test from pool
  - Add Content Area
  - Add test to content area
    - Modify Test
    - Modify Test Options
  - Test your test
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Question 2: Multiple Choice
Which of the following searches in an online database would likely result in the greatest number of records retrieved?

- children and divorce
- children or divorce
- children not divorce
- divorce

Correct Feedback: You are correct! The Boolean operator "OR" returns the most records.
Incorrect Feedback: NO!

Question 3: Multiple Answer
Check all that apply. Primary sources may include:

- letters
- diary
- ship's log
- minutes of an organization meeting
- court decisions
- all of the above
- I don't know

Correct Feedback: You are correct!
Incorrect Feedback: NO!
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- Challenges of using Blackboard/What we learned
  - Manual process of adding students
  - Building/using groups in the organization
  - Limited reporting
    - No data analysis
    - Reports from original study
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My overall impression of the library instruction was favorable.

- Strongly Agree: 20.00%
- Agree: 60.00%
- Neither Agree nor Disagree: 10.00%
- Disagree: 5.00%
- Strongly Disagree: 0.00%
- Unanswered: 20.00%

*My overall impression of the library instruction was favorable.*
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- Study Size and Results
  - 293 Students total
    - Reported on 184 (paired sample t-test)
  - Pre- and post-questionnaires were identical
  - Highest possible score is 15
  - Higher test scores following instruction
    - Pre-questionnaire 8.23
    - Post-questionnaire 9.89
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- **Study Size and Results**
  - Impact of instruction and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)
    - 7.73 pre scores
    - 10.05 post scores
  - Internal Consistency Reliability
    - Consistency displayed by questions
    - 0 = bad 1.00 = good
    - .699 = reliable
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Future Developments

- Blackboard Version 8
  - Available May/June 2008
  - Gradebook is changing
    - Different organization of groups
    - Want to see data per group
    - Reporting module changing
  - Change manual process of adding students to an automated process
  - Set up visitor accounts to test our tests
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- Questions???

- Thank you!