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ITLC Lilly Online Conference

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2022 UASC Mini-Grant Project Report

Project: Attend 2022 ITLC Lilly Online Conference

Project objective (summarized): Attend Lilly Conference Online and view/participate in presentations that align with the Assessment Track as well as other assessment-related interests.

Anticipated Outcomes (summarized): Learn new tools/ways to improve existing assignment rubrics and ways of teaching, which rely heavily on defined SLOs and CLOs.

Actual outcomes: Attendance of 3 assessment related presentations, which are summarized below.

Session 1: Interaction Effects on Three Types of Assessments in Online Classes
- This session focused heavily on the use of Bloom's Taxonomy, outlined as follows from bottom to top/outside to inside: Remember (weekly quizzes); Understand (midterm exam); Apply (labs); Analyze (labs); Evaluate (capstone assignment); Create (capstone final project)
- Authors noted the progress process for students involved self-checks throughout the course, which informally assessed understanding and provided feedback for students and instructor.
- Authors found the biggest predictors of student success was a combination of quiz scores, lab assignments (most influential) and capstone project.
- Informal self-checks were not found to be predictor of student success.
- Quizzes: strongest predictor – used for knowledge acquisition; labs next – used for application and analysis of knowledge; capstone third – used to demonstrate synthesis
- Overall takeaway: To best guarantee student success, chunk content into lessons/modules and add knowledge checks/quizzes; break the lessons/modules down into topics; add knowledge checks and quizzes at the topic level; run reports periodically on instructor end to make sure students are on track

Most/least liked and takeaways: I liked the application of Blooms to the evaluation strategies. I think Blooms is an underused tool by most instructors. I also liked the overall takeaway to break the material into more bite-sized pieces and evaluate along the way, especially since quizzes were found to be a good predictor of student success. I didn't care for the way the material was presented in the sessions; a lot of extra conversation occurred that distracted from the main outcomes. I had to focus on the slides and decipher what the presenters were saying to take adequate notes for my own understanding. I was a little surprised the self-checks didn't elicit more of a predictor of success. I am wondering if they were not as applicable as they should have been, or if students didn't take them seriously if they were not grade.

My application of material: My classes build on the material covered throughout the semester. My main form of student assessment is rough and final drafts and/or progressive presentations. I've never been a big fan of quizzing students on the material we cover or checking to make sure they're understanding the main takeaways from the unit because we

already have so much writing/presenting and work in the classes, but given the presenter's results in periodic quizzing and overall student success, I may consider incorporating some periodic quizzes. Some my BCM co-faculty do incorporate quizzes. I will need to reach out to them to see if the quiz results are an indication of student success. I can this being most applicable in my online courses where my personal instruction is limited to four interactions per semester.

Session 2: Moving Testing Out of the Classroom: Student Impact and Challenges
- This session focused on moving testing and other assessment out of the classroom and instead used the time to focus on instruction. There were, understandably, concerns about cheating, student anxiety related to online testing on their own time, technology issues, and student's knowledge of the LMS.
- The authors did find cheating was higher when the tests were not proctored, but student anxiety was lower when testing outside of class.
- The biggest predictor of student success was the instructor's ability to use the LMS – not the student's ability.
- Researchers were ultimately interested in student success/impact on test scores by moving them out of the classroom, but the findings were of no significance. Scores did not improve or lower significantly.
- Ultimate impact was felt more on instructors and meeting additional teaching expectations.
- Regarding cheating and anxiety: While incidents of cheating did increase, they were not to the point of increasing test scores, which would have been expected. Regarding anxiety, expectations were test scores would have been lower if anxiety was factor, but they were not. Conclusion was cheating and anxiety were not impactful incidents.
- Presenters noted cheating prevention methods if of great concern such as lockdown browsers, timed tests, randomized questions, online proctoring, and student honor statements.

   Most/least liked and takeaways: I had higher expectations for this presentation as I have had interest in flipped classroom in the past and removing assessment activities from classroom time applies to this concept. My classes do not have in-class or out-of-class timed assessments, so the lack of significant findings by the author were non-applicable – and honestly not surprising. I have experience in other institutional settings with students taking remote tests, and I have not found cheating to a problem. I have found lock-down browsers to be more of a hinderance to the instructor than a benefit. Additionally, the finding by the authors that instructor knowledge of the LMS was much more predictable to student success on the remote quizzes than the student's knowledge of the LMS was expected. Clear instructor and setup of assessment materials definitely leads to overall student success, especially without the instructor interaction - in my personal experience.

   My application of material: I don't know that I'll really apply any of the findings of the authors expect to continue to educate myself on the inner workings of the LMS as instructor knowledge was found to be the biggest predictor of student success.

Session 3: Implementing Oral Examination as an Effective Assessment Tool
- The presenters sought to incorporate best practices when developing oral examinations to ensure students can convey knowledge effectively and recognize the benefits and challenges when implementing oral exams.
- The authors explored the pros and cons of written and oral examinations, noting the following: written exams give students more privacy, are often less intimidating for students, are easier to implement in large classes, but may not always be accurate of student knowledge; oral exams encourage student/teacher interaction, foster communication, can minimize cheating, but are really only feasible in small classes.
- The authors provided tips for preparing students and instructors for oral exams and noted some of the positives on the instructor end, which included: less grading time, immediate feedback, and no confusion about questions or student responses due to real-time ability to ask for clarification on both ends.
- The biggest positives the authors found was the student/instructor interaction in real-time, which lead to a lot less confusion on questions being asked and responses from students. Students had the ability to talk through a response instead of just write a statement. Immediate feedback was also greatly appreciated by students. Students also spent more time preparing for the assessment, working with their peers, and engaging in critical thinking activities. The authors also found students actually enjoyed this type of assessment, which was a surprise finding.
- The biggest negative the authors found was the anxiety and intimidation of having an instructor in front of students, asking questions, and waiting for response. The class size was also a very limiting factor in this approach to assessment, as was instructor bias.

Most/least liked and takeaways: I thought this was a unique way to approach assessment. My classes are smaller, and some kind of oral assessment could work. I do wish the authors had shared what type of classes they were using this process for as it would not apply to quite a few classroom subjects. I really liked the ability of students to talk through responses and the surprising results that students actually liked this type of assessment. I would have thought otherwise. Finally, I appreciate the authors noted instructor bias a problem. When grading, it is easy to avoid student names and/or set up automated grading to take away instructor bias, but when the student is in front of you, that is obviously not possible. That is something an instructor would have to really work on.

My application of material: Give that I do not administer much assessment, I don't know that I would use this method as discussed by the authors, but I might use it to encourage more group interaction and discussion of assignment requirements. Right now, I do give students in my writing heavy classes an assignment quiz (not timed but graded), which tests their knowledge o the assignment requirements. However, students are encouraged to use the assignment to answer the questions, so it's really just a reading comprehension exercise. We could do this in class or during a synchronous course session for the online classes with students broken into small groups.

Conference Application of Proposed Objective/s: While it may seem the sessions chosen were not application to my classes since most focused on rote assessment, and my application of

material was a bit limited, I did takeaway some support for how I am currently assessing student progress and some ideas for critical thinking activities/student interaction activity I really liked the idea of periodic review of material application from the first presentation, especially give the prediction of student success with this material. I have found some positive correlation of student success on assignments with the implantation of assignment quizzes when assignment are introduced. Perhaps I could introduce some kind of post-assignment self-assessment as well; right now, that is limited to presentations in BCM3700 and as an optional, end of semester extra credit opportunity.

I was also intrigued by the oral assessment presentation as that is not something I have ever considered doing. I worked as a test proctor for some time, and I had a few students whose DSS accommodations required oral proctoring of exams. I and they found that process to be quite challenging, so I was very surprised by the results of the presentation that students quite enjoyed the process. The usefulness in my classes would be limited to small group interaction, but I could be more participative in those sessions and use them as a bit of an assessment to judge assignment progress and/or understanding/application of materials.

I think the session I found the least helpful was the one that introduced the idea of moving testing out of the classroom. As mentioned, I have had a pretty big interest in the flipped classroom model, especially when I was teaching hybrid courses. The author's findings were of no surprise. I am glad they were able to reiterate that cheating did not seem to be a big problem, which I find some instructors focus on/worry about too much, and that student anxiety was reduced with out of class exams. I have also found this to be the case. Remote testing/remote work also helps alleviate some DSS requirements, making the process of accommodation easier on the student and instructor. I also found it interesting the author's note of success being most heavily reliant on the instructor's knowledge of the LMS, especially when they had hypothesized that would be reliant on the student's knowledge level of the LMS. Mentoring fellow instructors through periods of remote class instruction (COVID and prior at other institutions) has shown me how little some instructors actually understand the LMS and how that can negatively impact student success in a course. This can also cause a big block between expectations and outcomes on the instructor's end, leading to frustration and unwarranted negative feelings toward remote teaching modalities.

Going forward, I'm looking forward to reflection and application of some of the information I learned through the sessions. I am a bit disappointed there was not more discussion of rubrics and other assessment tools outside of oral exams, but the information was useful nonetheless – and worth sharing! I have been and will continue to share the findings of the sessions with my co-faculty as discovery of their application assessment activities is discovered.