

What Do You Want To Know About Your Students?

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Really, three main things

- › For planning purposes, who they are and what they can do when they first make contact with your course (or your concentration, or our university)
- › For making dynamic changes in direction as needed, how they are reacting along the way to your course (or your concentration, or the entire university experience)
- › For assessing student learning and institutional and curricular effectiveness, how they have come out of your course (or your concentration, or the entire university experience)

Why should you care?

- › For content-centered philosophies of education, it is not really so important
- › Students are vessels into which you pour knowledge, and it is their responsibility not to have it leak away
- › It is much more important for learning-centered philosophies
- › All that really counts is what the students are actually learning, retaining, applying, and transferring to others

This symposium is not about pedagogy, but ...

- › Assessment and effective pedagogy are tied together fairly tightly
- › *Applying the Science of Learning to the University and Beyond*, Diane Halpern and Milton Hakel, *Change*, July/August 2003, has ten basic principles to foster long-term retention and knowledge transfer
- › #4: What and how much is learned in any situation depends heavily on prior knowledge and experience. ... "Yet few college faculty try to discover anything about the prior knowledge or beliefs of their students, despite the importance of prior conditions in determining what they will learn."

A few ways to find out where your students are when they arrive in your classroom

- › Look for sources of statistical information on them
- › Academic Reporting Toolkit (ART)
- › Pre-test them – Particularly valuable when you can then post-test for learning gains
- › Ask them to tell you – In writing, in their own words
- › E.g., automathographies, à la Paul Halmos

A few ways to find out where your students are along the way

- › Testing and homework, certainly, but it should be used as formative feedback for the instructor as well as summative information for evaluating the student
- › One attitude growing in popularity: Don't do true, irrevocable summative assessment on the students until well into the course
- › CRLT midterm feedback sessions
- › Intelligent use of clickers
- › Ask them to tell you – In writing, in their own words

A few ways to find out at the end of the course how you and your students did

- › Again, tests and final projects, but used not just as summative student assessments but also as formative course and instructor assessments
- › End-of-term student evaluations (well, maybe not last term)
 - › But we need better questions that actually get at student learning gains
 - › Better departmental selections
 - › Better College selection
 - › SALG pilot in the fall

SALG sample question set (but we'll likely use different ones)

As a result of your work in this class, what GAINS DID YOU MAKE in your UNDERSTANDING OF EACH OF THE FOLLOWING?	No gains	A little gain	Moderate gain	Good gain	Great gain	NA
1. The main concepts explored in class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The relationship between main concepts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. How ideas from this class relate to ideas encountered in other classes within this subject area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. How ideas from this class relate to ideas encountered in other classes outside of this subject area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. How studying this subject area helps people address real world issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Please comment on HOW YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE SUBJECT HAS CHANGED AS A RESULT OF THIS CLASS.						

A growing resource

- › <http://www.crlt.umich.edu/assessmentLSA>