Closing the Loop: Western Libraries and the Learning Commons

Teaching & Learning Assessment Plan: 2017-2018

Department: Western Libraries and the Learning Commons (LIBR)

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Vision & Mission: Western Libraries will be the intellectual crossroads of our community, an innovative partner in learning and research. Western Libraries connects – people to people, people to place, people to learning.

Teaching and Learning Strategic Goal: Integrate teaching and learning activities by using an innovative approach across the Libraries and the Learning Commons.

Teaching and Learning Context: The Teaching and Learning Division leads planning and implementation of activities across Western Libraries, incorporating a rich array of curricular (Libraries credit-bearing courses), curricular embedded, and co-curricular activities. Staffing includes faculty, professional exempt staff, classified staff, and student staff. Programming in the Learning Commons includes the Hacherl Research & Writing Studio, Writing Instruction Support (WIS), and the Teaching-Learning Academy (TLA); Heritage Resources and the Resource Discovery Unit also contribute instructional programming. All assessment activities across this broad teaching and learning landscape are led by the Teaching and Learning Division and grounded in three shared student learning outcomes: inquiry, collaboration, and agency.

Student Learning Outcomes:

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<th>GUR Academic Competencies:</th>
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| Use and value **inquiry** for gaining and sharing knowledge. | • Analyze and communicate ideas effectively in oral, written, and visual forms.  
 • Analyze and interpret information from varied sources, including print and visual media.  
 • Identify and analyze complex problems.  
 • Explore, imagine, and create. |
| **Collaborate** as respectful, productive, and ethical members of a diverse and inclusive intellectual community. | • Recognize the rights, responsibilities, and privileges of participating in, and contributing as a citizen in, a diverse society.  
 • Understand and evaluate assumptions, values, and beliefs in context of diverse local, national and global communities.  
 • Work collaboratively and manage projects to effective completion. |
| Demonstrate a sense of **agency** for managing own learning. | • Apply tools of technology, with an understanding of their uses and limitations.  
 • Reflect on one’s own work and on the ethical dimensions of academic pursuits. |
## PROBLEM STATEMENT
Curriculum designers and facilitators hope the workshop series leads to three main outcomes for students (inquiry, collaboration, agency), but we currently lack direct measures of these outcomes.

## INQUIRY QUESTION
In addition to self-report survey data, what direct measures can we implement that will inform how workshops help deepen student inquiry?

## RESEARCH QUESTION
To what extent does collecting multiple drafts of inquiry questions (IQ) and thesis statements (TS) from students throughout the workshop series yield data that allows researchers to quantify student gains in producing focused, specific, and meaningfully complex inquiry questions and thesis statements?

## HYPOTHESES
1. Later iterations of both IQ and TS will score more highly than earlier ones; these scores correlate to one main workshop strategy: draft – question – revise sequence.
2. Higher scoring IQs will correlate with higher scoring TSs.
3. Collecting multiple drafts of IQ/TS works as a direct measure of student learning and provides reliable evidence of gains in inquiry.

## ETHICS
Because this research will not be published and is designed to test a methodology and inform program improvement, this project is exempt under WWU HSRB guidelines. Students will be protected in the following ways: participation is voluntary, data collection tool has benefit to students because it provides them a copy of the question, privacy and confidentiality will be maintained. Students are informed of interim assessment results mid-quarter.

## METHOD
1. Choose one course (based on convenience) where the instructor has signed up for the three workshop series.
2. Secure permission/collaboration of course instructor.
3. Design a Google Form to collect current versions of IQ/TS. Design form so that students can receive an email record of their IQ/TS drafts.
4. Pilot the form.
5. Post link to Google Form on class Canvas site.
6. Explain project to students, including risks/benefits of voluntary participation. Explain privacy, confidentiality ethics.
7. Prompt students to voluntarily fill out form at least twice per workshop.
8. Recruit two workshop facilitators to rate data, one who facilitated this particular workshop series and one who did not.
9. Inform participating students and the faculty member of the preliminary results.

## INSTRUMENT
Google Form Prompt:
1. Type below the current version of your IQ/TS
2. Email -- enter your email address to receive a copy
### DATA ANALYSIS
- Remove identifiers and date/time indicators.
- Two raters will independently rate IQ/TS on criteria taught in the workshop: focused, specific, meaningful and complex.
- Disagreements in score of over 10% will be negotiated.
- Scores of both raters totaled; determine percentage of improvement/non-improvement from first to final IQ/TS iteration.
- Confirm/deny hypotheses.

### TIMELINE
1. 1/16/17: Getting Started Workshop – collect versions 1 & 2 of IQ
2. 1/31/17: Finding & Using Workshop – collect version 3 of IQ; version 1 of TS
3. 2/10/17: Develop rubric and rate IQs; raters meet to calibrate and negotiate significant differences
4. 2/28/17: Revising & Editing Workshop – collect versions 2 & 3 of TS.
5. 3/10/17: Rate TS; present preliminary findings to workshop team; recommend improvements
6. 3/27/17: Plan spring implementation of expanded assessment
7. Spring 17: Implement improved curriculum and practices in spring workshop series

### CLOSE LOOP
1. Inform workshop facilitators of results.
2. Improve workshop curriculum – Explicitly tell students the benefits of the draft – question – revise sequence.
3. Implement other improvements as suggested by findings.

### FUTURE STEPS
Expand this pilot assessment by widening the circle of involvement: more courses, more instructors, more students, more workshop facilitators.

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### HACHERL RESEARCH & WRITING STUDIO CONSULTATION OUTCOMES: AGENCY

#### PROBLEM STATEMENT
Results from a 2016 pilot suggests that studio-based learning pedagogies yield growth in student agency, that is students’ ability to manage their own research and writing process. Although evidence of growth was captured more frequently in follow-up interactions rather than initial interactions, we lack a significant corpus of transcript data from follow-up interactions between Studio Assistant and students.

#### INQUIRY QUESTION
1. To what extent does incrementally scaffolded, strategy-based instruction (studio-based learning) promote growth in student agency?
2. To what extent do transcripts of follow-up consultations provide a window on agency?

#### RESEARCH QUESTION
1. Do transcripts from follow-up consultations that feature studio-based learning pedagogies yield evidence of greater growth in student agency than transcripts from consultations that feature traditional writing center response pedagogies?
2. Do transcripts of consultation dialogue provide a valid and reliable indicator of growth in student agency?

#### HYPOTHESES
1. Learning outcomes will be achieved more often in transcripts that demonstrate incremental strategy-based instruction.
2. Transcripts of follow-up consultations are a valid and reliable indicator of growth in student agency.

**ETHICS**
- HSRB review complete; exemption granted. Students and staff will give written consent to participate, participation is voluntary, privacy and confidentiality will be maintained.

**METHOD**
1. Brief studio assistants about purpose, ethics, and methods of the research.
2. When beginning a consultation, SAs will describe the research and ask for the student’s written consent to participate.
3. SAs will record the initial consultation and any follow-up consultations during the same session.
4. SAs will transcribe the consultations they recorded.
5. Researchers will independently analyze transcripts for patterns before comparing findings.

**INSTRUMENT**
- Glossed transcripts of consultations

**DATA ANALYSIS**
- Remove identifiers from transcripts
- Using taxonomy from pilot study, identify indicators of agency – evidence of new conceptual and processual understandings, evidence of metacognitive awareness, evidence of increased motivation and confidence
- Two independent reviewers analyze transcripts using the taxonomy
- Disagreements negotiated to achieve acceptable interrater reliability
- Findings from SBL pedagogies transcripts compared to previous research on traditional pedagogies
- Confirm/deny hypotheses

**TIMELINE**
1. 2/17: Inform Studio Assistants of study/goals. Elicit volunteer staff/students to participate, sign consents.
2. 2/17-3/17: Collect digital recordings
3. 3/17-5/17: Transcribe recordings
4. 6/17-7/17: Analyze transcripts
5. 8/17: Report findings
6. 9/17: Enact improvements suggested by findings

**CLOSE LOOP**
1. Share findings with Studio Assistants
2. Use findings to guide upcoming staff development and training initiatives
3. Implement improvements to incremental strategy-based instruction as suggested by findings.

**FUTURE STEPS**
- Publish results to campus community and beyond

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**HACHERL RESEARCH & WRITING STUDIO: QUARTERLY PRACTICES ASSESSMENT FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

**PURPOSE STATEMENT**
- With a staff of 50 comprising our community of praxis, it’s difficult to determine practice patterns and relate them to our desired SLOs. Knowing common practices helps us improve professional development materials that prepare staff to implement evidence-based pedagogies.
### INQUIRY QUESTION
Which elements of studio pedagogy are Studio Assistants using effectively? Which elements do Studio Assistants still need to develop?

### ETHICS
HSRB exempt; internal assessment for program improvement.

### METHOD
1. Explain closing conference research purpose and process to Studio Assistants.
2. In a consultation of choice, SAs describe the research and ask for the student’s written consent to be recorded.
3. SAs digitally record, loosely transcribe, and write a self-reflective analysis of practice based on transcript evidence.
4. In quarterly closing conferences to review self-assessment materials, SAs meet with a supervisor to acknowledge strengths and set one practice goal.
5. Program leaders gather to identify patterns that describe the entire community of practice, noting both strengths and development needs.

### INSTRUMENTS
Glossed transcripts of consultations; self-assessment forms prompting strengths and goals; closing conference consultation notes

### DATA ANALYSIS
Transcripts, analyses and self-assessment

### TIMELINE (Quarterly)
- **Week 5:** Remind staff of closing conference purpose.
- **Week 6-8:** Recordings gathered, transcribed, and analyzed.
- **Week 9-10:** Individual conferences held.
- **Week 11:** Supervisors meet to identify patterns.
- **Following quarter:** New professional development curricula implemented.

### CLOSE LOOP
1. At the end of each quarter, staff receive individual feedback on strengths and goals to develop their practice.
2. At the beginning of each quarter, Studio staff are informed of patterns of strength and opportunities for development for the entire community.
3. Opportunities for development drive curricular planning for that quarter’s staff education and training initiatives.

### FUTURE STEPS
Repeat each quarter of each academic year.

### Plan for 2018:
1. Collect LIBR credit-course syllabi, identify existing course outcomes, and connect them to Division outcomes: inquiry, collaboration, and agency. Work with instructors to create a grid for each course that maps assessment to learning outcomes.
2. Expand scope of existing assessment efforts to incorporate all three outcomes and to encompass additional teaching and learning activities.
3. Incorporate indirect measures such as student and instructor surveys and focus groups into the overall assessment plan in order to develop a fuller picture around student outcomes.
4. Expand capacity for rigorous assessment by engaging faculty and staff in professional development.
5. Regularize assessment planning as part of the strategic planning process for all teaching & learning programs. Designate a multi-year cycle for conducting appropriate assessments across all Libraries Teaching & Learning Programs.
6. Make program improvements as suggested by 2017 assessment project results.
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