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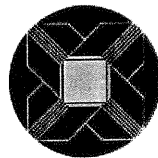
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Assessment Immersion: An Intensive Professional Development Program for Information Literacy Assessment

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Abstract

This paper describes the Association of College and Research Libraries' Assessment Immersion Track: Assessment in Practice program, which is intended for librarians active in teaching and learning and those with leadership roles for information literacy program development who want to improve their knowledge and practice of both classroom and program assessment.

Introduction

The Institute for Information Literacy (IIL) of the Association of College and Research Libraries has created a new program to add to its Immersion program. The Assessment Immersion Track: Assessment in Practice is intended for librarians active in teaching and learning and those with leadership roles for information literacy program development who want to improve their knowledge and practice of both classroom and program assessment.

This program approaches assessment from a learning-centered perspective, building upon the philosophy of "assessment-as-learning," as developed at Alverno College. Formative assessment is emphasized to explore its role in instructional and curricular design, in librarian/faculty skill development, and in development of information literacy programs. Summative assessment tools are explored along with strategies for determining their appropriate application.

Assessment Immersion Track

The Assessment Immersion Track is based on two crucial assumptions: (1) that assessment requires librarians to clearly articulate their goals, whether those are expressed in terms of the learning that librarians want students to achieve or the impacts/outcomes that information literacy programs will accomplish, and (2) assessment is a developmental process critical to fostering instructional and program development as much as, or more than, instructional or program evaluation. After the program, participants will be able to:

- Define assessment in terms of student learning in order to understand its relationship to good teaching, library viability, and change;
- Formulate a learning-centered philosophy of assessment in order to inform development of information literacy program elements;
- Explore and utilize multiple modes of assessment in order to build a culture of evidence upon which to base programmatic development and change;
- Critically examine a variety of assessment techniques and methodologies in order to evaluate them for application in your institutional setting; and
- Examine the leadership role of the library in a collaborative information literacy assessment effort in order to build support and trust among the stakeholder groups at the institution.

Participants in the program work individually and cooperatively to extend their conceptual understanding of assessment and to expand their toolkit of practical assessment methods. They will emerge with a broader understanding of assessment and how to use assessment as an important tool to guide evidence-based classroom, curriculum and program development. During the program, participants develop a plan for their assessment activities which will form the basis for future engagement with these issues both individually and as a leader of information literacy initiatives at their institutions.

The success of this program depends on developing an engaged, supportive learning community. The faculty and participants will co-create this environment, thus, participants are expected to be self-motivated, experienced librarians. The program is three and a half days long and offers a mixture of structured content sessions and unstructured segments in which participants deepen their experiences with the program content in relation both to assessing classroom learning (with particular attention to the

specific challenges of library instruction contexts) and to assessing information literacy programmatic efforts.

Pre-program preparation includes foundational readings, establishing an instructional scenario with student learning outcomes, conducting an institutional environmental scan and document identification, holding interviews with assessment leaders on campus, and writing an assessment SWOT (strengths/weaknesses/opportunities/threats) for the institution. A program listserv and Moodle site support participants before, during, and after the program.

While the assessment program's content builds upon the assessment curriculum presented in the Teacher and Program tracks of the Immersion Program, previous participation in Immersion is not required. Participation is limited to forty-five to ensure an environment that fosters group interaction and active participation.

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