

## Guidelines for Information Literacy assessment

The most important question to ask is "What am I trying to assess?"  
What students have learned, or how participants feel about their own learning?

Select the major assessment criteria and break it into smaller components. These units not only clarify your assessment criteria, they should be the basis of curriculum design. Here is an abbreviated example:

What have students learned?

- Can the students incorporate appropriate journal articles into their research papers?
  - Can the students locate appropriate journal indexes?
    - In print?
    - Can they use computers for electronic searching?
  - Can students create a useful search strategy?
    - Do they know sufficient words for keyword searches?
    - Do they understand controlled vocabulary & use it?
  - Do the students employ Boolean search strategies effectively?
  - Do students select peer reviewed articles for their research?

**There are three types of learning assessment, each used for a different purpose**

**Prescriptive or Diagnostic** – assesses the knowledge and skill of participants before the instruction is designed. These can take the form of standardized or instructor developed tests, auditions or review of a student's prior work.

**Formative** – provides feedback about student learning while the instruction is ongoing and allows the instructor to adjust teaching methods during a course. For example, require students to write a one page "reaction paper" to a reading assignment, or prepare an annotated bibliography of research materials several weeks before the research paper is completed.

**Summative** – a final evaluation of the criteria for assessment, occurs at the end of instruction, i.e. multiple choice question, essays given under controlled conditions, or an evaluation of citations used in the student's research paper or a portfolio review. The latter two examples require development of an assessment "rubric."

Assessment of students' feeling about instruction can take the form of questionnaires or focus groups. These techniques do not evaluate learning and are often mistakenly used for that purpose.

### For specific assessment techniques:

Angelo, T. A., & Cross, K. P., *Classroom assessment techniques: A handbook for college teachers*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. 1993.

Kitzinger, J. (1995). Introducing focus groups. *British Medical Journal*, 311, 299-302.

*Practical Assessment, Research, & Evaluation*. (online journal)  
<http://pareonline.net/>  
The "articles" section allows browsing by subject.

Williams, J. (2000). Creativity in assessment of library instruction. *Reference Services Review*. 28. 323-34.

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<http://sails.lms.kent.edu/index.php>