The Big Picture of Assessment:
Here’s what I want to know about my students – now how do I find that out?

FIRST II Workshop
February 8, 2003
Paula Waddill, Murray State Univ.

Learning and teaching should not stand on opposite banks and just watch the river flow by; instead, they should embark together on a journey down the water.
Loris Malaguzzi (1920-1994)

Planning for Assessment
- Rather than asking, “What do I want to teach them?”
- Ask instead, “What do I want them to learn?”

Assessment
- Appraising or estimating the level or magnitude of some attribute of a person (Aiken, 1985)
- Goal-driven
  - Assessments are tied to objectives

Making Connections

“Goal”
- “The end of a race or journey; the end to which a design tends; aim” (Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary)
- In planning, it’s the usual starting place
  - What do I want them to learn?
Identifying Goals
- Inductive inference
  - from current syllabus, activities, tests, etc.
- Planning
  - Brainstorming, the literature, common sense, inventories, etc.

Teaching Goals Inventory (Angelo & Cross, 1993)
- Complete & score the Inventory for your chosen course
- Discuss your results with your partner(s)
  - Which goals do you rate as most important?
  - Why?

Interrelatedness
- Think Creatively
- Commitment to Own Values
- Improve Reading Skills
- Leadership Skills
- Openness to New Ideas
- Learn Terms & Facts

Goal Connections
- Choose at least 5 goals you rated as “Essential” or “Very Important”
- Write each briefly on a Post-it; color code
- Make a connection matrix
  - cluster related goals
  - label connections

Objectives
- Objective: “point to be hit or reached”
- Observable, assessable
- Course-related goal
  - Relevant objective

Goal: Develop openness to new ideas
- Be open to multiple theories
  - Students will compare and contrast the wave and particle theories of light.
- Overcome misperceptions
  - Students will identify and correct common misperceptions about the solar system.
- Frame information in new ways
  - Students will develop analogies for the precession of the Earth and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of those analogies.
Developing Course-related Goals and Objectives

- Select 2 general goals (GGs)
- For each GG, develop 3 course-related goals (CRGs)
- For each course-related goal, develop an observable, assessable objective
  - The CRGs/objectives for a given goal must be from different sections (chapters, topics, etc.) of your course
  - At least one objective from GG1 must relate to the same course section as at least one objective from GG2

GG1: Openness to new ideas
GG2: Learn terms & facts

GG1-CRG: Overcome misperceptions
- Students will identify and correct common misperceptions about the solar system.

GG2-CRG: Learn planetary names
- Students will name the planets of our solar system in order of distance from the sun

Relatedness

- Write each objective briefly on a Post-it; color code to match goal
- Add to connection matrix
  - Cluster related objectives
  - Draw connections

From Objectives to Assessment

- Learning activities connected to objectives
- Assessment tied to learning activities and to objectives
  - Educational assessment – students learn through research questions
  - Formative assessment – diagnostic feedback
  - Evaluative assessment – curricular feedback
  - Summative assessment – student attainment
Learning and Assessment

- For each related objective, briefly outline an appropriate learning activity
- Devise an appropriate assessment technique
- Discuss relationships

Connections

- Assessment outcomes can inform subsequent objectives and activities
- Assessing related objectives and goals allows tracking of progress

Making Connections
If you think of learning as a path, you can picture yourself walking beside [your students] rather than either pushing or dragging or carrying [them] along.

Polly Berrien Berends (1987)