

ACURIT

The Augustana Conference on Undergraduate Research and Innovative Teaching
University of Alberta, Augustana Campus, Camrose
Conference program available at <http://aug.ualberta.ca/acurit>

ABSTRACTS (alphabetical by last name of first author)

Asfeldt, Morten. Assessing Wilderness Educational Expeditions in the Canadian North.

University of Alberta. Educational expeditions have a long history as a practice for enhancing learning. In the field of outdoor education, educational expeditions continue to be common practice. However, as a relatively young academic discipline, outdoor education has struggled to establish credibility in some post-secondary settings. Therefore, there is a growing field of research investigating the critical elements and learning outcomes of field-based outdoor learning including educational expeditions that take students on extended learning journeys in wild-places and foreign landscapes. In this presentation, I will share the results and assessment processes used to assess the critical elements and learning outcomes of summer and winter educational expeditions in the Canadian North. Specifically, assessments that have investigated the impact of extended wilderness canoe expeditions, the use of group journals, cross-cultural expedition groups, and the achievement of place-conscious objectives will be shared.

Behfar, Alireza¹, Meira Levinson² and Nancy Hill². Evaluation of Two Factors on Beginner Learners' Fluency, ¹Young Researchers and Elite Club (Iran) and ²Harvard University.

Nowadays, in the light of progress in the world of science, technology and communications, mastery of learning international languages is a sure and needful matter. In learning any language as a second language, progress and achieving a desirable level in speaking is indeed important for approximately all learners. In this research, we find out how preparation can influence L2 learners' oral fluency with respect to individual differences in working memory capacity. The participants consisted of sixty-one advanced L2 learners including MA students of TEFL at Isfahan University as well as instructors teaching English at Sadr Institute in Isfahan. The data collection consisted of two phases: A working memory test (reading span test) and a picture description task, with a one-month interval between the two tasks. Speaking was elicited through speech generation task in which the individuals were asked to discuss four topics emerging in two pairs. The two pairs included one simple and one complex topic and was accompanied by planning time and without any planning time respectively. Each topic was accompanied by several relevant pictures. L2 fluency was assessed based on preparation. The data were then analyzed in terms of the number of syllables, the number of silent pauses, and the mean length of pauses produced per minute. The study offers implications for strategies to improve learners' both fluency and working memory.

Blizzard, Kara and Nancy Goebel. A Four-Step Plan for Teaching and Assessing Undergraduate Students' Information Literacy Skills. University of Alberta. The Augustana Campus Library of the University of Alberta is implementing a new initiative that integrates information literacy into all levels of Augustana's curriculum and degree programs. The Augustana Plan for the

Integration of Information Literacy (APIIL) includes four steps. Step 1 introduces students to basic, non-disciplinary information literacy skills, including searching for books and articles and citing sources using MLA citation style. Students watch a series of custom video tutorials and complete four exercises to demonstrate skill acquisition. Step 1 of APIIL is taught in all of Augustana's First Year Seminar courses. Steps 2-4 of APIIL will focus on three concepts: thinking critically about information, search strategies, and the value and ethical use of information. Each of these concepts will be taught using progressively sophisticated resources, with a disciplinary focus in each student's major. Assessment is built into all steps of APIIL, so that faculty and librarians have an ongoing understanding of the inputs and outcomes related to information literacy in each discipline. This session will provide an overview of the information literacy integration and associated assessment.

Blokland, Ian R., Sheryl L. Gares and Brian P. Rempel. Development and Calibration of the Augustana Interdisciplinary Scientific Literacy Evaluation (AISLE). University of Alberta.

Undergraduate science courses designed for students who are not science majors are being offered at a variety of institutions. However, assessment of the effectiveness of these courses is not always easy. Measuring gains in knowledge by examining student understanding and recall of scientific facts is of limited value; most of this type of knowledge is unlikely to be valuable to these students in their future (non-scientific) careers. Measuring gains in scientific attitudes and skills has not traditionally been a focus for these types of courses, even though such skills and attitudes are more useful to the average non-science student. To address this need, we have developed the Augustana Interdisciplinary Scientific Literacy Evaluation (AISLE) to measure gains in scientific skills and attitudes, without focusing on measuring gains in factual knowledge. Twenty multiple-choice questions have been designed to provide a quantitative measurement of students' scientific skills and attitudes in a relatively short and straightforward fashion. Samples of AISLE questions and answers, development criteria and process, and calibration data with different student populations will be presented.

Carpenter, Alex. Springtime in Vienna: The Challenges of Assessment and Place-Based Learning. University of Alberta.

Traveling internationally with students brings with it a host of logistical challenges, but there are significant pedagogical challenges as well. While one can be confident that a place-based learning experience will, of its own accord, ensure that the students learn simply by dint of being exposed to a very different place and culture, it can be difficult to adequately assess their learning. Drawing on my experiences leading a musical/cultural history course in Vienna, Austria, I will discuss the evolution of my assessment practices for this course, focusing on the ways in which students are encouraged to prepare for and critically document their experiences.

Cor, Ken. Workshop: Aligning Learning Objectives to Program Objectives. University of Alberta. Not available at time of printing.

Cubero-Ibáñez, Jaione, María Soledad Ibarra-Sáiz and Gregorio Rodríguez-Gómez. Empirical Validation of an Assessment Literacy Program for Students in Higher Education. University of Cadiz. This work shows partially the results of the empirical validation of the training program EDECOM-DevalSimWeb Evaluation and development of professional competences in Higher Education, aimed at university students of last year, with the intention of knowing the opinion

of the participants about its usefulness and satisfaction. This program offers training in evaluation and skills in order to facilitate the labor insertion and employability of students, developing skills required in the professional market, encouraging their active participation in the assessment process and using web services and simulation.

The empirical validation of the training program was carried out through a pilot study, in which 75 students from 4 Latin American universities participated. Once the program was completed, the perception of its protagonists was gathered about the material resources used, the virtual campus, the results and satisfaction. The instruments used for the collection of information were 4 questionnaires, with Likert questions (scale from 1 to 6) in which they had to indicate the degree of agreement with the stated statements and some open questions referring to positive or improvement aspects. The results show that the training program is valued very positively by its participants, 82.3% are very satisfied and fully satisfied. In the same way, all the aspects related to the utility surpass an average score higher than 5 points out of 6, highlighting that the realization of the training program has allowed them to expand their knowledge on the assessment of learning in Higher Education (5,52).

Goebel, Nancy¹ and Michelle Edwards Thompson². Moving Information Literacy Assessment from Gory to Glory. ¹University of Alberta and ²Red Deer College. The Information Literacy Assessment and Advocacy Project (ILAAP -- ILAAP.ca) is an initiative which offers free quantitative and qualitative assessment associated with library instruction to college and university librarians. The assessment is aimed at the first couple of years of college/university instruction. Institutions join ILAAP via their campus library. The librarian then requests that ILAAP generate a pre-/post (or both) quiz for the students to complete. The quiz is based on a set of questions developed and tested for this purpose. The questions assess student acquisition of library concepts and also provide an opportunity for student feedback about their experience of the instruction and any outstanding questions. This session will introduce attending conference faculty to this service so that they are aware of this information literacy assessment possibility for collaboration with their librarians and free implementation at their institution. For ease of assessment, ILAAP questions are mapped to both the Association of College and Research Libraries' Standards and Framework documents.

Gulawani, Makarand, Sahil Chadha and Kashtin Apsassin Roundtable: Learning Consumer Behaviour with Project Work at Local Businesses. MacEwan University. At MacEwan University, consumer behaviour course for undergraduate students includes working with local business for understanding application of theory and concepts into practice. This work with local business is a mandatory part of consumer behaviour course and includes major portion of their overall evaluation. This presentation is reflection of student learning experience and assessment of their learning. Professor and students discuss their views about teaching and learning consumer behaviour with a project work with local business. The project is valued for 40% of the total assessment. This presentation also highlights practice of assessment of this course.

Haave, Neil. Are Learning Styles Disabling Students with a Fixed Mindset about Reading? University of Alberta. Reading is one mode of learning, but is a mode that predominates in academia. The literature indicates that readers are more successful academically, and historically readers have been the scholars in their communities. The ability to read is an

indicator of intelligence; well-read people have a wealth of information to draw upon to generate their viewpoints. Many post-secondary students, however, assume that scholarly theses for assignments are generated in a vacuum and, as a result, produce uninformed ideas rather than first informing themselves about the topic. The problem in my learning community is that so many first-year students arrive on campus with a self-imposed disability: they have been taught that their learning style does not include reading, and thus the students have an expectation that teaching will cater to their learning preferences, which excludes the necessity to read. Many students arrive on our university campus with a fixed mindset about their reading ability and do not understand that reading is a skill. This is not unlike the common assertion from many people that they cannot do math. Colleges and universities need to help students develop a growth mindset around reading encouraging students to hone their ability to read. Without strong reading skills, students will find themselves excluded from our information-rich world, which will negatively impact their own ability to be creative in an informed manner.

Ibarra-Sáiz, María Soledad, Gregorio Rodríguez-Gómez and Jaione Cubero-Ibáñez. Students' Perspectives on Quality of Assessment Tasks in Higher Education. University of Cadiz. When considering the concept of assessment as learning and empowerment three major challenges need to be addressed: student participation, feedforward and high quality assessment tasks. This paper presents the results of a study focused on high quality learning and assessment tasks in the context of Higher Education. In accordance with the assessment quality framework developed by Gore, Ladwig, Elsworth & Ellis (2009) and the critical elements proposed by Ashford-Rowe, Herrington, & Brown (2014), learning and assessment tasks were developed which required students to engage with a range of challenges and demonstrate both skills and intellectual rigor. After each of these tasks were undertaken, students' opinions were obtained through the completion of a specifically designed online questionnaire called ATAE (Analysis of Learning and Assessment Tasks). This instrument is structured in three parts: 1. categorization questions, 2. closed questions on various aspects and possible strategies for the completion of the tasks in which the students' opinions are sought on their ease of implementation and how valuable they might be for application in other contexts and 3. open questions aimed at reflecting on the quality of the tasks. This paper presents the main results obtained from identifying undergraduate students' perceptions on the assessment tasks they undertook, on the way each task was carried out or implemented, their usefulness in other contexts (in university and professional contexts) and the intellectual rigor they demanded. The results show that assessment tasks whose design is based on authenticity and learning are valued very highly by students and represent valuable learning activities.

Lowe, Sammy. Monologues and Microscopes: A Self-assessment of Scientific and Personal Growth through Liberal Arts & Science Education. University of Alberta. As an aspiring scientist and science communicator, I have directed considerable time during my undergraduate studies developing my scientific competencies and reasoning skills. My experiences in the classroom have provided me with a framework of crucial concepts and skills, and my work in laboratory and field environments has allowed me to further my understanding experientially. My scientific development has been bolstered by my unique experience as both a biology and drama student, as I have been able to fully engage with my learning from a

broader, multifaceted perspective. In fact, there have been many unexpected instances of overlap between these seemingly disparate disciplines, which have expanded my ability to consider my creative growth in tandem with the acquisition of technical skills and knowledge. This talk will serve primarily as a self-assessment of how key experiences throughout my multidisciplinary undergraduate career have contributed to my scientific development, especially in terms of my research abilities, maturation of thinking, and pedagogical attitudes. I will also discuss how my recent work as a summer research assistant served as both a culmination of my undergraduate training, as well as an opportunity to provide future students with a more authentic laboratory learning experience. Finally, I will reflect on the challenges that I have encountered as a result of gaps in my learning, and how those challenges continue to shape my scientific and personal growth.

McGinitie, Elizabeth, James Kariuki and Brian Rempel. Two-Stage Exams as a New Tool for Student Assessment. University of Alberta. Two-stage exams have recently emerged as an attractive new tool for student assessment in a variety of different disciplines. As its name implies, a two-stage exam consists of two parts; an individual portion and a group portion. In the first part of the exam, students complete and submit the exam individually, allowing for a traditional assessment of student knowledge, understanding and learning. In the second portion, students complete the same exam again in a small group setting, providing students the opportunity to actively engage in and discuss course/exam material with their peers. This provides a number of benefits to students, including immediate feedback on exam solutions from peers and introduction to alternative problem-solving approaches and strategies employed by peers. In this presentation, we will discuss our recent efforts to integrate two-stage exams into the chemistry program at the University of Alberta Augustana Campus. Topics of discussion will include methods of implementation, from exam construction and grading to classroom logistics, challenges and victories, student and instructor reception, and strategies for improvement.

McGrath, Alexander. Sustainable Development in Protected Areas: Escaping the Classroom and Expanding Horizons. Mount Royal University. Mount Royal University's "Scotland Field School" focussed on sustainability in protected areas, in particular the Cairngorms National Park in Scotland. The field school enabled students to be immersed in a setting that was unfamiliar and challenging. Classroom time was kept to a minimum while time making site visits and meeting with local stakeholders was maximized. After two weeks of preparation, students were thrust together for three-weeks in the field, where cooperation and camaraderie were imperative. We learned about sustainability in terms of conservation, but also in terms of social and economic development for communities. We heard from guest speakers, ranging from landed gentry to community volunteers, and this augmented the concepts learned in class. The famous Scottish forthrightness not only added colour, but the frank discussion enabled our deeper understanding of sustainability issues. Each student completed a field journal to reflect on experiences and synthesize each day's learning into a written record. Our field journals became invaluable primary research, and our instructors reviewed them as an innovative way of assessing our learning. We were enthusiastic to learn about sustainability and also contribute to it. The Community Service Learning component of the course meant that two days were spent volunteering to help return forested areas to a more natural and sustainable state. The

field school therefore had a positive impact on my peers and me, as well as on forested areas in Scotland.

Prichard, Lisa and Kim Peacock. Workshop: Using Digital Infographics to Assess Scientific Literacy. MacEwan University. Learning objectives of university level biology courses typically focus on training students to think about and practice biology authentically. Traditional assessments align with how the discipline is performed and include formal lab reports, comprehensive reviews of primary literature, and analyses of biological problems. There is clear value to this approach, especially in the training and evaluation of majors who intend to continue studying and working within biology related fields following graduation. An additional learning objective of many biology departments, is for both majors and non-majors to become scientifically literate. Scientific literacy is an individual's ability to not only understand scientific concepts and processes, but to use this information in both personal and societal decision making. One approach I have used to assess scientific literacy is to task my students with communicating and 'translating' their knowledge and understanding of biology to a non-scientifically educated general public. Specifically, students from an advanced cell biology course investigated the effectiveness of non-traditional disease 'cures' using appropriate scientific sources. They then used a variety of easily accessible on-line digital tools including Piktochart, Thing Link, Biteable, and TackK to create an infographic or video which communicated their findings. The challenge was to present scientifically validated information in a format that was appropriate for the intended audience. With this approach, students were not only able to demonstrate their own scientific literacy, but also had the opportunity to impact the decision making of others. **In this hands-on workshop**, we will briefly introduce these digital materials. Participants will then have the opportunity to use the Piktochart Tool. In preparation, attendees are asked to come with a few of their own discipline specific assignment questions and materials that might be presented visually using this approach. Participants will use their own laptops for this activity and will set up a free Piktochart account. At the end of the presentation, some examples of student work will be shown, and strategies for planning and coordinating this style of assessment will be shared. Potential pitfalls including how to maintain disciplinary rigor and how to deal with technical difficulties will be discussed. The overall goal of this activity is for participants to assess whether this approach could be appropriate for a novel presentation style of an existing or new course assignment.

Rettie, Kathy, Dorothy Hill and Celeste MacConnachie. Practice and Assessment: Experiences with an Overseas Field School. Mount Royal University. Our presentation focuses on assessments and other challenges associated with a field school that we organized and taught focusing on sustainability in the Cairngorms National Park, Scotland. Ideally, students gained a better understanding of real-life approaches to achieving social and environmental sustainability as related in-person by citizens, managers, and landowners. Assessing students' success in achieving this outcome must be linked to field experiences; interpretations of events can be guided through group discussions and academic sources but, in large part, remain personal, thereby adding a critical variable to consider when assigning grades. Beyond the academic goals, personality traits play a major role in the success of field schools; assessing the desired level of maturity in each student may not be possible prior to departure. As well, managing students' expectations is important; one must clearly define the range of experiences

that the field school would provide and outline students' roles in achieving success. Empowering all students with access is a major challenge: programs are expensive and timing neither meshes with summer jobs nor with undergrad timetables. These and other challenges will be presented.

Rodriguez-Gómez, Gregorio, María Soledad Ibarra-Sáiz and Jaione Cubero-Ibáñez. University of Cadiz. Using Serious Games to Empower Students as Learning Assessors. A number of studies in educational research have highlighted the need for student participation in the assessment process as a way to promote their lifelong learning. This means that they should themselves act as assessors, becoming actively involved in the assessment process instead of being passive agents. This requires students to be trained to undertake this new role of assessor. This current study focuses on the conception of assessment as learning and empowerment and on the use of technology enhanced assessment (TEA) and it examines whether university students who use serious games in a technologically enriched environment develop their competence in assessment. Using a quasi-experimental design, specialized training courses were created and delivered in four Spanish universities for students in Health Sciences, Education, Art History and Labor Relations. The results of the study indicate that serious games are an excellent way to develop students' competence in assessment, itself an important step to enable students to become empowered by being involved in their assessment and, as a consequence, changing the nature of their role as university students.

Schultz, Chantel and Gracie Yelland. Student Views from the Field. University of Alberta. Students will present their reflection on their experience and learning in the Vienna field trip.

Starkey, June. Assessment and Feedback for Language Learning: Professors and Students Mind the Proficiency Gap... or Not. OISE, University of Toronto. This qualitative doctoral study examined the feedback experiences of ten undergraduate students who hope to teach (in) French and five French as a Second Language (FSL) instructors in Higher Education (HE). Through a series of three interviews with each student, an on-line survey, an analysis of work samples and course documents, as well as single interviews with instructors, classroom observations and focus groups, this study investigated four areas of interest: the characteristics of instructor-led feedback activities provided to future teachers wanting to teach (in) French; the ways future FSL teachers used feedback; how feedback practices interacted with individual context variables; and tasks that allowed instructors to provide the best feedback. This study contributes to the literature on assessment models in HE that may make a difference for the development of French proficient and assessment literate future FSL teachers. Students in HE who are non-native speakers of French and who wish to teach (in) French may face challenges in using the Target Language (TL). There is a "feedback gap" (Evans, 2013, pp. 73, 94-97) between the feedback students receive and their capacity to use feedback to improve their work. Boud and Molloy (2013) concur with this gap, noting that professors in HE spend significant amounts of time giving feedback, though it is not clear that students understand or act on the feedback they receive.

Trigg, Tina. Leveraging Student Learning Experiences through Informal Assessments: What We Ask, When, How, and Why? The King's University. If the goals of post-secondary assessment include a desire to capitalize on successes and to foster a culture of excellence, then beyond establishing formalized learning objectives, assessments should contribute to continued refinement of course design and delivery. While formal student evaluations provide one source of direct input, a major drawback of institutional assessments is timing: they occur at the conclusion of a course. Business research confirms that consistent, targeted, timely feedback is crucial to job performance, satisfaction, and engagement (Hybels 2016); the same applies in post-secondary classrooms for instructors and students. Ongoing informal assessments enable instructors to elicit reciprocal feedback efficiently and effectively. Based on twenty years of teaching in public and private, large and small universities, this paper will outline methods of leveraging student experience to refine courses – including required courses outside of their major. The presentation will consider WHAT we ask students in informal assessments; WHEN we ask for student responses including rationale for timing and types of information we can gain; HOW we ask students for feedback: types of questions and format of response; as well as, most critically, WHY to act on informal assessments: benefits and practical outcomes for instructors and students. If we value student learning, being intentional and responsive in our teaching strategies should be key components of pedagogical practice. This presentation will include specific examples, student comments, and emphasis on the value of implementing informal assessments to improve and leverage student learning experiences in any subject area.

Wesselius, Janet¹, Yvonne Franke², Annika Bastian³, Donovan Cleckley³ and Margaret Greenhalgh². Roundtable: Making the Familiar Strange: Assessment in a Distance Digital Humanities Course, Two Stages Exams as a New Tool for Student Assessment. ¹University of Alberta, ²Midwestern State University, ³University of Montevallo. We propose a two part presentation based on a COPLAC Digital Humanities course we taught in the Winter term of 2017. The first part of the presentation will focus on the grading experience of the two instructors. The second part will consist of students presenting their final digital projects. The goal of the first part is to share our experience and best practices of marking a distance digital humanities course with five teams of students at five different institutions taught by two instructors at different institutions; the goal of the second part is to give examples of the kind of work students can do in innovative courses and provide an opportunity for them to share the student-perspective on assessment in a non-traditional course. Moreover, the topic of this course—“Making Strange: Constructing Identities and Making Sense of Our Surroundings”—involved reflecting on how we make assessments in our everyday life. An excerpt from the course syllabus reads “This course aims to give students the time and tools to reflect upon the meaning of ‘strange.’ How is strangeness constructed? How do we identify ourselves as being part of a particular culture and nation? What is familiar and what is alien to us and why? This research will be used to create digital projects on ‘making strange’ and provide a resource for thinking through the issue of strangeness”. In this panel discussion, our goal is to engender a frank discussion between instructors and students on the advantages and disadvantages of assessment for student learning and suggestions for better practices.

Wilton, Shauna and Melanie Méthot. Fighting Assessment Fatigue: The Challenges of Creating a Culture of Academic Assessment. University of Alberta. Five years ago, our campus began a campus-wide assessment of student achievement of the core academic skills. Together, teaching faculty developed a ground-up assessment process; including: a new set of core academic skills that would be assessed, and a process for consulting and reporting on student mastery of the skills within each academic major and for the campus as a whole. Faculty unanimously endorsed the assessment program, even in the absence of any external pressure. This presentation explores the creation of a 'culture of assessment' on our campus, the challenges we face, and the apparent declining enthusiasm for the project among faculty. Specifically, we draw on a survey of all teaching faculty regarding the assessment process and outcomes, combined a longitudinal and content analysis of the disciplinary reports submitted to the Committee for Academic Skills Assessment.