



Researching Assessment Methods in Tutorial Education
Robert Beck, Bill Skinner and Lynsey Schwabrow
Lawrence University

TUTOR GUIDE FOR SAM-2

This Guide outlines methods and procedures for tutors researching tutorials during Year 2 of the project. The Guide contains instructions concerning research activities, including the organization of tutorials, student interviews, a timeline, procedures for recording tutorials, and learning outcomes.

Tutorial Course Organization

All tutorials will have one or more students. Students will engage in discussions, write papers, and if required, present their work. One assessment based on discussions, papers, and presentations (if relevant) will occur three times during the tutorial (see Timeline below) using the revised learning outcome rubrics discussed at the conference. These include a) the independent thinker (four traits), b) intellectual maturity (two traits), and c) creativity (four traits). Discussion sessions and, if necessary, presentations will be audio recorded and transcripts created to assist tutors in the development of the case study.

Non-Tutorial Course Organization

One or more students from a non-tutorial course should be chosen at random. It is recommended that a seminar or small group course be used. INFORMED CONSENT WILL BE REQUIRED OF ALL STUDENTS, and a separate consent form is provided in the materials. All assessment of the student's work will occur three times during the course (see Timeline below) using the revised learning outcome rubrics. Only the instructor will complete the learning outcome rubrics (no student self-evaluation), no recordings will be made, and no payment will be issued to the student(s) in the non-tutorial course. Faculty will decide how best to introduce and discuss the student(s) participation in the study.

Tutorial Course Student Interviews

Orientation Interview

The tutor will conduct an orientation interview that briefs the student(s) on the research activities. This interview should describe the goals and methods of the course and review the informed consent form including compensation for the student(s). This interview will not be recorded.

An important component of the Orientation Interview is to discuss the use of the learning outcome rubrics to be used in assessing student performance. Tutors will decide how best to introduce and discuss the outcomes and rubrics. One important point to be made in this

respect is that students will be using these rubrics to self-assess themselves. If the tutor decides that peer-to-peer (PTP) ratings would be advisable, **please specify the rater and student being assessed on the rubrics**. Another point is that the learning outcomes are goals toward which students should aspire and that they should feel free to seek assessment by the tutor as to how they are doing at any stage of the tutorial.

Sample Orientation Interview Questions

1. What are the learning goals of the tutorial?
2. What does the student hope to gain from the tutorial? What does the instructor hope to gain? Will the tutorial yield how-to-learn procedures as well as knowledge?
3. What's the difference in student and instructor roles in tutorials compared with other kinds of courses?
4. Has the student taken a tutorial previously? If so, what was the structure of the tutorial and what did the student learn from it? If not, what are the student's expectations for a tutorial and how were those expectations formed?
5. Do students feel they can use the rubrics to rate themselves? If not, what's the problem? Is the issue (for any particular rubric) your (student's) comprehension?

Exit Interview

The tutor will conduct an exit interview with the student(s) at the end of the tutorial to discuss progress and development during the tutorial. This interview should be recorded and will be transcribed to assist the tutor in developing case studies.

Sample Exit Interview Questions

1. Were the learning outcomes appropriate for the tutorial? Which ones were most appropriate and were there any that didn't make sense for this particular tutorial?
2. Did knowing the learning outcomes have any affect on how you approached the topic and readings, prepared for the tutorial sessions, discussed the material, and wrote the paper(s)?
3. Do you feel that each learning outcome developed over the course of the tutorial? If so, discuss how for each outcome.
4. Are there any other learning outcomes that you think should be assessed?
5. Did you find the self-assessment useful in understanding your progress in achieving the learning outcome?
6. Instructors: how did you encourage the development of the learning outcomes? (e.g., modeling, prompting, reinforcing)

Timeline

The timeline for using SAM-2 involves the schedule of assessment activities and the types of documentation that will need to be collected.

Baseline Assessment

This assessment should occur during the second or third week of class and serves as the baseline measure of the learning outcomes. The rubrics should be used in assessing the discussion that occurs in one class and any written work that occurs during this window of time. We encourage tutors to complete the rubrics as soon as possible after the class has ended and the after reading the written work, observing the art work, etc. **The rubrics should be used as appropriate to correct or annotate written work. This written work with annotations will be submitted with the final case study.** (See

Using Rubrics to Annotate Papers section below) Students should be instructed to complete their self-assessment as soon as possible and return the rubrics to the tutor at the next class period. **For SAM-2, additional rubric sheets are included for faculty and students to “invent” their own traits. These invented traits should be assessed at the same intervals (baseline, intermediate, final) as the other 10 traits.** The audio recordings of discussions and, if necessary, presentations are further explained in the Procedure for Recording Tutorial Discussions section of this Guide. Completed rubrics may be either e-mailed or mailed to Lynsey Schwabrow at lynsey.schwabrow@lawrence.edu, Office of Research Administration, Lawrence University, 711 E. Boldt Way, Appleton, WI 54911.

Intermediate Assessment

This assessment should occur during the fifth (for terms) to eighth (for semesters) week of class [for year-long IS projects, intermediate will occur halfway through the academic year] and serves as the midpoint measure of learning outcomes. Intermediate assessment should encompass the timeframe since the baseline to the present. Please complete rubrics as soon as possible after class has ended. **The rubrics should be used as appropriate to correct or annotate written work. This written work with annotations will be submitted with the final case study.** Students should be instructed to complete their self-assessment as soon as possible and return the rubrics to the tutor at the next class period. **Additional rubric sheets should be used to make an intermediate assessment of any invented traits by students and faculty.**

Final Assessment

This assessment should occur during the last couple weeks of the tutorial and serves as the end-point measure of the learning outcomes. Final assessment should encompass the timeframe since the intermediate to the present. Please complete rubrics as soon as possible after class has ended. **The rubrics should be used as appropriate to correct or annotate written work. This written work with annotations will be submitted with the final case study.** Students should be instructed to complete their self-assessment as soon as possible and return the rubrics to the tutor at the next class period. **Additional rubric sheets should be used to make a final assessment of any invented traits by students and faculty.**

Procedure for Recording Tutorial Discussions

A total of four tutorial discussions will be recorded. Specifically, the baseline, intermediate, and final assessments (as described in the Timeline) and the exit interview should be recorded with a **digital** audio recorder.

- 1.) It is the tutor’s responsibility to coordinate with their Information Technology department to acquire a **digital** audio recorder.
- 2.) Following the recording of each tutorial discussion, the recording should be downloaded to a computer.
- 3.) Create an mp3 file of the recording, again coordinating with the Information Technology department if assistance is needed.

- 4.) E-mail (or mail on a CD) the mp3 file to Lynsey Schwabrow at lynsey.schwabrow@lawrence.edu as soon as possible after each discussion.
- 5.) Lynsey will have the mp3 file transcribed. The transcription will be e-mailed back to the tutor when completed for use with writing the case study report.

Note: If you are conducting your tutorial in FALL 2009, please email or mail mp3 files to JANICE RUECHEL at janice.ruechel@lawrence.edu; Sampson House, Lawrence University, 711 E. Boldt Way, Appleton, WI 54911. Lynsey will be on maternity leave during the Fall, so your transcripts will be delayed if files are sent to her.

PLEASE SUBMIT MP3 FILES ASAP SO THAT YOU WILL HAVE USE OF TRANSCRIPTS.

Learning Outcomes

The following learning outcomes will be used in this study:

INDEPENDENT THINKER

- 1) **Independence:** the ability to take teacher roles by setting topics, asking questions to originate new topics, summarizing discussion and assessing ideas
- 2) **Developing an inquiring mind - questioning ideas and self-questioning:** asks high-level questions, such as why-questions
- 3) **Acquiring self-assessment skills:** self-assesses one's claims and arguments; the ability to recognize biases in thinking and predispositions to make certain judgments, shares or communicates critique of one's biases and prejudgments
- 4) **Learning to argue:** argues effectively by making conceptual claims backed with supporting theory, reasoning and evidence; does not imply emotional and contentious argument

INTELLECTUAL MATURITY

- 1) **Complexity/Uncertainty:** the ability to work with complex problems, issues, and information
- 2) **Takes intellectual chances:** willingness to state positions and arguments without worry of saying something wrong, making mistakes, or risking failure

CREATIVITY

- 1) **Idea generation:** generates new ideas, variations of or alternatives to solving problems, a novel way of analyzing or re-conceptualizing a topic or idea in the context of what the student knows and understands, interesting and creative restatements of others' ideas, unusual ideas, interesting theories
- 2) **Curiosity:** the desire to learn or know more, ability to become absorbed in the topic, discovers a new line of inquiry or question of a topic and wishes to persist and sustain in exploring the topic

3) ***Multiple perspectives in problem solving:*** sees a problem from multiple perspectives, compares and contrasts approaches, uses multiple disciplines

4) ***Connectivity:*** ability to bring together or synthesize disparate bits of information, makes connections between already established ideas or theories, connects disciplines

Learning Outcome Rubrics

The following instructions for using the rubrics also appear as a cover sheet on the SAM-2 Learning Outcome Rubrics packet. Learning outcome rubrics will be completed at 3 points during the tutorial (see Timeline).

When completing the rubrics, tutors should indicate their name and the student's name on the ratings. If PTP rating is being done, indicate rater and ratee.

Tutors and students will use a 5-point scale for 10 different traits. Each trait includes a rating possibility of zero, signifying that the trait has not been observed in discussions, writings, and/or presentations. This rating should be used **only** when the tutor or student does not find the trait to be applicable to observations of the work.

Space is available on the rubrics for “observational notes” regarding each trait. Tutors should record any comments regarding the reasoning for the ratings, evidence of the trait, and any discipline-specific thoughts about the trait that would be helpful to the researchers. Observational notes will be important to developing the case studies.

Additional sheets are included for faculty and students to “invent” their own traits. Faculty should use their invented rubrics to assess students at the same three intervals as the other 10 traits. Students may also generate their own traits as they self-assess.

Using Rubrics to Annotate Papers

We are on uncharted ground in using the rubrics to correct and annotate papers so this will require some creativity on your part to adapt the rubrics to your usual mode of responding to papers. For example, if a paper shows good evidence of questioning ideas in the literature Independent Thinker – Inquiring Mind, then tutors might write, “impressive questioning of ideas in work cited” or Learning to Argue, then tutors might write “I thought your argument was well-formulated here, but you could have provided more evidence”. Concerning Intellectual Maturity - “Takes intellectual chances”, “You went out on a limb here which is good; were you aware of taking a chance?” Under Creativity - Connectivity: “I liked the way you connected aesthetic theory and historical conditions in your exposition in this essay.” Some remarks will be appropriate in the margins where the “habit of mind” occurs in the paper and some, perhaps more, will be appropriate wherever you write overall impressions and evaluations of the paper. The instructor's personal rubrics — the “invented traits” (other than the standard set) may prove to be very useful in applications to students' written work.

Student and Tutor Payments

Students enrolled in tutorial courses will receive a payment of \$50 at the conclusion of the tutorial. In order for students to receive their payment, please pay attention to the following instructions:

- For Lawrence students: Near the end of the tutorial, Tutors simply need to send an e-mail requesting payment, including the names of the students who are to be paid, to Janice Ruechel at Janice.Ruechel@lawrence.edu. After the e-mail has been received, the students will be paid in the next regular payroll cycle, assuming that the necessary tax forms are on file in the Business Office. If the forms, I-9 and W-4, are not on file, Janice will contact the students to let them know what is needed and how to proceed in order to get paid.
- For non-Lawrence students: Near the end of the tutorial, Tutors need to send an e-mail requesting payment with the names, mailing addresses and social security numbers of the students who are to be paid to Janice Ruechel at Janice.Ruechel@lawrence.edu. The dollar amount is low enough that a significant amount of taxes will not likely accrue. However, we need paperwork on file to meet IRS requirements.

NOTE: To make this payment process easier, the informed consent form for tutorial students now includes a place for address and social security number if students would like to provide this information for us there. Please make sure all of the information is clearly legible.

Tutors will receive their stipend in two installments during 2009-10. The first half of the stipend will be issued upon receipt of the baseline rubrics for all students. The second half of the stipend will be issued upon receipt of the case study.

Case Study Guidelines

New case study guidelines will be prepared for SAM-2 later in the Fall.