INFORMAL ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES (Radcliff, Chapter 4)

Overview:

Informal assessment techniques are used primarily in classroom settings as a way of evaluating “how things are going”. Largely, data from informal assessments are reflected upon and fed back into the assessment/instructional process and often lead to improved or revised classroom techniques and strategies. Specific techniques include observing, questioning and self-reflecting. Not a good choice for program assessment.

Extremely cheap and time friendly; reaches across assessment domains to informally assess student knowledge, feelings and behaviors; High degree of accessibility; faculty/librarian collaboration is minimal; no need for outside experts.

Indicators:

Requires little time
Requires little money
Level of assessment: Classroom
Domains: Affective, Behavioral, Cognitive
Easy access to participants
Little or no need for faculty collaboration
No outside expertise needed

Key Characteristics:

- Utilizes the natural processes of observation, questioning and reflection;
- Highly responsive, flexible and fast;
- Most classroom interactions represent an opportunity for informal assessment;
- Great at generating timely feedback during instruction or just after;
- Can complement other qualitative techniques, such as interviewing and focus groups;
- Requires little advance planning;
- Helpful in identifying formal assessment needs;
- Relies on inferences, which are susceptible to bias and false assumptions;
- Not a good choice when formal assessment is required.