For professors teaching skills, getting a clear picture of students’ skill acquisition process and where the break down is occurring is imperative for improving student performance. Designing assessment measures that uncover the underlying reasons for poor student performance begins at the initial phase of course design, when large-scale learning outcomes are differentiated from smaller-scale, specific learning objectives. It is not uncommon for faculty to confuse the two or use them interchangeably, thereby making meaningful assessment difficult. Learning objectives, when they are specific, observable, and measurable, will lend themselves to assessments that uncover the process deficiencies in students’ learning experiences. Following this presentation, participants will: (1) understand the key differences between learning outcomes and learning objectives; (2) reflect upon and articulate in specific terms the types of process-oriented skills objectives they have in their courses; and (3) be able to draft high quality, measurable learning objectives that lend themselves to meaningful assessments.
11:00AM - 11:45AM:
Let’s Talk About Grading, Maybe: Dialogues About How Instructors Assess Classroom Assessments

DeShun Harris, University of Memphis, Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law

Grading is a key component of the assessment practice. Yet, discussions about grading with colleagues and students can feel taboo. This presentation will provide a framework for how we can improve our conversations with students about grading assessments with an eye towards improving their self-assessment. And it will also engage the audience in a discussion about how we might broach the concept of grading with our colleagues.

11:45AM - 12:30PM:
Keynote Speaker

Dr. Roger Bolus, Founder and Senior Partner, Research Solutions Group

Roger Bolus, Ph.D. is the founder and senior partner of Research Solutions Group. He has been engaged for over 30 years with state bar examiner committees around the country assuring the psychometric integrity of their examinations. He has also worked with numerous law schools on internal outcome studies related to performance on the bar examinations. Dr. Bolus will be presenting on the recent investigations being conducted by the State Bar of California related to the current trend in declining performance on the bar examination. He will be talking about the most recent investigation involving the collaboration with California law schools.

12:30PM - 1:30PM:
Lunch

1:30PM - 2:15PM:
Presentation #4

Sarira Sadeghi, University of La Verne College of Law

Many of us have limited resources and/or workload overload. Providing meaningful feedback, particularly in large classes, can be very challenging. Guided essay feedback is a strategy for large groups (though it works with small groups as well) to address the challenge of providing individualized feedback for many students, and allows students to learn to dissect not only sentences and essay structure, but also substance. This strategy also helps students perform more thoughtful and critical self-assessment.
2:15PM - 2:45PM:

“Why Did That Happen?”:
Crafting Self-Assessment Questionnaires that Guide Students to Dig Deeper and Develop More Effective Action Plans for Improvement

Queena Mewers, UC Irvine School of Law

When self-assessing, most students can identify “surface-level” mistakes they made on an exam—e.g., “I missed this issue” or “I reached the wrong conclusion.” But most students don’t dig deeper to figure out why they made a particular mistake. Without determining the underlying cause for a mistake, students are then unable to develop a concrete action plan that actually helps to correct that particular mistake. This presentation will offer suggestions on how to craft better self-assessment questionnaires that guide students to dig deeper in identifying the underlying causes for their mistakes and how to fix those mistakes.

2:45PM - 3:00PM:

Break

3:00PM - 3:45PM:

Creative Solutions to Assessment Challenges

Liza-Jane Capatos, Santa Clara University School of Law

As lawyers, we are trained to think analytically. And yet, as academic support professionals, we are often required to solve challenging problems in creative ways. Sometimes, our ability to come up with innovative solutions to those challenges is harmed because we can’t quiet the critical, analytical portion of our brains long enough to think outside the box. This presentation will introduce structured brainstorming activities that participants can take back to their institutions and use as tools for creative problem solving. Once participants have activated the creative parts of their brains, they will engage in some problem solving of their own. Specially, they will address some of the challenges faced in the assessment realm.

3:45PM - 4:15PM:

Using Workshops to Make It Stick: How Skills Workshops Can Reinforce Retrieval Practice, Spaced Learning, and Interleaving

Kathleen Bolus, University of San Diego School of Law

Studies have proven that retrieval practice, spacing, and interleaving lead to deeper and more durable learning. This presentation will discuss how we introduced students to these concepts and incorporated retrieval practice into our 1L Skills Workshop Series. The presentation will also explore how we worked with Academic Success Fellows to develop targeted and meaningful practice materials.

4:15PM - 5:00PM:

Assessment from O to B – Orientation to Bar Prep

Mario Mainero, Chapman University Dale E. Fowler School of Law

This presentation will illustrate the various methods academic support faculty and the teaching assistants they supervise can use throughout the law school experience to increase and improve opportunities for assessment, with the ultimate goals being improved bar passage rates.

5:00PM:

Conference Close