WASC Senior College and
University Commission

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Assessment 201:

Advanced Topics in Assessment

November 18, 2015

Kellogg West Conference Center

Pomona, CA

Resource Binder

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

MARK YOUR CALENDARS
2015-2016

WASC Senior College and University Commission is pleased to announce a selection of educational programs for 2015-16. Developed by regional and national experts, they cover topics of vital interest to all higher educational institutions – and particularly to those in the WSCUC region. They are entirely optional, but our hope is that member institutions will find them of service. WSCUC staff will be present at each session to answer any questions related specifically to WSCUC accreditation expectations.

★ **REVISED AND REVAMPED! Meaning, Quality, and Integrity of Degrees: Exploring Approaches, Models, & Tools**
October 9, 2015. Mills College, Oakland, CA

★ **NEW! Moving Beyond Measuring: Integrating Assessment and Evaluation with Planning and Improvement**
October 22, 2015. Mills College, Oakland, CA

★ **Assessment 101: The Assessment Cycle, Clear and Simple**
October 23, 2015. Mills College, Oakland, CA

★ **Assessment 201: Advanced Topics in Assessment**
November 18, 2015. Kellogg West, Pomona, CA

★ **The Big Five: Addressing The Five Core Competencies (2-day Retreat)**
November 19-20, 2015. Kellogg West, Pomona, CA

★ **President/Trustee Retreats**
December 3, 2015. Woodbury University, Burbank, CA
December 4, 2015. Mills College, Oakland, CA

★ **Assessment 201: Advanced Topics in Assessment**
February 5, 2016. Chaminade University, Honolulu, Hawai'i

★ **NEW! Moving Beyond Measuring: Integrating Assessment and Evaluation with Planning and Improvement**
May 5, 2016. Mills College, Oakland, CA

★ **Assessment 101: The Assessment Cycle, Clear and Simple**
May 6, 2016. Mills College, Oakland, CA

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Assessment 201: Advanced Topics in Assessment

November 18, 2015 Kellogg West Conference Center, Pomona, CA

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Assessment 201 Advanced Topics in Assessment

8:30AM-5:00PM   November 18, 2015

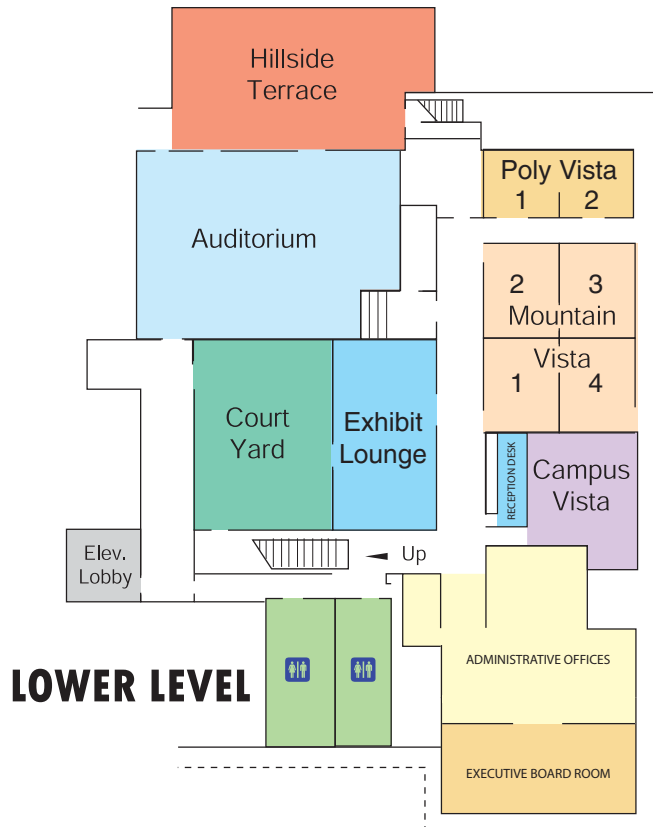Kellogg West Conference Center, Pomona, CA

Workshop Learning Outcomes

As a result of participating in Assessment 201, workshop participants will be able to:

1. Design direct and indirect assessments that align with outcomes.
2. Assess the quality of rubrics.
3. Calibrate reviewers and check for inter-rater reliability.
4. Develop quality evidence.
5. Engage faculty in assessment.
6. Close the loop with multiple strategies of inquiry and decision making.
7. Integrate best practices into the design and reporting of assessments.

Workshop Schedule

8:00 – 8:30 am   **Arrival and Registration**

8:30 – 8:40 am   **Welcome, Introductions, and Overview of Workshop** (Melanie Booth)

8:40 – 10:20 am   **Aligning Direct and Indirect Assessment Strategies with Outcomes** (Amy Driscoll)

10:20 – 10:35 am   **Break**

10:35 – 12:05 pm   **Reliability and Validity when Using Rubrics** (Mary Allen)

12:05 – 12:50 pm   **Lunch**

12:50 – 1:20 pm   **Developing Quality Evidence** (Amy Driscoll)

1:20 – 2:30 pm   **Engaging Faculty in Assessment** (Mary Allen and Amy Driscoll)

2:30 – 2:45 pm   **Break**

2:45 - 3:30 pm   **Closing the Loop** (Amy Driscoll)

3:30 – 4:50 pm   **Integrating Best Practices into the Design and Reporting of Assessments** (Mary Allen)

4:50 – 5:00 pm   **Implementation Ideas and Insights**

MEETING/EVENTS ROOM FLOOR PLANS

Kellogg West
Conference Center & Hotel

UPPER LEVEL

Conference Rooms

Hillside West
3 | 2 | 1

Hillside Central
3 | 2 | 1

Hillside East
2 | 1

Elev.

Garden Vista

Courtyard Below

Elevator

Down ►

Lobby

H
I
J
K

Dining Room C

Dining Room B

Dining Room A

Balcony

Business Center

Front Desk

Valley Vista

Front Drive

LOWER LEVEL

Hillside Terrace

Auditorium

Poly Vista
1 | 2

Mountain Vista
2 | 3
1 | 4

Court Yard

Exhibit Lounge

RECEPTION DESK

Campus Vista

Elev. Lobby

Up ◄

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

EXECUTIVE BOARD ROOM

3

Kellogg West Conference Center & Hotel | 3801 W. Temple Avenue, Building 76 | Pomona, CA 91768 | 1.800.KWEST.76 or 909.869.2222

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Facilitator Biographies

Assessment 201: Advanced Topics in Assessment

Lead Facilitators

Mary J. Allen

Mary J. Allen, Ph.D. is a consultant in higher education, specializing in assessment and accreditation. She is the former director of the California State University Institute for Teaching & Learning and a professor emerita of Psychology from California State University, Bakersfield. Mary has published books on the assessment of academic programs and general education, and she has offered assessment presentations and workshops at AAHE, AAC&U, SACS, and WASC conferences. She is a sought after speaker, consultant, and workshop presenter and has worked with over 150 colleges, universities, and college systems.
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Amy Driscoll

Amy Driscoll was former director of teaching, learning, and assessment at California State University, Monterey Bay, where she developed an institutional approach to outcomes-based education. Prior to that she served as the director of community/university partnerships at Portland State University, where she initiated community-based learning and community Capstones. She has presented at AAC&U conferences and the National Assessment Institute and has mentored more than 60 institutions in assessment. Her books include *Taking Ownership of Accreditation: Processes That Promote Institutional Improvement and Faculty Engagement* (Driscoll & Cordero de Noriega, 2006), and *From Outcomes-based Assessment to Learner-centered Education* (Driscoll & Wood, 2007)
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Attendee Directory

Attendee Directory

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Kellogg West Conference Center - Pomona, CA
November 18, 2015

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Aligning Direct and Indirect Assessment Strategies with Outcomes

Amy Driscoll

Direct Assessment: Blending Teaching, Learning, and Assessment

Amy Driscoll

2015

Direct and Learner-centered Assessment

- Many traditional examples (tests/exams, cases, projects, performances, essays, tasks, simulations, practicum/internships)
- Signature Assignments
- Portfolios
- Capstones
- Reflections

Signature Assignments: What and How?

- A generic task, problem, case, or project that can be tailored or contextualized in different disciplines or course contexts.
- Signatures are defining characteristics that reveal thinking or practices (Shulman, 2005).
- Signature assignments have the potential to help us know whether student learning reflects "the ways of thinking and doing of disciplinary experts".

Characteristics of Signature Assignments

- Course-embedded assessment
- Well aligned with LO's
- Authentic in terms of process/content, "real world" application
- May include reflection
- Collaboratively designed by faculty

When/Why Signature Assignments Are Appropriate and Useful

- In general education when multiple courses meet common requirements and shared LO's – provides a common data set to enable documentation of general education LO's being met.

Why and When?

When multiple sections of the same course are offered by multiple faculty with varied pedagogy – enables programs to collect common data across the course sections for program evaluation and review at both graduate and undergraduate levels.

Why and When?

- When Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILO's) are met in varied programs and departments across the institution – provides a common data set which enables the institution to determine whether graduates are meeting the ILO's

Why and When?

- For use in a foundational course on a grad or undergrad level, like PSY 500 or Intro to Computer Science to check that students are prepared with prerequisite understandings and skills for success in the courses that follow within the program.

Design Process for Signature Assignments

1. Faculty review one or more of the agreed upon targeted learning outcomes and come to a common interpretation of them.

2. Faculty use the learning outcomes to brainstorm possible and aligned tasks, problems, examples, authentic problems. (these are often suggested within the outcomes)

Taking Apart A Learning Outcome:

- EX. Students analyze a _____ issue from multiple perspectives and form a personal position of agreement/support or action.

Possible tasks:

      Articulate and analyze an issue

      Identify sources of perspectives

      Describe multiple perspectives

      Develop a position statement

Connecting to Contexts

- Kinds of Issues:

sociological	business
educational	scientific
technological	ethical
artistic	historical
economic	international
community	political

Design Process con't

3. First draft of the assignment is intentionally generic (in context) to allow for multiple disciplines and contexts.

4. Assignment is tailored for varied course or disciplinary contexts.

5. All faculty users agree to the use and to collaborative review of student work samples.

6. Faculty engage in conversations about expectations in student work, preferably design a rubric.

Advantages of Signature Assignments

- Promote faculty discussions of student learning, pedagogy, assessment (culture of learning)
- Provides significant common data sets to document program or institutional impact
- Engages students in important learning activities
- Guides pedagogy especially practice for learning
- Has potential for application or transfer to another department or institution for informative comparisons

Disadvantages of Signature Assignments

- Require time for development
- May be translated as rigid or confining of curriculum or pedagogy
- Requires faculty agreement

Practice with Signature Assignments

- LO   Students design management systems that include staffing, budget, evaluation, organization, and strategic plan. NON-PROFIT COMMUNITY STUDIES, EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION
- LO Students develop needs assessments, analyze data, and design community-based responses to the findings. PUBLIC HEALTH, SOCIAL WORK
- LO Students collaborate to produce public art that reflects community context.   ART MEDIA, MULTICULTURAL STUDIES

Portfolios: Making a Difference

- **Clear educational purpose** (not repositories)
- **Students' participation** in selecting contents using faculty selection criteria
- **Regularly evaluated** with established criteria
- Illustration of **growth**
- **Continual updating**
- **Student reflection** with potential for synthesis and metacognition

WHEN to use Portfolios?

- For almost any learning experience at both undergraduate and graduate levels
- Especially appropriate for courses and programs focused on thinking skills and on developing synthesis and metacognition
- For courses and programs with small numbers of students
- For self-designed programs

Advantages of Portfolios

- It helps students and faculty to look at learning holistically – to see connections – to present a composite of different kinds of learning.
- It goes beyond achievement of outcomes and looks at learning over time.
- It encourages students to be actively involved in their learning.

Advantages con't

- It promotes diversity of assessment and can be a rich focus for discussion among students and faculty.
- It provides in-depth information for faculty/staff use in revising courses and programs

Disadvantages of Portfolios

- Portfolios require a great deal of time.
- Portfolios demand careful planning and gradual implementation.
- Contents of portfolios can be an issue in terms of no. of items, length of items, etc.
- Storage of portfolios is also an issue.
- Analysis of portfolios as evidence of program success can be time consuming.

Sources for Portfolio Study

- Cambridge, Cambridge, & Yancey (2009). *Electronic Portfolios 2.0* Stylus Publishing
- T. P. Light, Helen Chen, & John Ittleson. (2012) *Documenting learning in E-portfolios: A guide for college instructors*. Jossey-Bass
- Linda Suskie (2009) Assessing student learning: A common sense guide, 2nd edition. Jossey-Bass   See Chapter 13.

History and Status of Capstones

- Offered or required in ¾ of U. S. baccalaureate institutions
- Discipline-based Capstones are most common format
- Emergence of Capstones as a senior experience in the late 1980's and early 1990's
- Calls for assessment that is synthetic, holistic, interdisciplinary and reflective of national goals
- The Boyer Commission (1998) recommended capstones for higher education curriculum
- Response to the LEAP initiatives to provide transformational experiences

Capstones: What and How?

- Capstones are a summarizing process with both learning and assessment integrated in the project, problem solving, report, etc. (multiple forms); at graduate level in the form of theses
- Capstones are best coordinated, implemented, and evaluated by collaborative groups (all faculty, teams of faculty, employers, community reps, students, alum, etc.)
- Actual Capstones are designed by students with input from multiple directions.

Generic Requirements for a Capstone:

- Arises from program or institutional mission and/or stated program or institution goals
- Shaped in a way that both assesses and extends the learning of program or institution
- Judged or evaluated by a set of outcomes that are aligned with programmatic or institutional goals
- Designed or conducted to be a high-impact practice for student learning***

Requirements for Capstone Formats

- For a programmatic or disciplinary Capstone, the prerequisite is a credible, sustained, and coherent program with a solid core to be reflected in the Capstone
- For an interdisciplinary or institutional Capstone, there must be broad connections between academic majors and the goals/values of the general education program

NOTE: The interdisciplinary Capstone is more challenging for both faculty and students.

Foundational Components of Capstone Course Design

- Intentionality
- Collaboration
- Curricular Fit
- Professional Standards

Structural Decisions that Address Student Experience/Learning

- Functions within distinct cultural and organizational contexts at all levels
- Practical issues like identifying stakeholders, analyzing resources, admissions and entry requirements, course length, enrollment size, and course description

Portland State University Example to demonstrate the decisions.

Capstone Criteria from Washington College

While Capstone formats or approaches may differ, all Capstone courses "will be informed by the following expectations":

- Demonstrated student initiative
- Significant preparatory work
- Active inquiry
- Integration of acquired knowledge and skills
- Culmination of previous academic work (Schermer & Gray, 2012)

UCLA Criteria for Capstones

- ● Must be a creative, inquiry-based learning experience that deepens the student's knowledge and integration of the discipline.

- ● Must be part of an upper-division course of at least 4 units and (preferably) taught by ladder faculty.

- ● May be completed individually or by a group, provided each student's contribution is significant, identifiable, and graded.

- ● Must culminate in a tangible product that can be archived (electronically) by the department or program for three years.

- ● Must be opportunities for students to share capstone projects with peers; this can occur in class or outside of class.

(Lindholm, 2012)

Assessing Student Learning in Capstones: Reminders

- Provide opportunities for self-assessment, peer assessment, and assessment by multiple faculty/staff/community representatives/ employers with shared standards, rubrics, etc.
- Develop simple and iterative progress reporting mechanisms for monitoring work, learning, relationships, engagement, potential for success
- Consider a hierarchical set of activities that incentivize more capable students

(Hauhart & Grahe, 2015, p. 197)

Sources for Capstone Study

- Robert Hauhart & Jon Grahe (2015) *Designing and teaching undergraduate capstone courses*. Jossey-Bass.
- B. Catchings (2004). Capstones and quality: The culminating experience as assessment. *Assessment Update, 16* (1), 6-7.
- G. Roberts & T. Pavlak (2002). Designing the MPA capstone course: A structured-flexibility approach. *Journal of Public Affairs Education, 8* (3), 179-191.

Reflections: What and How

- The reflective process is a major component of learning
- Reflection provides an opportunity for making meaning (with new information, ideas, experiences, skills, etc.)
- May take place individually and/or in community with peers
- May take oral, written, graphic or other forms

Reflection Foci

- **Reflection on the information, curriculum content, topics, experiences** - substantive writing or discussion aimed at processing and revealing understanding
- **Reflection on the learning process itself** – personal – focused on the learner's learning experience with attempts to identify the significance, value, meaning of the experience

Forms of Reflection

- Brief or abbreviated form – one minute paper, muddiest point paper (Angelo & Cross' CATS)
- Intermediate form – extended and ongoing over course or program; passed back and forth with other; primarily journals, learning logs
- Extended form – a component of a portfolio, blends both foci, integrative, may address the learning experiences of one course, program or the entire college experience.

Wlodkowski's "Process Folio"

- Content of learning – what have you learned?

- Context of learning – How does your learning fit in the larger context of life?

- Learning process – What have you learned about how you learned?

(Wlodkowski, 1999)

Principles of Reflection

- **<u>Continuous</u>** – an ongoing coherent process

- **<u>Connected</u>** – integrates past and current experiences, experiences with course content, concepts across curriculum/disciplines, and works to empower learners with knowledge about their learning

Principles con't

- **<u>Challenging</u>** – poses new questions and unfamiliar, even uncomfortable ideas for consideration, while simultaneously providing support
- **<u>Contextualized</u>** – extends to application of knowledge and understandings, may be oral or written.
- The DEAL Model (describe, examine, articulate, and learn) from Ash & Clayton

Resources for Reflection

- Eyler, J., Giles, D., & Schmiede, A. (1996). *A practitioner's guide to reflection in service learning.* Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University
- Fink, D. L. (2003). *Creating significant learning experiences: An integrated approach to designing college courses.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Ash, S.L., & Clayton, P. H. (2009a). Generating, deepening, and documenting learning: The power of critical reflection in applied learning. *Journal of Applied Learning in Higher Education, 1*, 25-48.
- Ash, S. L., & Clayton, P. H. (2009b). *Learning through critical reflection: A tutorial for service-learning students* (instructor's version). Morrisville, NC: East Coast Digital Printing.
- Brooks, E., Harris, E., & Clayton, P. H. (2010). Deepening applied learning: An enhanced case study approach. *Journal of Applied Learning in Higher Education,* 55-76.*
- Wlodkowski, R. (1999). Enhancing adult motivation to learn: A comprehensive guide for teaching all adults. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Indirect Assessment (Probing for Understanding)

Amy Driscoll

Assessment 201

Using Indirect Assessment

- Takes inquiry beyond questions of whether student learned or were successful to WHY? HOW? WHEN?

- Pushes for information about how learning occurred, confidence in learning, students' perceptions of their own learning and success.

- Extends interactions related to and discussions of learning

- Communicates to students that their opinions and issues are important

- Can yield unexpected or unanticipated information.

Common Examples of Indirect Evidence

- Assignment and course grades
- Retention and graduation rates
- Admission rates to other institutions
- Alum perceptions
- Student self-ratings of their learning
- Employer satisfaction
- Awards, honors, scholarships
- Employment rates of grads (including salaries, positions, etc.)

Commonly Used Forms of Indirect Assessment

- Surveys

- Interviews

- Focus Groups

Advice for Using Surveys:

- Determine purpose for survey – goals, issues, inquiry
- Carefully plan for how data/information will be used***
- Determine the population for the survey by identifying the individuals who will have the information being sought
- Sample size will be influenced by type of information needed, use of the information, and population of interest

Con't Advice for Using Surveys

- Select type of survey format that will best provide the intended information (frequency, rating scales, open-ended questions, checklist)
- Carefully design survey questions
  - Avoid confusing or vague wording with clear, straightforward questions
  - Avoid wording that might bias response
  - Allow respondents to not answer questions
  - Watch for order effects (Allen, 1995, 2004)
- Pilot test the survey before use

Advice for Using Interviews:

- Determine purpose for interview – goals, issues, inquiry
- Be clear about how you will use the information/data from the interviews
- Select kind – structured (SI), semi-structured (SSI) , or unstructured (UI)
- Develop a brief introductory protocol to explain purpose, structure, etc. and use uniformly for each interview

Con't Advice for Using Interviews

- Use care to not indicate your personal views
- Plan careful questions and do not interpret the questions (SI)
- For probing, begin with topics and questions, and allow the interviewee to vary content and flow (SSI)
- Determine no. of interviewees using the criteria of "sufficiency" and "saturation" (Seidman, 2006).
- Plan for recording that is non-obtrusive

Advice for Using Focus Groups:

- Determine purpose for focus groups – goals, issues, inquiry
- Be clear about how you will use the data/information
- Select a representative sample of the group whom you want to study or who can be helpful in understanding a topic or responding to questions
- Plan to conduct more than one focus group

Con't Advice or Using Focus Groups:

- Carefully develop a protocol with questions that are both broad and focused
- Begin the focus group with a general, broad and easy question to start the flow
- Select a site without interruptions but with comfortable seating arrangements
- Plan for recording that is non-obtrusive

Advice for Using Surveys, Interviews, Focus Groups

- Collaborate with professional faculty colleagues
- Consult with IR colleagues
- Pilot test or ask others to review questions before use
- Attend to schedule issues

Helpful References

- Allen, M. (2004). *Assessing academic programs in higher education*. Bolton, MA: Anker Publishing.

- Schuh, J. H. (2009*). Assessment methods for student affairs*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

- Seidman, I. (2006). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences*. Williston, VT: Teachers College Press.

- Suskie, L. (2009*). Assessing student learning: A common sense guide, 2nd edition*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

ALIGNING STUDENT EVIDENCE WITH LO'S, INQUIRY, CURRICULUM

➢CONTEXTUAL ALIGNMENT

➢CRITERIA TO CONSIDER

➢BLOOM AS A GUIDE

Assessment 201   Amy Driscoll 2015

CONTEXTUAL ALIGNMENT:
Designing Student Evidence to Align with Institution, Students, and Faculty

- Reflect on purpose/description of assessment
- Develop approaches to make assessment relevant, meaningful, authentic, and useful to students.
- Use a paradigm for assessment consistently across the institution
- Reflect on your own learning style, preferences

Criteria for Student Evidence that Supports Student Success

- Evidence of student learning respects varied learning strengths, interests, needs (Bodi, 1990)
- **Evidence of student learning is well matched to level of learning outcome (Driscoll & Wood, 2007)**
- Evidence of analytical skills, creativity, resourcefulness, empathy, and ability to apply knowledge and transfer skills from one situation to another (AACU, 2003)

Criteria for Student Evidence con't

- Replicate the kind of challenges adults face in the workplace, in civic affairs, or in their personal lives (Wiggins & McTighe, 1998)
- Provide data about our students with measures that are "as fair as possible for as many students as possible" (Suskie, 2000)
- **Responds to questions that faculty and others care about.**

PRACTICE ALIGNMENT

- Select direct and/or indirect assessments that align with student learning outcomes.

- Select direct and/or indirect assessments that align with inquiry focus (questions that people care about).

- Ideally triangulate the assessments

PRACTICE GROUP #1

- ILO Students use technology to locate, access, and evaluate information from multiple sources.
- INQUIRY

  What are the most common sources used by students? How confident are students about the 3 processes of the ILO? Can the ILO be achieved by online instruction? Does the learning transfer to other courses?

PRACTICE GROUP #2

- CLO Students conduct research, develop and make an oral presentation to multiple audiences using technology support
- INQUIRY
  - Are there student differences that influence success of students meeting the CLO (age, race, experience, gender, etc.)? When students observe each other's presentations, is their learning extended?
  - Do students find value in achieving the outcome? What value?

PRACTICE GROUP #3

- PLO Students develop and use strategies for leadership in project management.
- INQUIRY
  - Is there agreement in individual student self-assessment and those of their peers? What leadership strategies appear to be the most difficult and the most often used? Do employers rate the strategies useful? Not useful?

PRACTICE GROUP #4

- PLO   Students identify works of art by their historical period and describe influences of the culture on the subject, form, and practices.
- INQUIRY
  - To what extent do students use professional language? What periods appear to be better known and understood? Is there a significant difference in the discussions of 2nd and 3rd year students?

PRACTICE GROUP #5

- PLO Students conduct a community scan to determine assets, needs, interests, and cultural traditions, and sensitivities with implications for planning health education programming.
- PLO   Students design and implement a community health education program in collaboration with citizens of the community using community scan information

PRACTICE GROUP #5 con't

- INQUIRY
  - Are the most successful of the programs (determined by rubric use) safe, traditional or creative, risk taking approaches?
  - When students complete their design and implementation, what aspects of their learning do they wish they could strengthen?
  - How do community members rate their experiences? How would they change or improve the processes?

REFLECTIONS

- The value of collaboration in designing assessment (diversity of thinking)
- The power of triangulation in producing evidence
- The role of inquiry in designing assessment
- The importance of aligning assessment with the intended outcomes

Aligning Student Evidence with Learning Outcomes

- LO's with KNOWLEDGE expectations: define, repeat, list, name, label, memorizes, records, recalls, listens, identifies, matches, recites, selects, draws, cites, recognizes, indicates, enumerates, reproduces

- Evidence: definitions test, matching test, list key ideas, label diagram, descriptions

Aligning Student Evidence with Learning Outcomes

- LO's with COMPREHENSIION expectations: restates, describes, explains, tells, discusses, recognizes, reviews, expresses, reports, estimates, paraphrases, documents, generalizes, summarizes, discusses, classifies, traces

- Evidence: Discuss readings; Report of an observation; summaries; Explain a theory.

Aligning Student Evidence with Learning Outcomes

- LO's with APPLICATION expectations: computes, demonstrates, shows, translates, solves, employs, constructs, dramatizes, interprets, applies, uses
- Evidence: presentations, uses strategies in situations, problem solving, uses formulas or models, uses equipment,

Aligning Student Evidence with Learning Outcomes

- LO's with ANALYSIS expectations: dissects, differentiates, calculates, contrasts, debates, solves, surveys, categorizes, prioritizes, inventories
- Evidence: analysis of theories, research or philosophy; debate; assembling equipment; describing connections; compare and contrast; case studies; problem solving

Aligning Student Evidence with Learning Outcomes

- LO's with EVALUATION expectations: concludes, criticizes, justifies, supports, appraises, discriminates, decides, assesses, rates
- Evidence: Rate items and rationales; develop an argumentation; self critique and peer critique, evaluate research, compare models; use a rubric to critique work.

Aligning Student Evidence with Learning Outcomes

- LO's with SYNTHESIS expectations: creates, composes, formulates, constructs, manages, invents, produces, hypothesizes, speculates, facilitates, negotiates, structures
- Evidence: design plans, organizes meeting, create new model, rewrites history, produces film, invents tool, negotiates agreements; design a rubric.

Reliability and Validity when Using Rubrics

Mary Allen

Reliability and Validity when Using Rubrics

When we use rubrics to score evidence we have two basic concerns:
1. Are the scores valid? Do the scores reflect what we want to measure?
2. Are the scores reliable? Do raters agree on which score(s) should be given each artifact (inter-rater reliability)?

Valid results are meaningful. Reliable results are consistent.

Broken Clock Example
Imagine your clock is stuck at 10:00. Is this a reliable measure of what time it is? Is it valid?

How to Generate Higher Reliability and Validity when Doing Assessment
- Validity is threatened if faculty collect poor evidence, have an unrepresentative sample, use a poor rubric, or don't use their rubric well. This means that we have to be careful about each stage in the assessment process because we want good evidence, a good sample, a good rubric, and reviewers who carefully apply the rubric when they assess the evidence.
- Inter-rater reliability is threatened if reviewers do not apply the rubric in a consistent way. The purpose of calibration is to increase the reliability of the judgments, so we have confidence in them. If calibration works well, each piece of evidence would receive virtually identical ratings if scored by any of the calibrated raters.

Your Task
You and your colleagues are teaching a course on rubrics, and you agree to collaborate when providing feedback to students. You agree on the feedback rubric, and you plan to aggregate results to assess the impact of your instruction.
Before you begin scoring these rubrics, you are going to be calibrated.

And Now, the Calibration:

Outcome: Students who complete our program can effectively lead collaborative groups to accomplish a task.

The Evidence. The students' homework requires that they develop a two-dimensional analytic rubric that assesses the outcome dealing with Leadership. The students' rubric should fit evidence collected in this way**:** The rubric will be applied by faculty who observe a student-led group with six members that must complete a task in 20 minutes. The group will be given a task of sufficient complexity that multiple solutions are possible, although some solutions are better

than others; and faculty believe that the group should be able to reach a conclusion within 20 minutes.

The Feedback Rubric.
Here is the rubric that you will apply to the students' rubrics to provide them feedback and to learn about the impact of your instruction:

Rubric for Assessing the Quality of Assessment Rubrics

Dimension	1 Unacceptable	2 Marginal	3 Acceptable	4 Exemplary
Validity of Rubric Dimensions	Both rubric dimensions are unreasonable for the outcome being assessed; they do not relate to the outcome being assessed	Rubric includes one or more dimensions that are trivial (that would be near the "bottom of the list" of possible dimensions)	Both rubric dimensions are non-trivial and they reasonably focus on the outcome being assessed, but at least one of the dimensions would not be near the "top of the list" of possible dimensions	Both rubric dimensions clearly focus on major aspects of the outcome being assessed. The dimensions are at or near the "top of the list" of possible dimensions
Clarity for Decision-Making	The rubric's decision-making criteria are seriously flawed; they lead to ratings that do not make sense or they provide insufficient information to make judgments	The rubric's decision-making criteria are ambiguous about how to decide between levels	The rubric's decision-making criteria help us make reasonable distinctions between rating levels, but a little more detail would be helpful to give us more confidence in our judgments	The rubric's decision-making criteria allow us to distinguish among rating levels with confidence

Working only by yourself, rate the Validity and Clarity of the three rubrics on the next page.

As you assess the three rubrics, remember the outcome and the assessment process and give each example two ratings based on the above rubric: one for Validity and one for Clarity for Decision-Making. Your ratings should be 1, 2, 3, or 4 (1 for Unacceptable, 2 for Marginal, 3 for Acceptable, and 4 for Exemplary).

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Leadership Rubric 1 Rating for Example 1: Validity ____ Clarity ____

Dimension	1 Unacceptable	2 Marginal	3 Acceptable	4 Exemplary
Focus on Task	Assigned task is not addressed	The group regularly strays from the assigned task	The group occasionally strays from the assigned task	The group rarely strays from the assigned task
Speech Volume	Leader routinely speaks too softly to be heard	Leader sometimes speaks too softly to be heard	Leader can be heard, but sometimes group members must strain to hear him/her	Leader speaks in a voice loud enough to be easily heard by group members

Leadership Rubric 2 Rating for Example 2: Validity ____ Clarity ____

Dimension	1 Unacceptable	2 Marginal	3 Acceptable	4 Exemplary
Accomplishes Task	Group fails to reach a conclusion about how to accomplish the task	Group offers a conclusion, but their conclusion fails to adequately accomplish the task	Group reaches a reasonable conclusion that accomplishes the task	Group reaches a conclusion that accomplishes the task in a sophisticated or creative way
Engages Group Members	Leader is insulting to one or more group members	Leader does not insult anyone, but does not communicate with one or more group members	Leader encourages all group members and acknowledges what they say	Leader encourages and shows respect for all group members, listens actively, and encourages collaboration

Leadership Rubric 3 Rating for Example 3: Validity ____ Clarity ____

Dimension	1 Unacceptable	2 Marginal	3 Acceptable	4 Exemplary
Commands Respect	Leader is ignored by group members	Leader allows group members to criticize how the group is being led	Leader requires group members to raise their hands before speaking	Leader decisively reaches a conclusion and does not allow group members to disagree with him/her
Speed	Decision is made in 10 or more minutes	Decision is made in 5-10 minutes	Decision is made in 3-5 minutes	Decision is made in 0-3 minutes

Ratings Summary

Example	Validity Ratings				Clarity Ratings			
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
Example 1								
Example 2								
Example 3								

Our goal now is to calibrate by reaching consensus on what the scores should be.

After the calibration is completed, we would assess the students' rubrics. Here are two ways to organize this assessment:
1. Two independent readers/product
2. Paired readers

Calibration Basic Steps

1. Provide an orientation to the learning outcome, rubric, evidence, and assessment task.
2. Each participant scores exemplars that vary in quality. If all are of the same quality, the group will not discuss how to discriminate other levels of quality.
3. Reach consensus on what the exemplars' scores should be.

4

Group Orientation and Calibration Script for Assessing PLOs

1. Describe the purpose for the review, stressing how it fits into program assessment plans. Explain that the purpose is to assess the program, not individual students or faculty, and describe ethical guidelines, including respect for confidentiality and privacy.
2. Describe the nature of the products that will be reviewed, briefly summarizing how they were obtained.
3. Describe the scoring rubric and its categories. Explain how it was developed.
4. Explain that readers should rate each dimension of an analytic rubric separately (to avoid the "halo effect"), and they should apply the criteria without concern for how often each category is used (to avoid "grading on a curve" and norm-referenced interpretation).
5. Give each reviewer a copy of several student products that are exemplars of different levels of performance. Ask each reviewer to independently apply the rubric to each of these products, and show them how to record their ratings.
6. Once everyone is done, collect everyone's ratings and display them so everyone can see the degree of agreement.
7. Guide the group in a discussion of their ratings. There will be differences, and this discussion is important to establish standards. Attempt to reach consensus on the most appropriate rating for each of the products being examined by inviting people who gave different ratings to explain their judgments. Usually consensus is possible, but sometimes a split decision is developed, e.g., the group may agree that a product is a "3-4" split because it has elements of both categories.
8. Distribute the products and begin the data collection using either independent or paired readers.
9. If you accumulate data as they come in and can easily present a summary to the group at the end of the reading, you might end the meeting with a discussion of five questions:
   a. Are results sufficiently reliable?
   b. What do the results mean? Are we satisfied with the extent of student learning?
   c. Who needs to know the results?
   d. If we're disappointed with the results, how might we close the loop?
   e. How might the assessment process, itself, be improved?

Pick a partner and role play a calibration session to assess writing skills in a sample of capstone projects. Use your own words, rather than read the script. Before you begin, decide if you are going to use independent or paired scorers.

5

Inter-Rater Reliability

- Correlation Between Paired Readers
- Discrepancy Index

Example of Reliability Coefficients

Say you use an analytic rubric with 3 dimensions (organization, accuracy, and writing style) to assess writing quality in eight artifacts*. Here are the scores for the two raters who scored each artifact:

Artifact	Organization		Accuracy		Writing Style	
	Rater 1	Rater 2	Rater 1	Rater 2	Rater 1	Rater 2
1	1	2	1	1	3	3
2	2	2	2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3	3	1	1
4	4	3	4	3	4	4
5	1	3	3	4	4	3
6	4	3	2	2	2	2
7	3	3	3	3	3	3
8	4	2	3	3	2	2
inter-rater reliability	correlation=.27		correlation=.83		correlation=.95	
Discrepancy of 0	38%		75%		88%	
Discrepancy of 1	38%		25%		12%	
Discrepancy of 2	25%		0%		0%	
Discrepancy of 3	0%		0%		0%	

*I use 8 artifacts here just to keep the data simple, so you can later analyze the raw data on your own to verify that your calculations are correct. I would not calculate these statistics for fewer than 30 artifacts, and, in general, I recommend that 50-80 artifacts be assessed so you can have more confidence in your conclusions.

How reliable were these ratings?

6

One Way to Calculate the Reliability Statistics: Use Excel.

In an Excel spreadsheet rows are numbered and columns are lettered. Below are the data for the eight artifacts summarized on the previous page. Each cell is identified by its column letter and row number. For example, the score in Cell A1 is a 1 and the score in Cell E7 is a 3.

Artifact Number	A Org. Rater 1	B Org. Rater 2	C Org. Diff.	D Accur. Rater 1	E Accur. Rater 2	F Accur. Diff.	G Style Rater 1	H Style Rater 2	I Style Diff.
1	1	2	1	1	1	0	3	3	0
2	2	2	0	2	2	0	2	2	0
3	3	3	0	3	3	0	1	1	0
4	4	3	1	4	3	1	4	4	0
5	1	3	2	3	4	1	4	3	1
6	4	3	1	2	2	0	2	2	0
7	3	3	0	3	3	0	3	3	0
8	4	2	2	3	3	0	2	2	0

To correlate columns A and B select Statistical Functions (or Insert Function) from the Formula Menu (depending on the version of Excel you're using), select CORREL and in the boxes type A1:A8 and B1:B8 to identify the cells ("Arrays") in the two columns that will be correlated. Excel will give you the correlation. Round it to two decimal places.

The "Diff" columns contain the absolute value of the size of the difference (i.e., the difference, ignoring sign). Entries in these columns are used to calculate the discrepancies.

7

Developing Quality Evidence

Amy Driscoll

Quality Evidence:

Principles, Characteristics, and Recommendations

Assessment 201   Amy Driscoll 2015

Principles of Quality Evidence:

- Evidence is directly related to the knowledge, skills, and values of the program, reflects the program's curriculum, and what has been taught throughout the program. (Check Alignment Grids, Missions)

- Evidence involves multiple judgments (more than one faculty, more than one kind of evidence)of student achievement of the LO's, of student performance, of student work.

Principles of Quality Evidence con't

- Evidence provides information on multiple dimensions of student performance (Exs. accuracy, creativity, comprehensiveness, etc)

- Evidence reflects cumulative or iterative learning and makes use of multiple and scaffolded sources, methods, and approaches

Principles of Quality Evidence con't

- Evidence is verifiable and representative of important curriculum and LO's.

- Evidence is actionable, provides information to guide revisions or to affirm effectiveness and student success.

Example of Principles of Quality Evidence

Assessment of Social Work Students and Program

1. Capstone aligned with PLO's (includes disciplinary content, communication, ethics, and information literacy)
2. Faculty/Employer Reviews of Capstones
3. . Internship Evaluators and Employer Focus Groups
4. Alumnae Survey Feedback Surveys focused on PLO's
5. Survey of Graduates in Social Work Masters' Program

Characteristics of Exemplary Assessment Tasks (Leading to Quality Evidence)

- •Valid
- •Coherent
- •Authentic
- •Rigorous/Challenging
- •Engaging

Characteristics con't

- Respectful
- Responsive
- Intentional and purposeful
- Collaboratively developed and reviewed

Designing and Using Quality Evidence: Recommendations

- Use a process of inquiry for evidence selection
- Focus on questions and issues that are most important (students, faculty, institution)
- Use evidence to generate dialogue, reflection and new questions
- Think in terms of using data for long-term improvement

Practice with Colleagues

- Brainstorm questions related to courses, programs, and institutional learning
- Assess the importance of each question
- Design and align an assessment task to respond to one or more questions

WASC | EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS
Senior College and University Commission

Engaging Faculty in Assessment

Mary Allen

Amy Driscoll

4 C's of FACULTY ENGAGEMENT

Assessment 201 2015

C#1 Cardinal Rule for Engaging Faculty:

"LISTEN AND AFFIRM"

Listen to and acknowledge faculty reasons for resisting assessment. Practice authentic empathic responses to faculty's legitimate concerns and resistance.

C#2 Consider the following when communicating and interacting with faculty to engage in assessment

- Context in which faculty engage with students and with each other
- Culture in which faculty engage with students and with each other
- Language of faculty work with students

C#3 Commended Practices

- Connect assessment to faculty comfort zone

- Framing assessment in the commitments that faculty hold (Exs. Student success, student assets, student diversity, etc.)
- Respect faculty curricular authority and ownership
- Facilitate both formal developmental opportunities and informal spaces for faculty to engage with, learn about, and enact assessment
- Create mechanisms to share internal best practices and success stories
- Build on disciplinary expertise and perspective
- Allow for flexibility within a framework
- Embed assessment in the work faculty are already doing (Kuh, Ikenberry et al, 2015, pp. 104-107)

C#4 Cautions

- Build community to avoid isolation
- Connect to other initiatives
- Watch for "assessment fatigue"
- Consider a moratorium

Assessment 201
November 18, 2015
Engaging Faculty in Assessment Homework
Mary Allen

On the attached 3 pages are 28 ways I have seen campuses engage faculty in assessment. This assignment has three steps. Please complete all three steps and bring this document with you to the Assessment 201 workshop.

Step 1.

As you read each idea, think about your own campus. In the margin make one of these marks:

+ My campus already does this, and we do it well.

✓ This is a good idea. My campus should consider doing it or doing it better.

0 This idea is not relevant to my campus.

Step 2.

Identify 2 or 3 of these ideas that you would like to discuss at the Assessment 201 workshop on November 18. Perhaps you have specific questions about them, perhaps you want to learn about other campus' experiences using them, or perhaps you would like to brainstorm with colleagues from other campuses on how to make them happen.

Ideas I'd like to discuss at the Assessment 201 workshop:

1.

2.

3.

Step 3.

Bring this assignment with you to the Assessment 201 workshop so you can look at it during our discussion.

Engaging Faculty in Assessment

Approach to Assessment

1. <u>Focus on the students</u>. The purpose of assessment is to improve students' learning, not to get accreditors or administrators off your back. It is a best practice in higher education. Virtually all faculty are sincerely interested in their students' learning. If you focus on compliance, faculty will learn that assessment is done for external reasons rather than to help their students learn more.

2. <u>Faculty in control</u>. Faculty are in charge of every step in the assessment process—they determine the outcomes, align their curricula with the outcomes, decide on the evidence, set the criteria and standards, and decide how they will close the loop. Allow faculty in different disciplines flexibility to use assessment strategies and tools that make sense to them, and provide flexible, consultative support to aid their decision-making. A one-size-fits-all, rigid approach is likely to alienate many faculty.

3. <u>It's not personnel review</u>. Assessment results are for programs, and individual faculty names should not be associated with assessment findings. If assessment and personnel review are combined, faculty will not want to participate, they may feel personally threatened, and they will be tempted to submit only positive results.

4. <u>Include adjunct faculty</u>. Some programs rely heavily on adjunct faculty to staff their courses. Adjunct faculty who regularly teach in the program should be part of the assessment team. Campuses may have to build assessment into adjunct faculty contracts or pay them additional stipends for this work.

5. <u>Grading and assessment</u>. Consider integrating assessment rubrics and assessment into courses to provide feedback to students as well as program faculty. This eliminates the need to review student work twice (once for grading and once for assessment) and should result in better alignment between the curriculum and learning outcomes.

6. <u>Integrate assessment into Program Review</u>. Educational effectiveness and the improvement of learning should receive considerable attention in program review. Program review should include consideration of possible revision of the outcomes, curriculum map, and assessment plan; examination of what was learned in assessments conducted over the program review cycle and the impact of closing the loop; and requests for evidence-based budgetary support for improving learning.

Infrastructure and Support

7. <u>Faculty expertise</u>. Faculty are accustomed to doing things with expertise. Provide on-going training and support to help faculty develop assessment expertise. Help faculty identify efficient, cost-effective ways to do assessment without sacrificing the quality of their findings. Consider providing support in multiple ways, such as an assessment center, a handbook, a website with useful examples and links, workshops, and consultation. Consider creating faculty learning communities to explore assessment topics. Consider offering a Certificate in Assessment to faculty who actively participate in learning about it, such as faculty who complete a series of assessment-related workshops.

8. <u>Formal campus support for assessment</u>. Have a formal assessment center, provide funds for its operations, and encourage faculty to use it as a confidential, non-threatening support center focused on helping them do efficient, quality assessment. Many campuses create assessment centers shortly before an accreditation visit, then dismantle them after

2

accreditation is achieved. This sends the wrong message about the importance of assessment and is likely to result in episodic assessment that matches the accreditation cycle. Sustaining assessment requires on-going training and support.

9. <u>Assessment services</u>. Not all faculty are comfortable doing human-subjects research or handling data. Consider providing technical services for data input and analysis, focus groups, surveys, closing-the-loop decision-making, etc. An active faculty development/assessment center can be especially useful for this.

10. <u>Assessment Grants</u>. Consider funding pilot assessment studies, perhaps with an expectation that learning will be shared with other departments. Grants might include summer stipends for faculty, salary for student assistants, travel to training events, external consultants, or needed materials.

11. <u>Celebrate and share assessment studies</u>. Host an annual Assessment Faire in which departments share assessment procedures, rubrics, and results. Encourage faculty to adapt and share others' ideas. Administrators should attend and demonstrate that they value this work.

12. <u>Time</u>. Consider providing release time or summer support to key faculty, support for department retreats, or reducing other demands on faculty time. Sometimes campuses offer some release time to designated "assessment coordinators" in each department, and these coordinators meet periodically to share ideas or receive special training.

13. <u>Feedback on annual assessment reports</u>. Relevant administrators and/or committees review the reports and provide useful feedback. If reports are ignored or just put in a file drawer or on a website, faculty will learn that they are not important and that they are done out of compliance, rather than because they're a good idea. Why should they put time into a product that no one reads? Friendly, constructive feedback and support can help programs develop more meaningful and efficient assessment processes, helping faculty get more value from doing assessment.

14. <u>Responsibilities</u>. Include assessment in job descriptions for faculty, staff, and administrators. This includes deans and department chairs or designated department assessment coordinators, as well as adjunct faculty.

Culture

15. <u>Outcomes-based education</u>. Expect outcomes in syllabi for all courses, including proposed, new courses; and integrate assessment planning into the process of creating and approving new programs. Courses and programs should be systematically organized around outcomes. Campus stakeholders should be accustomed to thinking about and talking about learning outcomes.

16. <u>Conversations about teaching and learning</u>. Assessment is more natural when faculty are accustomed to talking about teaching and learning and trying out new ideas in their courses. A campus that nurtures these conversations and activities sets the stage for meaningful assessment. This generally requires an active faculty development program.

17. <u>Listen to faculty</u>. What are their concerns about assessment? Acknowledge that assessment takes time, especially at the beginning, but this is time well spent because having good outcomes, a quality curriculum map, and a quality multi-year assessment plan allows them to develop meaningful, manageable assessment systems that can be sustained.

Incentives

18. <u>Campus recognition and reward systems</u>. Give credit for leadership and engagement in assessment. Explicitly include assessment in personnel review guidelines and recognize people who have done exceptional assessment work. Many campuses have "Teacher of the Year" or "Researcher of the Year" awards. How about an "Assessment Leader of the Year" award? How about an annual luncheon honoring those who have done extraordinary work? How about administrators publicly praising individuals who have done outstanding work at public forums, such as School or College meetings? Vocal, public praise goes a long way.

19. <u>Budgeting</u>. Integrate assessment and program review into the budgeting and planning process. Administrators should set aside funds to support needs documented in assessment studies and program reviews. Department requests for funding should be tied to needs demonstrated by empirical evidence. This shows that assessment is an essential part of campus decision-making (the "culture of evidence").

20. <u>Assessment as scholarship</u>. Encourage faculty to engage in the scholarship of teaching, learning, and assessment (SOTLA). Journals in almost every field are eager to publish well-documented studies. This may require adding explicit recognition of SOTLA to faculty review criteria.

21. <u>Continuing education credit</u>. If relevant and reasonable, provide continuing education credit to faculty for participating in assessment workshops or activities. This would be particularly helpful for adjunct and regular faculty with licenses that require continuing education credits.

22. <u>Integrate assessment into flex days</u>. If your campus requires faculty to participate in flex day activities (paid workdays when no classes are in session), allow them to use this time to plan, implement, or discuss assessment studies.

23. <u>Payment for extra service</u>. While faculty may be expected to assess their own discipline's programs, consider paying them for assessing college-wide programs, such as GE. An easy way to pay them is to give them a campus debit card (if your campus uses them), an Amazon.com card (if you can order them through your campus procurement procedures), or funds they can use to support professional travel or supplies. Actual stipends are a lot of paperwork on most campuses, and, after tax withholding, are smaller than we expect.

Administrators

24. <u>Communicate the importance of assessment</u> in public forums and communications with campus stakeholders. Integrate assessment into your vision of educational effectiveness. Support and celebrate improvements in student learning.

25. <u>Speak the language</u>. Leading assessment requires that administrators and assessment leaders understand what assessment is. What are outcomes? How are they useful? What are curriculum maps? How are they useful? What does a quality assessment plan, rubric, assessment study, or assessment report look like? Faculty get turned off to assessment if they get ambiguous information or conflicting advice from campus leaders or if they see their administrators requiring something that they don't understand, themselves.

26. <u>Trust</u>. Faculty must be able to trust that a weak assessment finding will not jeopardize their program. If they fear that their program might be under threat if they find a problem, they will be tempted to only examine easy-to-achieve outcomes. Reward departments for solving problems, rather than punish them for identifying them. Faculty need to hear this from administrators.

27. <u>Provide funds</u> to support the institutionalization of an on-going assessment infrastructure.

28. <u>Explicitly recognize assessment contributions</u> when you make personnel decisions.

4

Closing the Loop

Amy Driscoll

"CLOSING THE LOOP"
(Taking Action Using Assessment Information)

STEP ONE: PREPARING FOR THE ASSESSMENT CYCLE

Design exemplary assessment tasks that provide important information
Design assessment that provides quality evidence
Whenever possible, include direct and indirect evidence and triangulate the data

STEP TWO: PROBE THE DATA - ENGAGE IN COLLABORATIVE INQUIRY

Continue information gathering (rubrics? assessment design? Etc.)
Discuss possible reasons for the data
     What factors are responsible for the findings?
     What explanations are there for the findings?
Ideally review both direct and indirect data
Check in with involved students, faculty, etc.
Consider whether more data is needed before making decisions

PRACTICE SCENARIO A.

Assessment Data: Students' Critical Thinking Skills in Business Management

Senior capstone projects	High ratings in critical thinking
Senior self-ratings of critical thinking	Med ratings in critical thinking
Employers' ratings of critical thinking	Low ratings in critical thinking
Alumnae ratings of critical thinking	Low ratings in critical thinking

*All four ratings used the same scale of critical thinking skills.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS TO PROBE DATA:

What critical thinking skills were rated?

Were the actual critical thinking skills demonstrated in capstones related to the critical thinking desired by employers?

Were the critical thinking LO's the same for all groups?

What kind of situations required critical thinking in employment settings?

What kind of situations were alumnae experiencing for their use of critical thinking skills?

Other questions???

STEP THREE: CONSIDER AND CREATE POSSIBLE ACTIONS

Consider multiple perspectives (students', faculty, employer, alums), multiple levels of possible action (course, program, institutional), and multiple foci (pedagogy, curriculum, assessment)

Involve employers in pedagogy and curriculum review/planning of program courses and Capstones planning and evaluation.
Be sure that students are able to identify critical thinking skills (meta-analysis)
Align curriculum and pedagogy with real life situations from employers.
Involve students in iterative progress checks on their development of critical thinking skills.
Engage faculty in collaborative definition and articulation of critical thinking skills and LO's.

STEP FOUR: PLAN FOR NEXT CYCLE OF CLOSING THE LOOP

Schedule actions such as curriculum changes, programmatic sequence, etc.
Implement changes or additions and associated assessment
Schedule data collection after a semester/quarter or year
Analyze the area of curriculum in student evidence for effectiveness of change

PRACTICE SCENARIO B.

Assessment Data: Students' Ethical Reasoning Across Majors
        The ILO Assessment Committee worked during the summer to design a signature assignment that could be used across campus to assess ethical reasoning. The assignment consisted of three mini-cases of different ethical dilemmas, and for each program, the context varied and reflected the discipline. During the academic year, the assignment was used in all of the courses that focused on ethical reasoning. When the assignment data was analyzed, the average score across programs was 3.8-4.2 out of 5 for the first two cases but the average score for the third case was 2.4 out of 5.

What are three questions you would ask?

What are the first two steps you would take?

CATEGORIES OF "CLOSING THE LOOP ACTIONS"

Celebrate and/or affirm that a practice, course, program is effective in producing student
    learning, and that students are successful

Determine that there is a gap or weakness in the program that can be improved

Make decisions about effectiveness of the program, curriculum, pedagogy

Make changes in pedagogy, curriculum, assessment, and programs overall

Determine whether the assessment is aligned, appropriate or relevant and if needed, revise

Consider quality of data, analysis, etc.

EXAMPLES: Phillips Graduate University, Ethics LO's
     University of San Francisco, Psychology and Speech Departments
``   Zayad University

"CLOSING THE LOOP" PRACTICE EXAMPLES
Practice with Step Two through Four– be creative, scholarly, and collaborative!

EXAMPLE #1
Available Data:

Student Technology Projects (Signature Assigns)	Ratings – low to average
Student Self Ratings of Technology Expertise	Ratings - low to average
Employers' Evaluations of Technology Expertise	Ratings - low to average
Alumnae Self Ratings of Technology Expertise	Ratings - average to high

*same rating scale is used for all ratings

EXAMPLE #2
Available Data :

Student Final Exams in Social Work	Ratings -	excellent scores
Student Final Projects in Social Work		average ratings
Internship Evaluations		good scores
Employer Ratings		high satisfaction
Graduate School Ratings		average scores

EXAMPLE #3
Available Data:

1sr Year Student Ratings of College Experience	Ratings – high satisfactory
1st year Student Interviews of College Experience	satisfactory
Retention rate of returning students after 1st year	below satisfactory

EXAMPLE #4
Available Data:

Program Review Data for Psychology (student feedback)	Ratings – exemplary
Student retention rate	satisfactory
Graduation rate	satisfactory to low
Employer satisfaction	exempla

EXAMPLE #5
Available Data:

Institutional retention rate	Ratings -	Satisfactory
Graduation rate		Satisfactory
Satisfaction of graduates		Satisfactory
Senior Projects/Capstones		Satisfactory

EXAMPLE #6
Available Data;

Nursing Seniors Clinical Evaluations	Ratings-	Satisfactory
Nursing Seniors Coursework Exams		Excellent
Nursing Seniors Self-Assessment		Good
Nursing Seniors Graduation Interviews		Satisfactory

*Some common items in all rating scales

Integrating Best Practices into the Design and Reporting of Assessments

Mary Allen

Integrating Best Practices into the Design and Reporting of Assessments

Uses of the Annual Assessment Report

1. Provide on-going documentation of assessment efforts. These records will be useful to department faculty, department chairs, and assessment coordinators to ensure continuity and to understand why changes have been made. When outcomes are revisited, the same procedures can be used if they worked well in the past.
2. Provide feedback to the program on the quality of their assessment work. An individual or team can review the reports, recognize assessments that are done well, and provide follow-up assistance to departments that are having difficulties.
3. Tie assessment to budgeting. If deadlines are established to inform budgeting decisions, assessment-based budgetary requests can be integrated into decision-making.
4. Provide data that can be aggregated across departments to assess ILOs or to identify issues that go beyond individual departments. Reviewers who examine multiple reports can identify issues that could be addressed more broadly, such as campus need for a writing center, ESL student support, or a faculty workshop on teaching critical thinking skills.
5. Use in accreditation. Self-study writers can integrate information from the reports to document assessment activities. Accreditation visiting teams can analyze the reports to verify that programs have effective, sustainable assessment systems in place.

Review of Annual Report Examples

You are going to review three sample reports, and your task is to give balanced, useful feedback. Assume that each of these programs graduates 150-200 students/year. To keep this exercise simple, each report focuses on only one learning outcome.

For each report, what would you **praise** and what **constructive criticism** would you provide for each of the following dimensions?

1. **Overall Report Quality**: Is the report clearly written and reasonably complete? Based on the report, can you understand and evaluate what was done? Are important details missing?
2. **Quality of the Evidence**: Did they collect reasonable evidence in reasonable ways? Was the sample representative and reasonably sized?
3. **Assessment of the Evidence**: Did they do it well? Were readers calibrated? Were assessments reliable?
4. **Use of the Results**: Did they use a reasonable decision process and reach reasonable conclusions about student mastery of the outcome and how to close the loop, if needed?

Program 1

We examined Outcome 3, Writing in the Discipline, using 10 papers written in our Capstone course. Several instructors who teach this course volunteered to apply the AAC&U VALUE Writing rubric to some of their students while grading, and they submitted students' scores to the Assessment Coordinator who combined their results. (The rubric has five dimensions that were rated from *1* to *4*, so the lowest possible total score was *5*, and the highest possible score was *20*.) We also collected these students' self-ratings of their writing skills. After summarizing the results, the Assessment Coordinator was satisfied that our students write well. Students agreed.

Table 1 is a summary of our findings based on the Writing Rubric.

Table 1	
Score	**Percentage**
18-20	10
15-17	50
10-14	30
5-9	10

Table 2 is a summary of the students' self-ratings.

Table 2	
Self-Rating	**Percentage**
1. I have serious problems communicating in writing.	0
2. I need to improve my writing to communicate well.	0
3. I write fairly well.	20
4. I am an excellent writer.	80

YOUR REVIEW: What praise and constructive criticism would you offer?

1. Overall Report:

2. Evidence:

3. Assessment of the Evidence:

4. Use of the Evidence:

2

Program 2

This year we assessed this outcome: **Students who complete our program can explain concepts and theories in our discipline**. Students in four required upper-division courses completed an embedded final exam question. While each course required students to examine different terms, all the embedded questions followed this format:

Define four of the following five terms: _____.

Responses from 100 students were randomly selected, and a team of six faculty assessed the evidence using this rubric:

Unacceptable	Needs Improvement	Acceptable	Exemplary
All four of the definitions were inaccurate or incomplete.	Three of the definitions were inaccurate or incomplete.	Two of the definitions were inaccurate or incomplete.	All of the definitions were accurate and complete.

Here is a summary of our findings:

Score	Percentage
Exemplary	21%
Acceptable	46%
Needs Improvement	19%
Unacceptable	14%

We discussed results at the November 19 department meeting, and faculty concluded that too many of our students cannot adequately define terms in our discipline. We agreed that faculty who teach all our courses will devote more class time to help students practice defining terms. This spring all faculty reported doing so in their courses, so we successfully closed the loop.

YOUR REVIEW: What praise and constructive criticism would you offer?

1. **Overall Report:**

2. **Evidence:**

3. **Assessment of the Evidence:**

4. **Use of the Evidence:**

3

Program 3
This year we assessed Outcome 2, **Students can think critically about issues in our discipline**. We collected evidence in our Capstone course last spring by requiring students to write a paper in which they explore an important issue in our discipline. Students chose their own topics, but instructor approval was required. Students were given the AAC&U VALUE critical thinking rubric in advance and were told that part of their grade would be based on the quality of their critical thinking, as defined by the rubric. We collected essays (*n=157*) in all sections of the capstone course, and we randomly selected 50 of them for assessment.

Twelve faculty volunteers assessed the essays using the rubric, with two faculty independently assessing each artifact. We first calibrated them, and the inter-rater reliability for each scale was at least .80 (range was .80 to .91). At the end of the scoring session the involved faculty agreed that the rubric appeared to reasonably assess critical thinking.

Results were summarized (see figure below) and the twelve faculty who scored the artifacts reached consensus that students performed at acceptable levels for Explanation of Issues, Influence of Context and Assumptions, and Student's Position, but did not meet their expectations for Evidence and Conclusions. They recommended to the faculty that they seek the help of the campus faculty development director to get advice about how to improve students' use of evidence and ability to reach conclusions.

Dimension	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Explanation of issues	0%	14%	70%	16%
Evidence	3%	37%	58%	2%
Influence of context and assumptions	0%	4%	80%	16%
Student's position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis)	0%	8%	60%	32%
Conclusions and related outcomes (implications and consequences)	26%	38%	34%	2%

The faculty development director suggested several possible pedagogical changes, and the faculty, as a whole, decided to add problem-based learning to the four required courses that share responsibility for developing students' critical thinking skills. With the director's assistance, the six faculty who teach those courses met several times in November. This spring they are pilot testing a project-based learning assignment in each course, and they have agreed to integrate the AAC&U critical thinking rubric into the grading of these assignments. They plan to meet again at the end of the semester to discuss what they learned about using this pedagogy and the impact it had on students' critical thinking.

YOUR REVIEW: What praise and constructive criticism would you offer?
 1. **Overall Report:**

 2. **Evidence:**

 3. **Assessment of the Evidence:**

 4. **Use of the Evidence:**

4

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

A Collection of Literature and Online Resources
Learning and Assessment in Higher Education

Useful Online Resources

National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA)
- Resource Library - http://www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/publications.html
- Occasional Papers - http://www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/occasionalpapers.htm (See also select papers below)
- Reports - http://www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/NILOAReports.htm

University of Kentucky ASSESS ListServ - http://lsv.uky.edu/archives/assess.html

Assessment Commons - http://assessmentcommons.org/

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CAPSTONE RUBRIC
Rubric for Using Capstone Experiences to Assess Program Learning Outcomes

Criterion	Initial	Emerging	Developed	Highly Developed
Relevant Outcomes and Lines of Evidence Identified	It is not clear which program outcomes will be assessed in the capstone course.	The relevant outcomes are identified, e.g., ability to integrate knowledge to solve complex problems; however, concrete plans for collecting evidence for each outcome have not been developed.	Relevant outcomes are identified. Concrete plans for collecting evidence for each outcome are agreed upon and used routinely by faculty who teach the capstone course.	Relevant evidence is collected; faculty has agreed on explicit criteria statements, e.g., rubrics, and has identified examples of student performance at varying levels of mastery for each relevant outcome.
Valid Results	It is not clear that potentially valid evidence for each relevant outcome is collected and/or individual faculty use idiosyncratic criteria to assess student work or performances.	Faculty has reached general agreement on the types of evidence to be collected for each outcome; they have discussed relevant criteria for assessing each outcome but these are not yet fully defined.	Faculty has agreed on concrete plans for collecting relevant evidence for each outcome. Explicit criteria, e.g., rubrics have been developed to assess the level of student attainment of each outcome.	Assessment criteria, such as rubrics, have been pilot-tested and refined over time; they are usually shared with students. Feedback from external reviewers has led to refinements in the assessment process, and the department uses external benchmarking data.
Reliable Results	Those who review student work are not calibrated to apply assessment criteria in the same way; there are no checks for inter-rater reliability.	Reviewers are calibrated to apply assessment criteria in the same way or faculty routinely check for inter-rater reliability.	Reviewers are calibrated to apply assessment criteria in the same way, and faculty routinely check for inter-rater reliability.	Reviewers are calibrated, and faculty routinely finds assessment data have high inter-rater reliability.
Results Are Used	Results for each outcome may or may not be collected. They are not discussed among faculty.	Results for each outcome are collected and may be discussed by the faculty, but results have not been used to improve the program.	Results for each outcome are collected, discussed by faculty, analyzed, and used to improve the program.	Faculty routinely discusses results, plan needed changes, secure necessary resources, and implement changes. They may collaborate with others, such as librarians or Student Affairs professionals, to improve results. Follow-up studies confirm that changes have improved learning.
The Student Experience	Students know little or nothing about the purpose of the capstone or outcomes to be assessed. It is just another course or requirement.	Students have some knowledge of the purpose and outcomes of the capstone. Communication is occasional, informal, and left to individual faculty or advisors.	Students have a good grasp of purpose and outcomes of the capstone and embrace it as a learning opportunity. Information is readily available in advising guides, etc.	Students are well-acquainted with the purpose and outcomes of the capstone and embrace it. They may participate in refining the experience, outcomes, and rubrics. Information is readily available.

Guidelines for Using the Capstone Rubric

A capstone is a culminating course or experience that requires review, synthesis and application of what has been learned. For the fullest picture of an institution's accomplishments, reviews of written materials should be augmented with interviews at the time of the visit.

Dimensions of the Rubric:
1. **Relevant Outcomes and Evidence**. It is likely that not all program learning outcomes can be assessed within a single capstone course or experience.
    Questions: Have faculty explicitly determined which program outcomes will be assessed in the capstone? Have they agreed on concrete plans for collecting evidence relevant to each targeted outcome? Have they agreed on explicit criteria, such as rubrics, for assessing the evidence? Have they identified examples of student performance for each outcome at varying performance levels (e.g., below expectations, meeting expectations, exceeding expectations for graduation)?
2. **Valid Results**. A valid assessment of a particular outcome leads to accurate conclusions concerning students' achievement of that outcome. Sometimes faculty collects evidence that does not have the potential to provide valid conclusions. For example, a multiple-choice test will not provide evidence of students' ability to deliver effective oral presentations. Assessment requires the collection of valid evidence and judgments about that evidence that are based on well-established, agreed-upon criteria that specify how to identify low, medium, or high-quality work.
    Questions: Are faculty collecting valid evidence for each targeted outcome? Are they using well-established, agreed-upon criteria, such as rubrics, for assessing the evidence for each outcome? Have faculty pilot tested and refined their process based on experience and feedback from external reviewers? Are they sharing the criteria with their students? Are they using benchmarking (comparison) data?
3. **Reliable Results**. Well-qualified judges should reach the same conclusions about a student's achievement of a learning outcome, demonstrating inter-rater reliability. If two judges independently assess a set of materials, their ratings can be correlated and discrepancy between their scores can be examined. Data are reliable if the correlation is high and/or if discrepancies are small. Raters generally are calibrated ("normed") to increase reliability. Calibration usually involves a training session in which raters apply rubrics to preselected examples of student work that vary in quality, then reach consensus about the rating each example should receive. The purpose is to ensure that all raters apply the criteria in the same way so that each student's product would receive the same score, regardless of rater.
    Questions: Are reviewers calibrated? Are checks for inter-rater reliability made? Is there evidence of high inter-rater reliability?
4. **Results Are Used**. Assessment is a process designed to monitor and improve learning, so assessment findings should have an impact. Faculty can reflect on results for each outcome and decide if they are acceptable or disappointing. If results do not meet faculty standards, faculty can determine which changes should be made, e.g., in pedagogy, curriculum, student support, or faculty support.
    Questions: Do faculty collect assessment results, discuss them, and reach conclusions about student achievement? Do they develop explicit plans to improve student learning? Do they implement those plans? Do they have a history of securing necessary resources to support this implementation? Do they collaborate with other institution professionals to improve student learning? Do follow-up studies confirm that changes have improved learning?
5. **The Student Experience**. Students should understand the purposes different educational experiences serve in promoting their learning and development and know how to take advantage of them; ideally they can also participate in shaping those experiences.
    Questions: Are purposes and outcomes communicated to students? Do they understand how capstones support learning? Do they participate in reviews of the capstone experience, its outcomes, criteria, or related activities?

GENERAL EDUCATION RUBRIC
Rubric for Evaluating General Education Assessment Process

Criterion	Initial	Emerging	Developed	Highly Developed
GE Outcomes	GE learning outcomes have not yet been developed for the entire GE program; there may be one or two common ones, e.g., writing, critical thinking.	Learning outcomes have been developed for the entire GE program, but list is problematic (e.g. too long, too short, unconnected to mission and non-assessable values.)	Outcomes are well organized, assessable, and focus on the most important knowledge, skill, and values of GE. Work to define levels of performance is beginning.	Outcomes are reasonable, appropriate, and assessable. Explicit criteria, such as rubrics, are available for assessing student learning. Exemplars or student performance are specified at varying levels for each outcome.
Curriculum Alignment with Outcomes	No clear relationship between the outcomes and the GE curriculum. Students may not have opportunity to develop each outcome adequately.	Students appear to have opportunities to develop each outcome. Curriculum map shows opportunities to acquire outcomes. Sequencing and frequency of opportunities may be problematic.	Curriculum is explicitly designed to provide opportunities for students to develop increasing sophistication re each outcome. Curriculum map shows "beginning," "intermediate," and "advanced" treatment of outcomes.	Curriculum, pedagogy, grading, advising, are explicitly aligned with GE outcomes. Curriculum map and rubrics are well known and consistently used. Co-curricular viewed as resources for GE learning and aligned with GE outcomes.
Assessment Planning	No formal plan for assessing each GE outcome. No coordinator or committee that takes responsibility for the program or implementation of its assessment plan.	GE assessment relies on short-term planning: selecting which outcome(s) to assess in the current year. Interpretation and use of findings are implicit rather than planned or funded. No individual or committee is in charge.	Campus has a reasonable, multi-year assessment plan that identifies when each outcome will be assessed. Plan addresses use of findings for improvement. A coordinator or committee is charged to oversee assessment.	Campus has a fully articulated, sustainable, multi-year assessment plan that describes when and how each outcome will be assessed. A coordinator or committee leads review and revision of the plan, as needed. Campus uses some form of comparative data (e.g., own past record, aspirational goals, external benchmarking).
Assessment Implementation	Not clear that potentially valid evidence for each GE outcome is collected and/or individual reviewers use idiosyncratic criteria to assess student work.	Appropriate evidence is collected; some discussion of relevant criteria for assessing outcome. Reviewers of student work are calibrated to apply assessment criteria in the same way, and/or faculty check for inter-rater reliability.	Appropriate evidence is collected; faculty use explicit criteria, such as rubrics, to assess student attainment of each outcome. Reviewers of student work are calibrated to apply assessment criteria in the same way; faculty routinely checks for inter-rater reliability.	Assessment criteria, such as rubrics, have been pilot-tested and refined and typically shared with students. Reviewers are calibrated with high inter-rater reliability. Comparative data used when interpreting results and deciding on changes for improvement.
Use of Results	Results for GE outcomes are collected, but not discussed Little or no collective use of findings. Students are unaware of and/or uninvolved in the process.	Results are collected and discussed by relevant faculty; results used occasionally to improve the GE program. Students are vaguely aware of outcomes and assessments to improve their learning.	Results for each outcome are collected, discussed by relevant faculty, and regularly used to improve the program. Students are very aware of and engaged in improvement of their learning.	Relevant faculty routinely discusses results, plan improvements, secure necessary resources, and implement changes. They may collaborate with others to improve the program. Follow-up studies confirm that changes have improved learning.

Guidelines for Using the General Education Rubric

For the fullest picture of an institution's accomplishments, reviews of written materials should be augmented with interviews at the time of the visit. Discussion validates that the reality matches the written record.

Dimensions of the Rubric:

1. **GE Outcomes**. The GE learning outcomes consists of the most important knowledge, skills, and values students learn in the GE program. There is no strict rule concerning the optimum number of outcomes, and quality is more important than quantity. Do not confuse learning processes (e.g., completing a science lab) with learning outcomes (what is learned in the science lab, such as ability to apply the scientific method). Outcome statements specify what students do to demonstrate their learning. Criteria for assessing student work are usually specified in rubrics, and faculty identify examples of varying levels of student performance, such as work that does not meet expectations, that meets expectations and that exceeds expectations.

    Questions: Is the list of outcomes reasonable and appropriate? Do the outcomes express how students can demonstrate learning? Have faculty agreed on explicit criteria, such as rubrics, for assessing each outcome? Do they have exemplars of work representing different levels of mastery for each outcome?

2. **Curriculum Alignment**. Students cannot be held responsible for mastering learning outcomes without a GE program that is explicitly designed to develop those outcomes. This design is often summarized as a curriculum map—a matrix that shows the relationship between courses and learning outcomes. Pedagogy and grading aligned with outcomes help encourage student growth and provide students' feedback on their development. Relevant academic support and student services can also be designed to support development of the learning outcomes, since learning occurs outside of the classroom as well as within it.

    Questions: Is the GE curriculum explicitly aligned with program outcomes? Does faculty select effective pedagogies and use grading to promote learning? Are support services explicitly aligned to promote student development of GE learning outcomes?

3. **Assessment Planning**. Explicit, sustainable plans for assessing each GE outcome need to be developed. Each outcome does not need to be assessed every year, but the plan should cycle through the outcomes over a reasonable period of time, such as the period for program review cycles. Experience and feedback from external reviewers can guide plan revision.

    Questions: Does the campus have a GE assessment plan? Does the plan clarify when, how, and how often each outcome will be assessed? Will all outcomes be assessed over a reasonable period of time? Is the plan sustainable? Supported by appropriate resources? Are plans revised, as needed, based on experience and feedback from external reviewers? Does the plan include collection of comparative data?

4. **Assessment Implementation**. Assessment requires the collection of valid evidence that is based on agreed-upon criteria that identify work that meets or exceeds expectations. These criteria are usually specified in rubrics. Well-qualified judges should reach the same conclusions about a student's achievement of a learning outcome, demonstrating inter-rater reliability. If two judges independently assess a set of materials, their ratings can be correlated and discrepancy between their scores can be examined. Data are reliable if the correlation is high and/or if discrepancies are small. Raters generally are calibrated ("normed") to increase reliability. Calibration usually involves a training session in which raters apply rubrics to preselected examples of student work that vary in quality, then reach consensus about the rating each example should receive. The purpose is to ensure that all raters apply the criteria in the same way so that each student's product would receive the same score, regardless of rater.

    Questions: Do GE assessment studies systematically collect valid evidence for each targeted outcome? Does faculty use agreed-upon criteria such as rubrics for assessing the evidence for each outcome? Do they share the criteria with their students? Are those who assess student work calibrated in the use of assessment criteria? Does the campus routinely document high inter-rater reliability? Do faculty pilot-test and refine their assessment processes? Do they take external benchmarking (comparison) data into account when interpreting results?

5. **Use of Results**. Assessment is a process designed to monitor and improve learning. Faculty can reflect on results for each outcome and decide if they are acceptable or disappointing. If results do not meet faculty standards, faculty (and others, such as student affairs personnel, librarians, and tutors) can determine what changes should be made, e.g., in pedagogy, curriculum, student support, or faculty supports.

    Questions: Do faculty collect assessment results, discuss them, and reach conclusions about student achievement? Do they develop explicit plans to improve student learning? Do they implement those plans? Do they have a history of securing necessary resources to support this implementation? Do they collaborate with other campus professionals to improve student learning? Do follow-up studies confirm that changes have improved learning?

PORTFOLIOS RUBRIC
Rubric for Using Portfolios to Assess Program Learning Outcomes

Criterion	Initial	Emerging	Developed	Highly Developed
Clarification of Students' Tasks	Instructions to students for portfolio development provide insufficient detail for them to know what faculty expects. Instructions may not identify outcomes to be addressed in the portfolio.	Students receive instructions for their portfolios, but they still have problems determining what is required of them and/or why they are compiling a portfolio.	Students receive instructions that describe faculty expectations in detail and include the purpose of the portfolio, types of evidence to include, role of the reflective essay (if required), and format of the finished product.	Students in the program understand the portfolio requirement and the rationale for it, and they view the portfolio as helping them develop self-assessment skills. Faculty may monitor the developing portfolio to provide formative feedback and/or advise individual students.
Valid Results	It is not clear that valid evidence for each relevant outcome is collected and/or individual reviewers use idiosyncratic criteria to assess student work.	Appropriate evidence is collected for each outcome, and faculty has discussed relevant criteria for assessing each outcome.	Appropriate evidence is collected for each outcome; faculty use explicit criteria, such as agreed-upon rubrics, to assess student attainment of each outcome. Rubrics are usually shared with students.	Assessment criteria, e.g., in the form of rubrics, have been pilot-tested and refined over time; they are shared with students, and students may have helped develop them. Feedback from external reviewers has led to refinements in the assessment process. The department also uses external benchmarking data.
Reliable Results	Those who review student work are not calibrated with each other to apply assessment criteria in the same way, and there are no checks for inter-rater reliability.	Reviewers are calibrated to apply assessment criteria in the same way or faculty routinely check for inter-rater reliability.	Reviewers are calibrated to apply assessment criteria in the same way, and faculty routinely check for inter-rater reliability.	Reviewers are calibrated; faculty routinely finds that assessment data have high inter-rater reliability.
If Results Are Used	Results for each outcome are collected, but they are not discussed among the faculty.	Results for each outcome are collected and discussed by the faculty, but results have not been used to improve the program.	Results for each outcome are collected, discussed by faculty, and used to improve the program.	Faculty routinely discusses results, plan needed changes, secure necessary resources, and implement changes. They may collaborate with others, such as librarians or Student Affairs professionals, to improve student learning. Students may also participate in discussions and/or receive feedback, either individual or in the aggregate. Follow-up studies confirm that changes have improved learning.
Technical Support for e-Portfolios	There is no technical support for students or faculty to learn the software or to deal with problems.	There is informal or minimal formal support for students and faculty.	Formal technical support is readily available and technicians proactively assist users in learning the software and solving problems.	Support is readily available, proactive, and effective. Programming changes are made when needed.

Guidelines for Using the Portfolio Rubric

Portfolios can serve multiple purposes: to build students' confidence by showing development over time; to display students' best work; to better advise students; to provide examples of work students can show to employers; to assess program learning outcomes. This rubric addresses the use of rubrics for assessment. Two common types of portfolios for assessing student learning outcomes are:

- Showcase portfolios—collections of each student's best work
- Developmental portfolios—collections of work from early, middle, and late stages in the student's academic career that demonstrate growth. Faculty generally requires students to include a reflective essay that describes how the evidence in the portfolio demonstrates their achievement of program learning outcomes. Sometimes faculty monitors developing portfolios to provide formative feedback and/or advising to students, and sometimes they collect portfolios only as students near graduation. Portfolio assignments should clarify the purpose of the portfolio, the kinds of evidence to be included, and the format (e.g., paper vs. e-portfolios); and students should view the portfolio as contributing to their personal development.

Dimensions of the Rubric:

1. **Clarification of Students' Task**. Most students have never created a portfolio, and they need explicit guidance.
   Questions: Does the portfolio assignment provide sufficient detail so students understand the purpose, the types of evidence to include, the learning outcomes to address, the role of the reflective essay (if any), and the required format? Do students view the portfolio as contributing to their ability to self-assess? Does faculty use the developing portfolios to assist individual students?

2. **Valid Results**. Sometimes portfolios lack valid evidence for assessing particular outcomes. For example, portfolios may not allow faculty to assess how well students can deliver oral presentations. Judgments about that evidence need to be based on well-established, agreed-upon criteria that specify (usually in rubrics) how to identify work that meets or exceeds expectations.
   Questions: Do the portfolios systematically include valid evidence for each targeted outcome? Is faculty using well-established, agreed-upon criteria, such as rubrics, to assess the evidence for each outcome? Have faculty pilot-tested and refined their process? Are criteria shared with students? Are they collaborating with colleagues at other institutions to secure benchmarking (comparison) data?

3. **Reliable Results**. Well-qualified judges should reach the same conclusions about a student's achievement of a learning outcome, demonstrating inter-rater reliability. If two judges independently assess a set of materials, their ratings can be correlated and discrepancy between their scores can be examined. Data are reliable if the correlation is high and/or if discrepancies are small. Raters generally are calibrated ("normed") to increase reliability. Calibration usually involves a training session in which raters apply rubrics to preselected examples of student work that vary in quality, then reach consensus about the rating each example should receive. The purpose is to ensure that all raters apply the criteria in the same way so that each student's product would receive the same score, regardless of rater.
   Questions: Are reviewers calibrated? Are checks for inter-rater reliability made? Is there evidence of high inter-rater reliability?

4. **Results Are Used**. Assessment is a process designed to monitor and improve learning, so assessment findings should have an impact. Faculty can reflect on results for each outcome and decide if they are acceptable or disappointing. If results do not meet their standards, faculty can determine what changes should be made, e.g., in pedagogy, curriculum, student support, or faculty support.
   Questions: Do faculty collect assessment results, discuss them, and reach conclusions about student achievement? Do they develop explicit plans to improve student learning? Do they implement those plans? Do they have a history of securing necessary resources to support this implementation? Do they collaborate with other institution professionals to improve student learning? Do follow-up studies confirm that changes have improved learning?

5. **Technical Support for e-Portfolios.** Faculty and students alike require support, especially when a new software program is introduced. Lack of support can lead to frustration and failure of the process. Support personnel may also have useful insights into how the portfolio assessment process can be refined.
   Questions: What is the quality and extent of technical support? What is the overall level of faculty and student satisfaction with the technology and support services?

PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES RUBRIC
Rubric for Assessing the Quality of Academic Program Learning Outcomes

Criterion	Initial	Emerging	Developed	Highly Developed
Comprehensive List	The list of outcomes is problematic: e.g., very incomplete, overly detailed, inappropriate, and disorganized. It may include only discipline-specific learning, ignoring relevant institution-wide learning. The list may confuse learning processes (e.g., doing an internship) with learning outcomes (e.g., application of theory to real-world problems).	The list includes reasonable outcomes but does not specify expectations for the program as a whole. Relevant institution-wide learning outcomes and/or national disciplinary standards may be ignored. Distinctions between expectations for undergraduate and graduate programs may be unclear.	The list is a well-organized set of reasonable outcomes that focus on the key knowledge, skills, and values students learn in the program. It includes relevant institution-wide outcomes (e.g., communication or critical thinking skills). Outcomes are appropriate for the level (undergraduate vs. graduate); national disciplinary standards have been considered.	The list is reasonable, appropriate, and comprehensive, with clear distinctions between undergraduate and graduate expectations, if applicable. National disciplinary standards have been considered. Faculty has agreed on explicit criteria for assessing students' level of mastery of each outcome.
Assessable Outcomes	Outcome statements do not identify what students can do to demonstrate learning. Statements such as "Students understand scientific method" do not specify how understanding can be demonstrated and assessed.	Most of the outcomes indicate how students can demonstrate their learning.	Each outcome describes how students can demonstrate learning, e.g., "Graduates can write reports in APA style" or "Graduates can make original contributions to biological knowledge."	Outcomes describe how students can demonstrate their learning. Faculty has agreed on explicit criteria statements, such as rubrics, and has identified examples of student performance at varying levels for each outcome.
Alignment	There is no clear relationship between the outcomes and the curriculum that students experience.	Students appear to be given reasonable opportunities to develop the outcomes in the required curriculum.	The curriculum is designed to provide opportunities for students to learn and to develop increasing sophistication with respect to each outcome. This design may be summarized in a curriculum map.	Pedagogy, grading, the curriculum, relevant student support services and co- curriculum are explicitly and intentionally aligned with each outcome. Curriculum map indicates increasing levels of proficiency.
Assessment Planning	There is no formal plan for assessing each outcome.	The program relies on short-term planning, such as selecting which outcome(s) to assess in the current year.	The program has a reasonable, multi-year assessment plan that identifies when each outcome will be assessed. The plan may explicitly include analysis and implementation of improvements.	The program has a fully-articulated, sustainable, multi-year assessment plan that describes when and how each outcome will be assessed and how improvements based on findings will be implemented. The plan is routinely examined and revised, as needed.
The Student Experience	Students know little or nothing about the overall outcomes of the program. Communication of outcomes to students, e.g. in syllabi or catalog, is spotty or nonexistent.	Students have some knowledge of program outcomes. Communication is occasional and informal, left to individual faculty or advisors.	Students have a good grasp of program outcomes. They may use them to guide their own learning. Outcomes are included in most syllabi and are readily available in the catalog, on the web page, and elsewhere.	Students are well-acquainted with program outcomes and may participate in the creation and use of rubrics. They are skilled at self-assessing in relation to the outcomes and levels of performance. Program policy calls for inclusion of outcomes in all course syllabi, and they are readily available in other program documents.

Guidelines on Using the Learning Outcomes Rubric

This rubric is intended to help teams assess the extent to which an institution has developed and assessed program learning outcomes and made improvements based on assessment results. For the fullest picture of an institution's accomplishments, reviews of written materials should be augmented with interviews at the time of the visit.

Dimensions of the Rubric:

1. **Comprehensive List**. The set of program learning outcomes should be a short but comprehensive list of the most important knowledge, skills, and values students learn in the program. Higher levels of sophistication are expected for graduate program outcomes than for undergraduate program outcomes. There is no strict rule concerning the optimum number of outcomes, but quality is more important than quantity. Learning processes (e.g., completing an internship) should not be confused with learning outcomes (what is learned in the internship, such as application of theory to real-world practice).
   > Questions. Is the list reasonable, appropriate and well organized? Are relevant institution-wide outcomes, such as information literacy, included? Are distinctions between undergraduate and graduate outcomes clear? Have national disciplinary standards been considered when developing and refining the outcomes? Are explicit criteria – as defined in a rubric, for example – available for each outcome?

2. **Assessable Outcomes**. Outcome statements specify what students can do to demonstrate their learning. For example, an outcome might state, "Graduates of our program can collaborate effectively to reach a common goal" or "Graduates of our program can design research studies to test theories." These outcomes are assessable because the quality of collaboration in teams and the quality of student-created research designs can be observed. Criteria for assessing student products or behaviors usually are specified in rubrics that indicate varying levels of student performance (i.e., work that does not meet expectations, meets expectations, and exceeds expectations).
   > Questions, Do the outcomes clarify how students can demonstrate learning? Are there agreed upon, explicit criteria, such as rubrics, for assessing each outcome? Are there examples of student work representing different levels of mastery for each outcome?

3. **Alignment**. Students cannot be held responsible for mastering learning outcomes without a curriculum that is designed to develop increasing sophistication with respect to each outcome. This design is often summarized in a curriculum map—a matrix that shows the relationship between courses in the required curriculum and the program's learning outcomes. Pedagogy and grading aligned with outcomes help encourage student growth and provide students feedback on their development.
   > Questions. Is the curriculum explicitly aligned with the program outcomes? Do faculty select effective pedagogy and use grading to promote learning? Are student support services and the co-curriculum explicitly aligned to reinforce and promote the development of student learning outcomes?

4. **Assessment Planning**. Programs need not assess every outcome every year, but faculty are expected to have a plan to cycle through the outcomes over a reasonable period of time, such as the timeframe for program review.
   > Questions. Does the plan clarify when, how, and how often each outcome will be assessed? Will all outcomes be assessed over a reasonable period of time? Is the plan sustainable, in terms of human, fiscal, and other resources? Are assessment plans revised, as needed?

5. **The Student Experience**. At a minimum, students need to be aware of the learning outcomes of the program(s) in which they are enrolled. Ideally, they could be included as partners in defining and applying the outcomes and the criteria for varying levels of accomplishment.
   > Questions: Are the outcomes communicated to students consistently and meaningfully? Do students understand what the outcomes mean and how they can further their own learning? Do students use the outcomes and criteria to self-assess?
   > Do they participate in reviews of outcomes, criteria, curriculum design, or related activities?

PROGRAM REVIEW RUBRIC
Rubric for Assessing the Integration of Student Learning Assessment into Program Reviews

Criterion	Initial	Emerging	Developed	Highly Developed
Required Elements of the Self-Study	Program faculty may be required to provide a list of program-level student learning outcomes.	Faculty are required to provide the program's student learning outcomes and summarize annual assessment findings.	Faculty are required to provide the program's student learning outcomes, annual assessment studies, findings, and resulting changes. They may be required to submit a plan for the next cycle of assessment studies.	Faculty are required to evaluate the program's student learning outcomes, annual assessment findings, bench-marking results, subsequent changes, and evidence concerning the impact of these changes. They present a plan for the next cycle of assessment studies.
Process of Review	Internal and external reviewers do not address evidence concerning the quality of student learning in the program other than grades.	Internal and external reviewers address indirect and possibly direct evidence of student learning in the program; they do so at the descriptive level, rather than providing an evaluation.	Internal and external reviewers analyze direct and indirect evidence of student learning in the program and offer evaluative feedback and suggestions for improvement. They have sufficient expertise to evaluate program efforts. Departments use the feedback to improve their work.	Well-qualified internal and external reviewers evaluate the program's learning outcomes, assessment plan, evidence, benchmarking results, and assessment impact. They give evaluative feedback and suggestions for improvement. The department uses the feedback to improve student learning.
Planning and Budgeting	The campus has not integrated program reviews into planning and budgeting processes.	The campus has attempted to integrate program reviews into planning and budgeting processes, but with limited success.	The campus generally integrates program reviews into planning and budgeting processes, but not through a formal process.	The campus systematically integrates program reviews into planning and budgeting processes, e.g., through negotiating formal action plans with mutually agreed-upon commitments.
Annual Feedback on Assessment Efforts	No individual or committee on campus provides feedback to departments on the quality of their outcomes, assessment plans, assessment studies, impact, etc.	An individual or committee occasionally provides feedback on the quality of outcomes, assessment plans, assessment studies, etc.	A well-qualified individual or committee provides annual feedback on the quality of outcomes, assessment plans, assessment studies, etc. Departments use the feedback to improve their work.	A well-qualified individual or committee provides annual feedback on the quality of outcomes, assessment plans, assessment studies, benchmarking results, and assessment impact. Departments effectively use the feedback to improve student learning. Follow-up activities enjoy institutional support
The Student Experience	Students are unaware of and uninvolved in program review.	Program review may include focus groups or conversations with students to follow up on results of surveys	The internal and external reviewers examine samples of student work, e.g., sample papers, portfolios, and capstone projects. Students may be invited to discuss what they learned and how they learned it.	Students are respected partners in the program review process. They may offer poster sessions on their work, demonstrate how they apply rubrics to self-assess, and/or provide their own evaluative feedback.

Guidelines for Using the Program Review Rubric

For the fullest picture of an institution's accomplishments, reviews of written materials should be augmented with interviews at the time of the visit.

Dimensions of the Rubric:

1. **Self-Study Requirements**. The campus should have explicit requirements for the program's self-study, including an analysis of the program's learning outcomes and a review of the annual assessment studies conducted since the last program review. Faculty preparing the self-study can reflect on the accumulating results and their impact, and plan for the next cycle of assessment studies. As much as possible, programs can benchmark findings against similar programs on other campuses.

   Questions: Does the campus require self-studies that include an analysis of the program's learning outcomes, assessment studies, assessment results, benchmarking results, and assessment impact, including the impact of changes made in response to earlier studies? Does the campus require an updated assessment plan for the subsequent years before the next program review?

2. **Self-Study Review**. Internal reviewers (on-campus individuals) and external reviewers (off-campus individuals, usually disciplinary experts) evaluate the program's learning outcomes, assessment plan, assessment evidence, benchmarking results, and assessment impact; and they provide evaluative feedback and suggestions for improvement.

   Questions: Who reviews the self-studies? Do they have the training or expertise to provide effective feedback? Do they routinely evaluate the program's learning outcomes, assessment plan, assessment evidence, benchmarking results, and assessment impact? Do they provide suggestions for improvement? Do departments effectively use this feedback to improve student learning?

3. **Planning and Budgeting**. Program reviews are not be *pro forma* exercises; they should be tied to planning and budgeting processes, with expectations that increased support will lead to increased effectiveness, such as improving student learning and retention rates.

   Questions: Does the campus systematically integrate program reviews into planning and budgeting processes? Are expectations established for the impact of planned changes?

4. **Annual Feedback on Assessment Efforts**. Institutions often find considerable variation in the quality of assessment efforts across programs. While program reviews encourage departments to reflect on multi-year assessment results, some programs are likely to require more immediate feedback, usually based on a required annual assessment report. This feedback might be provided by an assessment director or committee, relevant dean or others; and whoever has this responsibility should have the expertise to provide quality feedback.

   Questions: Does someone or a committee have the responsibility for providing annual feedback on the assessment process? Does this person or team have the expertise to provide effective feedback? Does this person or team routinely provide feedback on the quality of outcomes, assessment plans, assessment studies, benchmarking results, and assessment impact? Do departments effectively use this feedback to improve student learning?

5. **The Student Experience**. Students have a unique perspective on a given program of study: they know better than anyone what it means to go through it as a student. Program review can take advantage of that perspective and build it into the review.

   Questions: Are students aware of the purpose and value of program review? Are they involved in preparations and the self-study? Do they have an opportunity to interact with internal or external reviewers, demonstrate and interpret their learning, and provide evaluative feedback?

Core Competency FAQs

Overview & Purpose

In the *2013 Handbook of Accreditation*, Criteria for Review 2.2a states:

> Baccalaureate programs engage students in an integrated course of study of sufficient breadth and depth to prepare them for work, citizenship, and life-long learning. These programs ensure the development of core competencies including, but not limited to, **written and oral communication, quantitative reasoning, information literacy, and critical thinking.**

Component 4 (Educational Quality) of the Institutional Review Process asks for institutions "to describe how the curriculum addresses each of the five core competencies, explain their learning outcomes in relation to those core competencies, and demonstrate, through evidence of student performance, the extent to which those outcomes are achieved."

The purpose of these FAQs is to provide additional information to institutions regarding the five core competencies.

1. How did WSCUC come up with these five competencies? Why were writing (W), oral communication (OC), quantitative reasoning (QR), information literacy (IL), and critical thinking (CT) singled out for such focused treatment in the institutional report?

These competencies have been part of Standard 2 for undergraduate degrees (criterion for review 2.2a) since 2001. The language of CFR 2.2 states that "all degrees . . . awarded by the institution are clearly defined in terms of . . . levels of student achievement necessary for graduation that represent more than simply an accumulation of courses or credits." Now, at a time when there is widespread concern about the quality of graduates' learning, and when assessment practices have emerged that are able to address these outcomes in nuanced ways, the Commission is asking for documentation of actual achievement.

While CFR 2.2a mentions additional outcomes beyond the five core competencies – e.g., creativity, appreciation for diversity, and civic engagement – the five that are the focus of component 4 were deemed generic, fundamental to students' future success, and assessable. The focus on these five does not in any way limit institutions that wish to address additional competencies.

2. What are the definitions of these five core competencies? Who gets to define them?

Institutions are free to define each core competency in a way that makes sense for the institution, its mission, its values, and the needs of its student body. The assumption, however, is that these are generic competencies – that is, applicable across multiple programs – that will be approached in an interdisciplinary, integrative way. Institutions have a lot of latitude in deciding how they will do that.

3. Are these core competencies supposed to be institutional learning outcomes (ILOs)?

That's one way to approach them. For many institutions, there's a lot of overlap between their ILOs and the five core competencies. For very large, complex institutions, it may be more appropriate – and manageable – to approach them at the college, division, or department level.

4. Can institutions assess the core competencies in the major?

Because most students take major courses right to the end of their studies, there are advantages in embedding core competencies into the assessment of the major or professional field. Many majors use capstones, senior projects, e-portfolios, or other methods of collecting student work for assessment, and these can provide evidence of students' mastery of the competencies. Assessing core competencies at the degree level allows expectations and types of evidence to be adapted to the degree. For example, depending on the field, oral communication skills might be demonstrated through debating, interviewing, negotiating, counseling, or presenting ideas.

In some cases, assessing students' level of achievement in a particular competency through the major assessment might not seem appropriate (e.g., quantitative reasoning in an English or dance major) or feasible, where faculty are reluctant to integrate them into their assessment of the major. In that case, the institution can look at other options such as upper-division GE; signature assignments across a range of upper-division courses that students may be taking as electives; or a core competency portfolio that students assemble with artifacts that illustrate each of the core competencies. The benefit of this last approach is that it can also include items from the co-curriculum or internships.

So the answer to the question about "having" to assess core competencies in the major is no. The major is probably the easiest place to do it, but not the only place, and it's definitely not required.

5. Do institutions need to assess and support transfer students' development of the CCs?

Yes. The diploma that students receive, whether they're native students or transfers, will look the same. It's the institution's responsibility – as well as in the student's interest – to ensure that the degree represents high-quality learning for every graduate.

6. Academic programs are all so different. Does this mean there are different definitions of the core competencies and different assessment processes for each program?

Program-level learning and assessment results are very important; they're a key part of program review, which also has a place in the 2013 institutional review process, or IRP (see Component #6: Quality Assurance and Improvement). But with the core competencies, the goal is a higher level of aggregation: the institution level, or at very large and complex universities, the school or college or division level. Institutions should develop processes that allow for differences while at the same time focusing on commonalities across disciplines.

7. Is it necessary to document how much students learned and developed from entry to exit? Should there be pre- and post-testing?

No. While it can be useful to know the trajectory of students' learning over time, so faculty can see where they improved or plateaued or even became less proficient, the focus is on their level of

proficiency at graduation. Think of assessment that measures growth as a tool for enhancing the final result. Pre- and post-testing is one approach to assessment, and it may be useful. But it can also be costly, it is methodologically challenging, and the results can be difficult to interpret. In some contexts, it can be inauthentic and self-serving.

8. What about institutions that award A.A. or A.S. degrees? Should core competencies be assessed for students as they leave with an associate's degree? What if they transfer to a baccalaureate program?

Yes, the Commission cares about students' mastery of competencies in all degree programs, from associate to graduate levels. Institutions that award A.A. or A.S. degrees should also set standards, report results, and document plans for improvement when necessary at those levels.

9. Does this core competency requirement mean that institutions have to show 100% of students meeting the standard? Or that a student who doesn't meet the standard gets a failing grade – for example on their capstone – or doesn't graduate?

No. What is important—to the institution as well as the Commission—is the distribution: what proportion of your students is meeting the standard or even exceeding it? What proportion is below the standard, and how far below? And what do you plan to do to raise overall performance and shift the distribution upward, if you are dissatisfied with the results?

10. How can such extensive and complex findings be documented for the institutional review process, particularly at large institutions with hundreds of programs, multiple divisions, and several degree levels?

As an element of their institutional reports, institutions are asked to describe and provide evidence of how they assess students' achievement of core competencies. Institutions are free to decide how best to organize the setting of proficiency standards, assessment, documentation, and reporting of results, but it must be clear that this work is documented as it occurs throughout the institution. For large, complex institutions a narrative summary might be provided to include where responsibility for this work lies; general information on the definition of these proficiencies and how they were developed; general information on cycles and timelines for reviews across the institution; systems or processes for reviewing data/information obtained through reviews; and locus of authority for taking action based on results. A matrix providing specifics could be created to demonstrate the pervasiveness and effectiveness of this work throughout the institution. Depending on the size and structure of the institution, this might be done through a selection of examples that represent all of the institution's programs, divisions, and degree levels.

Adopted by the Commission in June 2014

Meaning, Quality, and Integrity of Degrees FAQs

Overview & Purpose

In the *2013 Handbook of Accreditation*, institutions are asked to address the Meaning, Quality, and Integrity of Degrees in component 3 of the institutional report. The purpose of these FAQs is to provide additional information to institutions regarding how to think about and address this component.

1. What is meant by the "meaning," "quality," and "integrity" of degrees and how can an institution demonstrate it is meeting this requirement?

CFR 2.2 indicates that the degree as a whole should be more than the sum of its traditional parts: courses, credits, and grades. Demonstrating the meaning of degrees thus involves addressing questions about what the institution expects its students – undergraduates and graduates alike – to know and be able to do upon graduation, and how graduates embody the distinct values and traditions of the institution through their dispositions and future plans. A degree that is of high quality and integrity is one in which appropriately relevant and challenging learning goals are met by students who are offered a rich and coherent educational experience that is designed, delivered, and assessed by appropriately qualified faculty and supported by other institutional personnel as needed to ensure student success in achieving those goals. An institution may want to address all of these elements in providing evidence of the meaning, quality, and integrity of its degrees.

2. Why are institutions in the region being asked to define and document the meaning, quality, and integrity of our degrees?

The value of higher education in the U.S. is being questioned today more forcefully than at any time in recent memory. Institutions and accreditors are challenged to demonstrate that it is worth the time, effort, and money necessary for students to engage in and complete postsecondary study leading to a degree. Traditionally, institutions have described their degrees either very generally (i.e., as something of self-evident value) or very concretely (in terms of specific degree requirements and preparation for specific professions). This component of the institutional report asks for something different: a holistic exploration of the middle ground between those two extremes, expressed in terms of the outcomes for students and the institutional mechanisms that support those outcomes. Defining the meaning of higher degrees can provide clarity for institutions, for students, and for a public that seeks to understand what unique educational experience will be had at that particular institution and what makes the investment in that experience worthwhile.

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3. What's the relationship between the meaning, quality, and integrity of degrees (component 3 of the institutional report) and educational quality, specifically the core competencies (component 4)?

Component 3 takes a broad, holistic view of the entire educational experience leading to a degree; component 4 is concerned with five specific higher-order intellectual skills that provide a foundation for current and future learning. For Component 3, institutions are encouraged to develop their own strategies for articulating the meaning of their degrees in ways that make sense for their mission, values, and student populations.

The response in Component 4 should convey the institution's expectations for its graduates' performance in these specific areas and how the institution determines whether graduates are reliably achieving those expectations. It is the institution's responsibility to set expectations for learning outcomes that are appropriate to the institution's mission, programs offered, student characteristics, and other criteria. The institution analyzes the evidence according to its own judgment, reports on student achievement of its learning outcomes in a way that makes sense for the institution (e.g., as a single score, or within ranges or qualitative categories), contextualizes the findings according to the mission and priorities of the institution, and formulates its own plans for improvement, if needed.

An institution's response in component 3 provides a broad background for understanding how these specific competencies are related to the meaning of the institution's degrees. Some institutions might find it useful to frame their response to component 3 in a way that anticipates its response to component 4. The *2013 Handbook* notes that institutions may structure their reports in the way that they find best suited to telling their stories and are free to depart from the suggested order by combining or reordering the components. However, reviewers should be able to identify the parts of the report that are intended as the response to the various components.

4. Do institutions have to use the Degree Qualifications Profile (DQP)? Does it improve their chances of a positive review if they do?

No and No. WSCUC does not require institutions to use the DQP or any other specific framework or resource. Rather, institutions are encouraged to develop their own strategies for articulating the meaning of their degrees in ways that make sense for their mission, values, and student populations.

5. Are institutions being asked to document that *every* student is meeting *every* expectation?

No. For good assessment practices to be sustainable, sampling is appropriate in most cases. Institutions are free to develop practices that best meet their needs.

Adopted by the Commission in June 2014

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Principles for Effective Assessment of Student Achievement

July 19, 2013

The undersigned national higher education associations and regional accrediting commissions have endorsed the attached statement, "Principles for Effective Assessment of Student Achievement." The statement grew out of a meeting of the presidents of the seven regional accrediting commissions and public and private university provosts. The statement is intended to emphasize the need to assess effectively student achievement, and the importance of conducting such assessments in ways that are congruent with the institution's mission.

We hope that colleges and universities will find this statement useful in evaluating their assessment policies and procedures and that accrediting commissions similarly will find the statement helpful in evaluating their assessment standards. Looking ahead, we believe that the shared principles of this consensus statement can facilitate continued cooperation and collaboration between these two allied sectors of the higher education community.

__Higher Education Associations:__

American Association of Community Colleges *(AACC)*

American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU)

American Council on Education (ACE)

Association of American Universities (AAU)

Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU)

National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (NAICU)

__Regional Accrediting Commissions:__

Middle States Commission on Higher Education *(MSCHE)*

New England Association of Schools and Colleges Commission on Institutions of Higher Education *(NEASC-CIHE)*

North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, The Higher Learning Commission (NCA-HLC)

Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities *(NWCCU)*

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACS)

Western Association of Schools and Colleges – Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (WASC-ACCJC)

Western Association of Schools and Colleges - Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities (WASC-ACSCU)

Principles for Effective Assessment of Student Achievement

Federal law requires that a higher education institution undergoing accreditation provide evidence of "success with respect to student achievement in relation to the institution's mission." Both aspects of this requirement—the insistence upon achievement, and the tailoring to institutional mission—are critically important. The demonstration of quality is a fundamental responsibility of all colleges and universities, but both the kinds of quality and the methods used to measure it will differ depending on the mission of the institution.

More specifically, though the exact content of these criteria and the methods for measuring them will differ, all institutions should be expected to provide evidence of success in three domains:

1. Evidence of the student learning experience. Institutions should be able to define and evaluate *how* their students are learning: more specifically, institutions should be able to describe the kinds of experiences that they expect students to have inside and outside the classroom. Relevant evidence may pertain to targets for the kinds of reading and writing assignments that students should complete; levels of personal interaction with faculty members; residential and/or co-curricular components of the learning experience, and other learning experiences that the institution deems relevant to its mission.

2. Evaluation of student academic performance. Institutions should be able to define meaningful curricular goals, and they must have defensible standards for evaluating whether students are achieving those goals. Appropriate methods for the assessment of student work may include, among other approaches, meaningful and rigorous faculty evaluation and grading or external benchmarking.

3. Post-graduation outcomes. Institutions should be able to articulate how they prepare students consistently with their mission for successful careers, meaningful lives, and, where appropriate, further education. They should collect and provide data about whether they are meeting these goals. Relevant kinds of data may include completion rates, job placement rates, levels of post-graduation civic participation, kinds of jobs and vocations chosen, surveys pertaining to alumni satisfaction and success, and data on other post-graduation goals relevant to the institution's mission.

The accreditation process needs to allow institutions flexibility with regard to the methods for measuring progress toward these goals. It is a mistake to conflate particular means for measuring goals with the achievement of those goals. Measures of all kinds will work best if they are integrated into the teaching and administration of colleges and universities, analyzed on a regular basis, and summarized in the accreditation process.

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FROM DEPARTMENTAL TO DISCIPLINARY ASSESSMENT:

Deepening Faculty Engagement

BY PAT HUTCHINGS

Pat Hutchings (hutchings@carnegiefoundation.org) is a senior associate with The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, where she previously served as vice president and senior scholar. She has written and spoken widely on student outcomes assessment, integrative learning, the peer review of teaching, and the scholarship of teaching and learning. Her most recent book is The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Reconsidered: Institutional Integration and Impact *(2011), with co-authors Mary Taylor Huber and Anthony Ciccone. Prior to joining Carnegie, she was a senior staff member at the American Association for Higher Education. From 1978–1987 she was a faculty member and chair of the English department at Alverno College.*

In the late 1980s, as student outcomes assessment was first taking hold in higher education, I interviewed a number of faculty members who had been pulled into the movement's orbit. One still sticks with me: a professor of art history at a large research university who recounted the experience of having to sit down with her department colleagues—for the first time ever—to hash out their collective goals for majors. It was a difficult conversation, she told me, surfacing serious disagreements but eventually yielding a more shared vision of what students in the program should know and be able to do.

Clarifying goals is, admittedly, only the first step in the assessment process. Nevertheless, the experience recounted by that faculty member twenty-some years ago says a lot about the power of assessment at the departmental and disciplinary level to engage the professoriate in substantive ways.

That said, most of assessment's attention over the last two decades has been aimed at cross-cutting outcomes—critical and analytical thinking, problem solving, quantitative literacy, and communication—that are typically identified with general education. Just about everyone agrees that abilities like these are essential markers of higher learning; critical thinking typically tops the list of faculty priorities for student learning, regardless of field or institutional type. They're also the outcomes that have caught the attention of employers and policymakers (as well as test makers)—who are not, for the most part, asking how well students understand art history, sociology, or criminal justice (though they *are* asking about math and science preparation). And of course they are outcomes that overlap with those of the disciplines.

In short, assessment's focus on cross-cutting outcomes makes perfect sense, but it has also meant that the assessment of students' knowledge and abilities *within* particular fields, focused on what is *distinctive* to the field, has received less attention. And that's too bad.

It's too bad because we do, after all, value what our students know and can do in their major area of concentration and because students themselves typically care most about achievement in their chosen field of study. But it's also too bad because anchoring assessment more firmly in the disciplines may be a route to addressing its most vexing and enduring challenge: engaging faculty in ways that lead to real improvement in teaching and learning.

This is not a new argument (see for example Banta, 1993; Wright, 2005; and, most recently, Heiland and Rosenthal, whose volume on assessment in literary studies is reviewed by Mary Taylor Huber this issue), but it is one worth renewing. My purpose in what follows, then, is to review the current state of affairs in departmental and

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disciplinary assessment, but especially to point to emerging developments that can help to deepen faculty engagement with questions about how and how well students achieve the learning we value within and across our diverse fields.

TAKING STOCK

Even though disciplinary and departmental assessment has played second fiddle to the assessment of more cross-cutting outcomes, a recent survey of program-level assessment practices released by the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (Ewell, Paulson, & Kinzie, 2011) reveals that there has been significant action in this arena. Often the first on campus to seriously engage with assessment, and among the most active going forward, are fields with specialized accreditation, including teacher education, pharmacy, nursing, social work, business, and engineering (see Palomba & Banta, 2001).

But good examples are plentiful in other fields as well, with levels of activity rising as all programs and departments respond to regional accreditation requirements. Indeed, the NILOA survey report concludes that "there is more assessment activity 'down and in' [academic programs and departments] than may be apparent by looking at only institutional measures" (p. 9), and it points not only to accreditation but to the desire to improve as major drivers for such work.

An earlier (2009) NILOA survey found that locally designed approaches are more prevalent at the department and program level than in the assessment of cross-cutting, general education outcomes, which are more likely to use standardized, externally designed instruments and national surveys. The 2011 report fills in the details: 68 percent of programs use capstone assessments; more than half use performance assessments or final projects; and alumni surveys, comprehensive exams, and portfolios all come in at about 30 percent.

What's also clear, although unsurprising, is that methods vary significantly from one field to another. For example, 84 percent of education departments report that all or most of their students take standardized examinations, while only 13 percent in the arts and humanities employ such instruments. Indeed, one reason to encourage greater attention to discipline-based assessment is because it's likely to encourage further methodological creativity and invention, reflecting the fuller range of evidence and methods valued in different fields and raising the chances that what is learned through assessment will be taken seriously and acted upon by faculty.

There are other promising developments. The NILOA survey suggests that assessment is making a difference in ways that affect the experience of students, with many respondents saying that they use results "very much" or "quite a bit" for instructional improvement (67 percent), improving the curriculum (59 percent), and informing program planning (57 percent). And in contrast to provosts—who, on the 2009 NILOA survey emphasized the need for greater faculty involvement in assessment—

60 percent of program-level survey respondents indicate that "all or most of their faculty are already involved" (p. 11).

THE CHARACTER OF FACULTY ENGAGEMENT

Since I am one of scores of people who have worried and written about the need for greater faculty engagement in assessment, this last finding got my attention. Perhaps the widespread perception of low faculty engagement is just plain wrong or at least outdated. Or perhaps, for whatever reasons, programs are over-reporting participation. In any case, NILOA's findings are significant in suggesting the need for further thinking not only about the *proportion* of faculty engagement but about its *character and depth*.

A situation that appears to be common in one form or another in many institutions was captured by a campus leader I spoke with recently, who opined that departmental engagement can often translate to a kind of "checklist mentality" in which assessment means telling the provost's office which two or three methods from a proposed menu of possibilities—a survey, portfolios, an ETS field test, and so on—the department will employ. With deadlines looming ("our accreditation self-study is due in four months!"), this kind of mentality is understandable, especially in a context where faculty expertise is limited and time even more so. In such circumstances it's easy to get caught up in questions of lists, methods, and instruments—important matters that can sometimes prompt deeper deliberations about program goals and purposes.

But it is, after all, the deeper thinking about how and how well students acquire the field's knowledge, practices, values, and habits of mind—and how to improve learning in all of those areas—that assessment (at its best) is after. Without such considerations, one might say that assessment is "departmental" but not necessarily "disciplinary"—that it is situated in the relevant administrative unit but may not entail significant deliberation about what it means to know the field deeply, why that matters, and how to ensure that all students in the program achieve its signature outcomes at high levels.

> " One reason to encourage greater attention to discipline-based assessment is because it's likely to encourage further methodological creativity and invention.

Of course disproportionate (and hurried) attention to methods is just one of the impediments to faculty engagement. Few faculty have any explicit training in documenting or measuring student learning; other pressing agendas compete for time; such work is rarely rewarded in promotion and tenure; and on some campuses, even those seriously committed to teaching and learning, there's a sense that assessment adds no real value (see Hutchings, 2010) and may, even worse, take a divisive turn that erodes collegiality.

Additionally, some have proposed that assessment's focus on broad generic outcomes has worked against deeper kinds of faculty involvement. In the introduction to their edited collection about assessment in literary studies, Donna Heiland and Laura Rosenthal argue that one of the reasons English (and presumably other) departments have been less than fully engaged with assessment is that "the best known assessment efforts have targeted overall institutional performance and general-education outcomes rather than the concerns and outcomes of specific disciplines" (2011, p. 11).

On the one hand, this argument may seem counterintuitive, since these cross-cutting outcomes are so highly valued by faculty across fields. In this sense, critical thinking (for example) would seem to be an entry point for faculty to think about assessment in their own fields. Certainly it has served that purpose in many settings, spurred on, for example, by an initiative on "Engaging Departments" led by the Association of American Colleges and Universities.

On the other hand, critical thinking looks very different from one field to another, and it often employs different language as well. Consider, for example, Rosenthal's own account (in the University of Maryland teaching center newsletter, April & May 2011) of how assessment helped her design a better way to teach upper-level students to make arguments that are recognizable as literary criticism.

> "Rosenthal's [account] illustrates what assessment can look like when it is not only located in the academic department but driven by and deeply engaged with the field's distinctive ways of thinking, acting, and valuing.

The intellectual practices she wants English majors to develop are arguably a subset of the broad category of "critical thinking." But her story starts not there but with a careful analysis of how her students *actually* respond to literary works (that is, it starts with assessment). Building on that foundation, she develops a five-stage model to guide learners toward "what my discipline generally understands as criticism" (p. 10), moving from understanding the literal meaning of the text to more nuanced arguments about its structure and historical context.

The NILOA survey finds that programs are eager to have more examples of thoughtful assessment, and it's easy to see why Rosenthal's work would be especially useful. In contrast to many accounts of program-level approaches—which typically focus on methods for gathering data—Rosenthal's illustrates what assessment can look like when it is not only *located* in the academic department but driven by and deeply engaged with the field's distinctive ways of thinking, acting, and valuing. Enlarging the supply (and increasing the visibility) of such examples would help move assessment more fully into the kind of disciplinary territory in which faculty live and work.

ENGAGEMENT BY DISCIPLINARY AND PROFESSIONAL SOCIETIES

The disciplinary and professional societies to which faculty belong can play a powerful role here, sending signals about what matters and what's worth doing. Historically, support and advocacy for the research role of the professoriate has held pride of place in virtually all of these organizations, but over the last two decades many of them have given greater emphasis to teaching and learning. In the process, in various ways and to varying degrees, the topic of assessment has also been taken up, as these organizations have created task forces on the topic, issued special reports, crafted guidelines for departments, made recommendations, collected case studies, and sponsored special initiatives and projects.

Their responses are not, of course, an even weave; how and how fully they have engaged with assessment depends on the history and culture of the field, how it thinks about itself in the educational landscape, and its signature habits of mind. For example, assessment has been a hard sell in the American Philosophical Association. According to Donna Engelmann, a faculty member at Alverno College who has been active in the organization, "there has been little official activity on the part of the APA in regard to assessment in philosophy."

And yet, she notes, there are signs of progress. An earlier and "explicitly hostile" statement on assessment was revised in 2008 in ways that reflect greater openness. And the APA and the American Association of Philosophy Teachers (a separate organization) now co-sponsor a seminar on teaching for graduate students in which assessment is an important strand.

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In other fields, assessment may be seen as important but in ways that have not easily connected with the language and imperatives of the larger assessment movement. In physics, for instance, one finds a robust, long-standing tradition of education research and an impressive collection of research-based instruments and tools (many readers will know of the Force Concept Inventory) for assessing student understanding of key concepts in the field (see for instance www.ncsu.edu/per/TestInfo.html and www.flaguide.org/resource/websites.php). And a search for "assessment" on the website of the American Physical Society (in June 2011) turned up all manner of resources—about assessment at the K-12 level, the impact of undergraduate research, research-based teaching, course design, and so forth—all of which speak to an interest in evidence about student learning.

But what one does not find are materials about the kind of program-level assessment of student learning outcomes that departments today are being called upon to conduct. In short, the field has a robust tradition of studying student learning, but that work has not been framed by its flagship scholarly society in ways that converge with the assessment movement.

As in philosophy, however, there are signs of movement. The APS will soon release guidelines for department review which—according to Noah Finkelstein, chair of the organization's Committee on Education and a faculty member in the department of physics at the University of Colorado—will include attention to educational goals and "assessment metrics that attend to those learning goals" (email, June 8, 2011).

The work of the Mathematical Association of America (MAA) offers a different example, one that has engaged scores of departments. In a useful overview of his field's response to assessment, Bernard Madison begins with the establishment in the late 1980s of a twelve-member subcommittee on assessment (he was its chair) of the Committee on the Undergraduate Program in Mathematics.

Charged with advising MAA members about how to respond to assessment, the subcommittee issued a first report in 1992 entitled *Heeding the Call for Change*. This was followed, in 1995, by a set of guidelines to assist departments in designing and implementing assessment strategies. The subcommittee also collected case studies of departmental assessment and published 72 of them in a 1999 volume.

Drawing, then, on a decade of work, the MAA secured funding from the National Science Foundation for a three-year project, Supporting Assessment in Undergraduate Mathematics (SAUM). Launched in 2002, SAUM held workshops for teams of faculty from 66 colleges and universities. Along the way, the project also shared its insights and findings with the wider field through panels at national and regional meetings, special forums at MAA

> **"[Physics] has a robust tradition of studying student learning, but that work has not been framed by its flagship scholarly society in ways that converge with the assessment movement.**

section meetings, and an expanded and updated set of case studies. The SAUM website includes a bibliography, a communication center for SAUM workshops, links to other relevant sites and resources, FAQs, case studies and papers published earlier, new case studies, an online assessment workshop, and a downloadable copy of the project's culminating volume, *Supporting Assessment in Undergraduate Mathematics* (2006).

This is not to say that assessment has gone smoothly in mathematics or that everyone is deeply engaged. Madison points to a number of "tensions and tethers" that have hindered meaningful assessment efforts in undergraduate mathematics, and his analysis would resonate in most fields.

But the work goes on. In 2006, Madison drew on the activities of SAUM to edit a collection of ten longer case studies entitled *Assessment of Learning in College Mathematics*—the second volume in the Association for Institutional Research's series on assessment in the disciplines. After SAUM ended in 2007, the MAA created a new Committee on Assessment in early 2008, which continues to disseminate information about assessment activities at regional and national meetings of the MAA.

A final "middle-ground" example (more extensive than what some fields have done, less than others) is my own field, English Studies, as represented by the Modern Language Association (MLA). Encompassing rhetoric and composition (where there's a long history of assessment research and practice) as well as the study of literature, language, and culture (where there is not), the field was once described by a prominent department chair as "not a neat, discrete discipline but a congeries of subject matters" (quoted in the essay by Feal, Laurence, & Olsen, 2011, p. 62). Like philosophy and other humanities, it is one in which assessment was not likely to find a happy reception. And yet, like the MAA, the MLA has stepped into the breach.

In 1992 (fairly early on in the assessment movement, that is), the MLA's Association of Departments of English (ADE)

> **"**The scholarly and professional societies have a critical role to play in promoting this kind of disciplinary view of assessment. . . . But their most important contribution, as well as their biggest challenge, lies in building disciplinary communities of inquiry around good questions about student learning.

organized an ad hoc committee on assessment to consider "what advice the ADE can usefully offer to departments and chairs engaged with the problem of developing assessment initiatives" (1996, p. 2). As grist for its work, the committee surveyed department chairs, from whom they heard stories of "hope, challenge, and frustration" and, perhaps predictably, a sense from some that "nothing need be said yet at all about this still tender and conflicted topic" (p. 2).

Accordingly, the report was cautious and open-eyed about what could go wrong as departments struggled to document their students' learning, but (full disclosure: I was a member of the task force) it also offered smart advice, still relevant today, about the most constructive ways to think about assessment. Among other advice was this caution: "Don't blow it off."

Subsequently, assessment has been a thread running through various ADE and MLA activities. It is, for instance, a theme in the 2003 *Report of the ADE Ad Hoc Committee on the English Major*. A paper prepared several years later as part of MLA's participation in a Teagle Foundation initiative on the relationship between the undergraduate major and the goals of liberal education (2006-2008) includes as its fourth and final recommendation "the adoption of outcomes measurements" (although, in truth, the report is skimpy on this point). The Winter 2008 *ADE Bulletin* includes a special section on "Assessment Pro and Con." (According to MLA officials, "a search on the category 'assessment of student learning' returns a list of 135 articles in the *ADE Bulletin* archive.") And in a 2010 survey of department chairs, 86 percent reported that their unit had implemented

an assessment process, and 90 percent said that assessment had the potential to improve student learning in their department's programs (developments reported in this paragraph are from the chapter by Feal, Laurence, & Olson in the Heiland & Rosenthal volume).

Recently, leaders in the field of literary study have come together to push for further progress. In their collection of essays enticingly entitled *Literary Study, Measurement, and the Sublime: Disciplinary Assessment*, Donna Heiland and Laura Rosenthal argue for a deeper level of engagement by colleagues in the fields of English and modern languages:

> While most departments . . . are conducting assessment projects, and while many faculty members currently participate in those projects, *and* while many instructors have strong opinions about assessment, few of the questions raised by assessment have attracted the kind of sustained thought that we give to other aspects of professional life. (pp. 9–10)

The volume, developed with support from the Teagle Foundation (which has funded a good deal of discipline-based work on teaching, learning, and assessment) is not an official publication of the MLA, but it features big names in the field—including recent past president Gerald Graff—and builds on statements and materials generated under the organization's auspices. Predictably, the essays do not speak in a single voice, ranging from alarm to energetic advocacy, from theory to concrete departmental practice. But what they share is a view that assessment should be firmly grounded in the discipline and shaped by the knowledge practices and values that define it, its place in the academic and cultural landscape, and a sharper sense of the learning goals that can make students' experience with literature matter more—to them, to higher education, and to society.

Clearly, the scholarly and professional societies have a critical role to play in promoting this kind of disciplinary view of assessment. Indeed, several writers in the Heiland and Rosenthal volume (and also respondents to the NILOA survey of program-level practices) urge these organizations to step up to the assessment plate. Their efforts can be especially useful in navigating the movement's politics—the place where many of them start—by establishing committees, issuing statements, and the like. But their most important contribution, as well as their biggest challenge, lies in building disciplinary communities of inquiry around good questions about student learning.

BUILDING BRIDGES TO THE SCHOLARSHIP OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

One of the most vexing realities in higher education is the existence of silos that keep good ideas and practices from

traveling across the academic landscape in useful ways. Assessment has certainly been plagued by its tendency to operate as "a train on its own track" (to invoke a much-quoted image employed by Peter Ewell in assessment's early days), disconnected from other work, functions, and initiatives to which it should, in theory, be intimately related and which would open opportunities for deeper faculty engagement and greater impact.

Most campuses today are aware of this problem and have tried, with varying degrees of success, to connect assessment more firmly to curriculum reform and pedagogical innovation. But I want to urge an additional point of connection, as well—to the scholarship of teaching and learning. In this work, faculty bring their skills and values *as scholars in their field* to their work as educators, posing questions about their students' learning; gathering and analyzing evidence about those questions; making improvements based on what they discover; tracking the results; and sharing the insights that emerge in ways that can reviewed, critiqued, and built on by others.

As this definition suggests, the scholarship of teaching and learning and student outcomes assessment inhabit some common ground. Both ask questions about what, how, and how well students are learning. Both bring a systematic, evidence-based approach to questions of educational quality and improvement. And both go public about the learning that happens (or does not) in college and university classrooms. In these ways, the scholarship of teaching and learning and student outcomes assessment are, if you will, members of the same extended family, both aimed at building communities of inquiry and improvement.

But the two movements have mostly proceeded on separate tracks. From its early days in higher education, assessment was "consciously separated from what went on in the classroom," Peter Ewell explains (2009, p. 19), while the *sine qua non* of the scholarship of teaching and learning is faculty inquiry into the learning of their own

> "The scholarship of teaching and learning and student outcomes assessment are, if you will, members of the same extended family, both aimed at building communities of inquiry and improvement.

students. In turn, the emerging scholarship of teaching and learning community sought to distance *its* approach and language from those of assessment, concerned that getting too cozy with an institutional or administrative agenda could put at risk the grass-roots, intellectual impulse behind the movement. Indeed, many faculty who have taken up the scholarship of teaching and learning have looked with mixed feelings, and even alarm, at signs of buy-in from the provost or president, fearing that such work could become yet another requirement or be co-opted to advance someone else's agenda.

Today, however, there are signs of convergence. In a 2009 survey of campuses participating in the Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (the CASTL program, which ran from 1998-2009), many respondents noted connections with assessment. Asked about an array of "wider institutional agendas" to which the scholarship of teaching and learning had contributed, for instance, they ranked assessment fourth.

And attitudes toward assessment have been affected as well. Because of the climate created by the scholarship of teaching and learning, one campus reported, "assessment is no longer a 4-letter word"; faculty have begun to understand "that it can be done 'from the inside' according to their curiosities and remaining within their control." Another noted, "Assessment conversations have connected to the scholarship of teaching and learning to generate more meaningful assessments." A third reported looking for ways to "build bridges" between the two movements. It seems, in short, that the principles and practices of the scholarship of teaching and learning may have something to offer the work of assessment, and this is particularly so around the challenges of faculty engagement (see Hutchings, Huber, & Ciccone, 2011).

For starters, while a focus on the academic department emerged as a kind of second-level issue in assessment (with attention to cross-cutting outcomes in the first position), the scholarship of teaching and learning has been framed from the beginning as disciplinary work. CASTL, for instance, began its program for campuses by offering up a "sacrificial definition" which pointed explicitly to the importance of "methods appropriate to disciplinary epistemologies" (Cambridge, 2004, p. 2). In this same spirit, CASTL's fellowship program for individual scholars was organized in disciplinary cohorts, so historians could work with other historians, chemists with chemists, and so forth (though the final cohort was selected around the cross-disciplinary theme of integrative learning).

Along the way, Mary Taylor Huber and Sherwyn Morreale edited a volume on *Disciplinary Styles in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning* (2002), exploring the quite different contexts for such work in a broad array of fields. More recently, disciplinary communities have begun to organize themselves as special-interest groups (in history, sociology,

geography, biology, and the humanities) under the umbrella of the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning.

The point of this disciplinary orientation is not to deny the value of working across disciplines; some of the most powerful experiences in the CASTL program, for instance, came as a result of connections and borrowing across fields. The point is that the scholarship of teaching and learning is *practitioner* research; as such, it focuses not on learning in general or even learning across the campus (how well do this institution's students solve problems or write?) but asks (as one CASTL participant from English did) "what does it mean for me to teach *this* text with *this* approach to *this* population of students at *this* time in *this* classroom?" (Salvatori, 2002, p. 298).

This is a formulation that assessment has largely eschewed, and in so doing it has missed the opportunity to tap into a tremendous well of faculty energy. Building bridges with the scholarship of teaching and learning might help move assessment down into the discipline and the classroom, where real change happens.

The scholarship of teaching and learning has also cultivated a wide variety of methods, reflecting the range of approaches characteristic of different fields. As Huber and Morreale point out in the introduction to their volume on disciplinary styles, scholars of teaching and learning bring their fields' "intellectual history, agreements, disputes about subject matter and methods" to the scholarship of teaching and learning (Huber and Morreale, 2002, p. 2). Thus, while there are interesting instances of methodological borrowing (a microbiologist employing think-alouds that she learned about from a historian, for instance), scholars of teaching and learning have mostly relied on methods from their own fields.

In this spirit, we see English faculty investigating their students' learning through the use of "close reading," management professors using focus groups, and psychologists looking for ways to establish comparison groups. In fairness, much of the literature on assessment and many of its most exciting developments reinforce this notion of disciplinary styles. But in moving from departmental to more deeply disciplinary work, greater emphasis on the field's signature methods and conceptions of evidence and argument might well catalyze a next stage of work.

Finally, assessment could take a page from what might be called the scholarship of teaching and learning's "theory of action." Assessment proceeds on the assumption that data will prompt people to make changes: You assess, you get results, and you make improvements based on the results. As it turns out, the process is balkier than this formulation suggests. As Charles Blaich and Trudy Banta argue in a January/February 2011 *Change* article, the biggest challenge facing assessment is not getting good data but prompting action.

In fairness, the scholarship of teaching and learning has also placed significant hopes on the power of data and evidence to drive improvement. And it has faced its own challenges in this regard; translating highly contextualized findings from a scholarship of teaching and learning project into terms that can be used by those in other settings isn't easy. But the theory of action that distinguishes such work from assessment is best captured in its invocation of and identity as "scholarship."

That is, the Project (with a capital P) of the scholarship of teaching and learning is not simply aimed at local improvement. Rather, the faculty engaged in this work see themselves as part of a larger knowledge-building enterprise, studying and adding to what is understood about how students learn history or sociology or (for that matter) the integrative skills to think across fields.

This aspiration is part of what has given the work its appeal: It's local but it's not *only* local. As such, it must be captured in ways that others can review, draw from, and build on. This is what we mean when we call something scholarship. And in the culture of academic life, the scholarship of teaching and learning's larger, knowledge-building aspiration has been an engine for faculty engagement that assessment might well tap into.

MODEST STEPS TOWARD SHARED GOALS

I'm not arguing that assessment should take on the mantle of the scholarship of teaching and learning or that the scholarship of teaching and learning should become "the new assessment." There are good reasons that the two movements have kept their separate identities, and they should continue to do so. Blurring the lines between them too much could put at risk the intellectual impulse that lies behind the scholarship of teaching and learning and might not serve assessment's imperatives well either. But thinking of the two movements as not-so-distant cousins can open the door to useful exchange and cross-fertilization.

Imagine, for instance, a campus center for teaching that brings the two groups together, or an occasional lunch hosted by the provost's office. What questions about students' learning are the two communities investigating? Are there any overlaps? What projects does each have underway or in mind for the future, and how might they collaborate or inform one another's efforts?

Imagine the assessment office commissioning groups of faculty to undertake scholarship of teaching and learning projects that more deeply explore (within their respective academic programs) findings from, say, the National Survey of Student Engagement or the Collegiate Learning Assessment. Or imagine those working on assessment documenting their efforts in ways that could be peer reviewed and put in a dossier for promotion and tenure, under the heading of the scholarship of teaching and learning.

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Although my focus in this piece is on the benefits that might come to assessment through the scholarship of teaching and learning, both movements would benefit from a bi-directional exchange. Drawing on the principles of the scholarship of teaching and learning can help assessment solve the movement's most enduring challenge: engaging faculty and making a difference in the classroom.

Meanwhile, a closer connection with assessment may help embed the scholarship of teaching and learning more deeply in institutional life, raising its chances for long-term viability. But not only do the two movements stand to gain from a closer connection—higher education needs their combined strengths in making student learning a site for serious faculty inquiry, meaning making, and improvement. **C**

Resources

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■ Banta, T., & Blaich, C. (2011, January/February). Closing the assessment loop. *Change, 43*(1), 22–30.

■ Ewell, P., Paulson, K., & Kinzie, J. (2011). *Down and in: Program-level assessment practices*. Urbana, IL: National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment.

■ Heiland, D., & Rosenthal, L. J. (Eds.) (2011). *Literary study, measurement, and the sublime: Disciplinary assessment*. The Teagle Foundation. Retrieved from http://www.teagle.org/disciplinaryassessment/

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Websites

■ American Philosophical Society. (2008). *APA statements on the profession: Outcomes assessment*. http://www.apaonline.org/documents/governance/APA_Outcomes_2008.pdf

■ Association of American Colleges and Universities. *Engaging departments with advancing and assessing essential outcomes*. www.aacu.org/engaging.departments/index.cfm. Also see the Winter 2010 issue of *Peer Review:* http://www.aacu.org/peerreview/pr-wi10/pr-wi10_Finley.cfm

■ Association for Institutional Research. For volumes on assessment in chemistry, writing, engineering, mathematics, and business education, see www.airweb.org/?page=204.

■ Association of Departments of English. (1996). *Report of the ADE Ad Hoc Committee on Assessment*. http://www.ade.org/reports/index.htm

■ Mathematics Association of America. *Supporting undergraduate mathematics assessment*. http://www.maa.org/saum/

■ National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment. For several papers cited in this article and many more resources and links, see: http://www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/
Within the NILOA site, also note links related to assessment resources by field: www.learningoutcomesassessment.org/CollegesUniversityPrograms.html#Art

LEVELS
OF ASSESSMENT

From the Student to the Institution

By Ross Miller and Andrea Leskes

students»course»program
»institutions

AAC&U
*Association
of American
Colleges and
Universities*

LEVELS

OF ASSESSMENT

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Publications in AAC&U's Greater Expectations Series

Greater Expectations: A New Vision for Learning as Nation Goes to College (2002)

Taking Responsibility for the Quality of the Baccalaureate Degree (2004)

The Art and Science of Assessing General Education Outcomes, by Andrea Leskes and Barbara D. Wright (2005)

General Education: A Self-Study Guide for Review and Assessment, by Andrea Leskes and Ross Miller (2005)

General Education and Student Transfer: Fostering Intentionality and Coherence in State Systems, edited by Robert Shoenberg (2005)

Levels of Assessment: From the Student to the Institution, by Ross Miller and Andrea Leskes (2005)

Other Recent AAC&U Publications on General Education and Assessment

Creating Shared Responsibility for General Education and Assessment, special issue of *Peer Review,* edited by David Tritelli (Fall 2004)

General Education and the Assessment Reform Agenda, by Peter Ewell (2004)

Our Students' Best Work: A Framework for Accountability Worthy of Our Mission (2004)

Advancing Liberal Education: Assessment Practices on Campus, by Michael Ferguson (2005)

Contents

Introduction

Assessment can answer important questions, questions about the learning of individual students, the effectiveness of a single course or program, or even the entire institution. Precision in formulating the questions of interest helps to pinpoint the level of analysis, determine the appropriate methods, and guide data sampling, aggregation, interpretation, and use.

This short paper describes five levels of complexity in assessment at the college level. It was written to help clarify the all-too-common "assessment morass," where questions are left unstated, levels of analysis conflated, and evidence inappropriately gathered.

Our basic assumption is that evidence of student learning should be used for multiple levels of assessment, and we limit our comments here to such evidence. Campuses do, of course, also gather and use information less directly linked to student learning (e.g., related to teaching loads or facilities) and factor it into complex analyses of the learning environment, especially at the program and institutional levels.

The best evidence of learning comes from direct observation of student work rather than from an input inventory (e.g., list of courses completed) or summary of self reports. The student work observed can be either required for a course (embedded) or requested in another context such as a testing situation. Course-embedded assignments provide the *most valid evidence for all levels of analysis* because they are closely aligned with faculty expectations and with the teaching-learning process. The ways of sampling, aggregating, and grouping the evidence for analysis (to make collection more manageable) will depend on the original questions posed. The questions will also determine how the data are interpreted to produce action. Internally, faculty members and staff accomplish aggregation by describing standards, translating them into consistent scoring scales, and anonymously applying the resulting rubrics to the evidence at hand. Such a process does not assign a grade to an individual student but rather attempts to understand better the learning process and how to improve its effectiveness. External assessment tools (e.g., commercial tests) aggregate results by cohort or institutions.

The Art and Science of Assessing General Education Outcomes (Leskes and Wright 2005) and *General Education: A Self-Study Guide for Review and Assessment* (Leskes and Miller 2005), both recently released by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) as part of its Greater Expectations initiative, complement this short paper. Additional resources can be found on the AAC&U Web site (www.aacu.org) and on pages 13 and 14. ■

Level 1. Assessing individual student learning within courses

Formative and summative questions would probe what individual students are learning and how well they are meeting the goals of a course (whether related to disciplinary content or to using transferable intellectual and practical skills).

Typical assessment questions at this level:

- Is the student learning as expected?

- Has the student's work improved over the semester?

- How well has the student achieved the learning outcomes set for the course?

- What are the student's strengths and weaknesses?

- How well is the instructor communicating with and engaging the student?

Sources of evidence: All student work embedded in the course (for example quizzes and exams, papers, projects, presentations, and portfolios) can provide evidence. This is the level of assessment at which instructor-assigned grades typically provide feedback to students about their progress and success.

Aggregation of data: Aggregation is often sequential as evidence is collected for each student during the course to track individual learning and improvement. Typically a final course grade holistically sums up a semester of learning.

Data uses:

- as formative and/or summative feedback to students so they can understand their progress in the course and ways to improve learning

- for feedback to the course instructor on how well he or she is communicating with and motivating each student (can shape subsequent lessons and assignments within the course)

Responsibilities: Individual students are responsible for the effort they exert, the quality of their work, and meeting the instructor's expectations. They are more likely to fulfill these responsibilities when consistently informed of learning goals and academic norms. By teaching students how to conduct self- and peer-assessments, the professor can improve student understanding of the learning process.

Individual instructors are responsible for setting expectations and making them transparent to students. As educators, their professional responsibility extends to the quality of their own teaching and to monitoring how well the pedagogical methods they employ assist students in learning. While the holistic assignment of grades (an A, B, or F) is a way to evaluate student work, such grades represent averaged estimates of overall quality and communicate little to students about their strengths, weaknesses, or ways to improve. A better way to aid learning is through analytical assessments, which can be as simple as written comments on student papers or as structured as the use of a detailed rubric for an assignment; such analysis can reveal precisely which concepts a student finds challenging. ■

ASSESSING INDIVIDUAL STUDENT LEARNING IN A COURSE

Anne Phillips, professor of English at **Kansas State University**, prepares a detailed rubric so students understand the elements of an "A" paper. She defines what she means by

- an interesting thesis (results from thought and judgment)
- useful organization (provides a plan for proving the thesis)
- rich detail (includes colorful examples)
- helpful paragraphing (introductory paragraph engages the reader)
- polished mechanics (smoothly connects sentences)

Her students can use the rubric to self- or peer-assess their writing as well as to strive toward improvement.

Level 2. Assessing individual student learning across courses

Formative and summative questions would probe what and how well individual students are learning during the progression of a particular program (e.g., the major, general education) or over their years at college.

Typical assessment questions at this level:

- Has the student's work improved and/or met standards during the program or since admission to college?

- How well has the student achieved the disciplinary outcomes of the major program?

- How well has the student achieved the general learning outcomes of the institution across four years?

Sources of evidence:

- embedded work in individual courses, for example quizzes and exams, papers, projects, presentations

- portfolios that assemble samples of the student's work in a number of courses

- capstone experiences or projects

- student self-reflection on the learning process

- relevant externally developed exams (e.g., for licensure)

Typical grades can provide some holistic feedback to the student but are difficult to interpret across courses except at very broad levels (such as a GPA) or to disaggregate into learning outcomes (e.g., how the student has learned to communicate orally).

Aggregation of data: Given appropriate formats and data, students can aggregate evidence of their own learning (e.g., of a particular skill such as writing) across courses, programs, or their entire time in college to track improvement. Traditionally, departments aggregate an individual's grades across courses when they require, for example, that their majors must maintain a minimum GPA of 2.5 in disciplinary courses.

Data uses:

■ as formative and/or summative feedback to students so they can understand their progress over time and ways to improve learning

■ for feedback to program faculty on how well individual students are achieving the goals and outcomes

Responsibilities: Individual students are responsible for the quality of their work and for gathering evidence of their learning. They are also responsible for integrating their learning over time and across courses. *Collectively* faculty members share the responsibility for clarifying goals and outcomes and providing rubrics for student self assessment. *Individually* faculty members are responsible for objectively assessing the assembled work samples or the test results and providing both holistic and analytic feedback to the student. ■

ASSESSING INDIVIDUAL STUDENT LEARNING ACROSS COURSES

The teacher education program at **Alverno College** asks students to demonstrate their readiness for student teaching by showing how well they perform in certain ability areas (e.g., conceptualization, communication, integration). Using common frameworks and clear expectations, students create portfolios that include lesson plans, a critique of a videotaped lesson, and self assessments. An educational professional from the local P-12 system critiques the portfolio as do department faculty members.

Level 3. Assessing courses

FORMATIVE OR SUMMATIVE QUESTIONS address the achievements of an entire class or the effectiveness of individual or multiple-section courses.

Typical assessment questions at this level:

- How well is the class collectively achieving the course's content outcomes and objectives (at any one point, at the end)? How well is the class collectively achieving general or transferable learning outcomes and objectives?

- Are the assignments helping students achieve the expected level of knowledge or skills?

- How well are students prepared for the following courses in the sequence?

- Is the course level appropriately targeted for the ability(ies) of the students when they begin?

- With what degree of consistency do different sections of a course achieve similar outcomes?

- How well is the course fulfilling its purpose in a larger curriculum?

Sources of evidence:

- embedded assignments of students in the course (papers, exams, projects, journals, portfolios)

- externally or commercially developed tests, as long as they are well aligned with the teaching and learning of the course

- course portfolios constructed by the instructor that include syllabi, expectations, and examples of student work

- for multi-section courses, common assignments that provide evidence across sections

At the course level, traditional holistic student grades are unlikely to provide sufficiently detailed insights to answer the questions unless tightly tied to explicit analytical standards and scoring rubrics.

Aggregation of data:

- *To assess individual courses:* Sampling the work of all students in a course can reveal how well the course content and assignments are helping students achieve the expected outcomes.

- *To assess multi-section courses:* Common assignments across sections (or common requirements such as a student or course portfolio) can be sampled, averaged, compared, discussed, or otherwise reviewed by the faculty involved and/or by departments or committees to ensure consistency across sections.

- *To assess both individual courses and multi-section courses:* Student portfolios and end-of-course reflections can provide evidence of both cognitive and affective learning outcomes aggregated at the level of the individual student.

Data uses:

- for formative feedback so instructors can improve learning

- for summative feedback to inform planning for the future by an instructor or a course committee

- to support cross-sectional analysis of how consistently multi-section courses are achieving important learning outcomes or the purposes of the course in a sequence

Responsibilities: Instructors and committees are responsible for setting expectations for the course, establishing common standards for multi-section courses, understanding how the course fits into a coherent pathway of learning, and using analysis of the evidence to improve teaching and course design. ∎

USING STUDENT LEARNING TO ASSESS A COURSE

At **Binghamton University**, for a course to be included in a general education category the instructor must agree to certain guidelines established by the faculty senate. To assess the course, the oversight committee asks the faculty member for a course portfolio that includes examples of student work representing high quality, average, and unacceptable achievement. Guided by approved criteria, an assessment team reviews the course portfolio in relation to the desired goals for student learning. The data gathered are used to determine how well courses satisfy the learning outcomes for each category; they can be further aggregated to examine the category as a whole.

Level 4. Assessing programs

SOME FORMATIVE BUT MOSTLY SUMMATIVE QUESTIONS guide assessment of programs (e.g., general education or a major).

Typical assessment questions at this level:

- Do the program's courses, individually and collectively, contribute to its outcomes as planned?

- How well does the program fulfill its purposes in the entire curriculum?

- How well do the program's sub-categories (e.g., distributive requirements in general education) contribute to the overall purposes?

- Does the program's design resonate with its expected outcomes?

- Are the courses organized in a coherent manner to allow for cumulative learning?

- Does the program advance institution-wide goals as planned?

Sources of evidence: Direct evidence of student learning from many sources can contribute to program-level assessment: assignments from individual courses, student portfolios built over the program's duration, entering student tests or assignments, capstone projects, results of common assignments, commercial tests. Selected assignments from other programs can be re-scored (given a "second reading") by program faculty (e.g., to assess the general education program's success in developing such institution-wide goals as communication, quantitative literacy, critical thinking, or ethical responsibility). Given the number of potential data sources and the amount of evidence that could be amassed, careful planning is needed to identify the important points for sampling and analysis. Program assessment may likely involve several sources of evidence gathered at the point of entry, a midpoint, and at the end of the program. End point data is particularly valuable as a summative indicator of how well the program, taken as a whole, is achieving its goals. Individual student grades are not informative at this level.

Aggregation of data: Course-level assessments of the courses in a program can be analyzed individually or collectively to reveal whether program goals are being achieved; sampling might be prudent in a large program. Information about the sub-categories in a program (e.g., distribution areas) can be aggregated to the program level (e.g., general education). Sampling of student portfolios considered excellent, average, and sub-par can vividly portray growth in student performance from beginning to the end of a program. Disaggregated data can reveal how sub-groups of students are succeeding in the program. Some external, commercially available assessments can be compared to norms (e.g., the Major Field Tests from ETS).

Data uses:

- to confirm the purpose of the program (e.g., its place in the entire curriculum or connection to mission)

- to check alignment of program design with program outcomes

- to discern how well the program, from its beginning to end, fosters cumulative learning of the desired outcomes

- to discover how well the program as a whole enables students to achieve end-point levels of competence for all program outcomes

- to identify superfluous and/or missing curricular and co-curricular elements in the program

Responsibilities: Responsibility largely rests on the program faculty, *collectively* and *individually*. Collectively, the faculty assumes responsibility for the entire program achieving its—and relevant institution-wide—goals and outcomes. Individual instructors are responsible for advancing the program and institutional goals embedded in their courses. Faculty members cooperate in establishing program "standards" and scoring rubrics for the quality of work expected. ■

USING STUDENT LEARNING TO ASSESS A PROGRAM

At **Buffalo State University**, the general education program is built on student learning in twelve areas: nine discipline- and three skill-based. A complete cycle of assessment occurs over three years with four areas assessed each year to provide the program-level picture. Evidence gathered in individual general education courses is compared to detailed statements of learning outcomes and objectives for each area. The faculty members from the relevant departments design the type of work product expected, a range which includes objective exams, common embedded exam questions, assigned papers, and portfolios. The same professors also pick the most appropriate sampling method and set assessment standards. Evidence aggregated by skill or disciplinary area is then analyzed and discussed by the departments, leading to changes in the program when necessary.

Level 5. Assessing the institution

INSTITUTION-LEVEL ASSESSMENT can be undertaken for internal improvement or to meet external accountability demands. Results of the former can often also serve the latter purpose.

Typical assessment questions at this level:

- What do the institution's educational programs add up to in terms of student learning?

- How well are the institution's goals and outcomes for student learning being achieved?

- How much have our students learned over their college years?

- How well does the institution educate students for the complexities of the twenty-first century?

- What evidence is there that the institution is fulfilling its educational mission?

- How can institutional effectiveness be demonstrated authentically to external stakeholders?

Sources of evidence: A significant body of evidence from multiple sources will be required to answer institution-level questions. Documentation of how well students are meeting institution-wide goals and outcomes requires a clear statement of these learning expectations. The picture of student learning will be based primarily on summarized data from program assessments, supplemented by results from appropriate exams (such as those taken for graduate or professional school admissions, licensure, or certification). Sampling student work, both at the entry- and graduation-levels, can serve to answer value-added assessment questions. Some selected course-level assessments—particularly from common experience courses such as a required core—could contribute to the institution-wide picture. Indirect measures of student learning (National Study of Student Engagement [NSSE], Cooperative Institutional Research Program [CIRP], etc.) may also be informative at this level but should be considered as supplementary to the direct measures.

Aggregation of data: Much of the data will already have been aggregated when analyzed for institutional-level assessment: aggregated by courses, by programs, or by student cohort. For example, sampled, aggregated, and summarized student achievement of the desired learning outcomes in a freshman general education course could be compared to sampled, aggregated, and summarized achievement in a senior capstone. Or an analysis of the cohort completing the Collegiate Learning Assessment instrument could reveal the level of critical thinking in the graduating class. Constructing both narrative and quantitative summaries of the "stories" from programs will shape the broad picture of teaching and learning at the institution. Disaggregated data can reveal how well sub-groups of students are succeeding.

Data uses:

- to reveal what students know and can do when they graduate in order to guide the design of the institution's undergraduate program

- to understand the value added by an institution's undergraduate program

- to discover the interactions among various programs (e.g., general education and the majors), especially in how they help students achieve institution-wide learning goals

- to guide and support decisions about resource allocation, faculty hiring, and professional development

- to demonstrate to external stakeholders the institution's effectiveness in educating students

Responsibilities: The responsibility for institution-level assessment rests with administrators working in close collaboration with the faculty, student affairs professionals, and other campus staff members. Collaborative groups would design an ongoing comprehensive program of institutional assessment, use data to improve learning, keep student success a top priority, ensure linkages to strategic planning and resource allocation, and communicate with external groups. ■

USING STUDENT LEARNING TO ASSESS AN INSTITUTION

Truman State University uses a variety of instruments—some developed internally and others externally—for comprehensive institution-level assessment. Direct measures of performance include a portfolio compiled by seniors, the nationally normed Academic Profile test for juniors, writing samples from a writing-across-the-university program, senior capstones, and standardized senior tests in the major (e.g., GRE and GMAT). This direct evidence is complemented by indirect measures (such as CIRP for freshmen, NSSE for freshmen and seniors, and alumni surveys). In addition to contributing to the institutional profile, some results are made available by discipline or division.

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Leskes, Andrea, and Ross Miller. 2005. *General education: A self-study guide for review and assessment.* Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities.

Leskes, Andrea, and Barbara D. Wright. 2005. *The art and science of assessing general education outcomes.* Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities.

Web Resources

On individual student-level assessment

Individual student learning within courses

depts.alverno.edu/saal/essentials.html

Gateway to information about Alverno College's rich assessment practices

ustudies.semo.edu/oralcom/holistic.htm

An oral presentation holistic scoring rubric from Southeast Missouri State University

www.flaguide.org

Gateway to Field-tested Learning Assessment Guide (FLAG) and multiple assessment resources in science, mathematics, engineering, and technology

www.k-state.edu/assessment/Learning/APaper.pdf

Five Characteristics of an A Paper—a scoring guide for writing from Kansas State University

www.uas.alaska.edu/humanities/documents/j-sp-comp-assess.pdf

Eight public speaking competencies and criteria for assessment from the University of Alaska Southeast

Individual student learning across courses

kings.edu/academics/capprogram.htm

King's College assessment information—especially the sections on the "sophomore-junior diagnostic project" and the "senior integrated assessment"

www.wvsctc.edu/InstitutionalEffectiveness/Self-Study%20Attachments.pdf

See page 115 of West Virginia Sate Community and Technical College's self-study for a student portfolio assessment rubric

On course-level assessment

provost.binghamton.edu/policy.html

Click on the link to "Assessment of General Education at Binghamton University: Program and Guidelines" for course assessment guidelines

www.bgsu.edu/offices/provost/academicprograms/genedprogram/Embedded%20assessment.htm

Course-level assessment at Bowling Green State University using course-embedded assessment to gather data

On program-level assessment

> web.bsu.edu/IRAA/AA/WB/contents.htm
> > An assessment workbook from Ball State University
>
> www.buffalostate.edu/offices/assessment/gened.htm
> > General education program assessment at Buffalo State University. Also major program
> > assessment at www.buffalostate.edu/offices/assessment/majorprogram.htm
>
> www.calstatela.edu/academic/aa/ugs/geassess/geplan.htm
> > Assessment plan for general education, California State University, Los Angeles
>
> www.ets.org/portal/site/ets/menuitem.htm
> > ETS link to standardized tests, some appropriate for general education—see especially MAPP
>
> www.sinclair.edu/about/gened/reports/assessment/index.cfm
> > Assessment of General Education at Sinclair Community College

On institution-level assessment

> assessment.truman.edu/components/index.htm
> > Truman State University, a leader in assessment, describes the components of a
> > comprehensive assessment program
>
> assessment.umflint.edu/GeneralEducation/
> > Documents from University of Michigan, Flint clarify that general education goals are
> > developed throughout a student's time at the university, not only during study in the general
> > education program

On multiple levels of assessment

> depts.alverno.edu/ere/index.html
> > Multiple links to Alverno College's well-developed systems of assessment
>
> www.ets.org
> > Select "Resources for Higher Education"
>
> www.stanford.edu/group/ncpi/unspecified/toolkits.shtml
> > National Center for Postsecondary Improvement at Stanford University assessment toolkits
> > (Improving Student Assessment, Engagement in Assessment, and State Government and
> > Regional Accreditation Association Policies for Assessment of Student Learning: Tools for
> > Policymakers and Administrators, among others)
>
> www.winthrop.edu/acad_aff/GenEd/NewGenEdProgram.htm
> > Winthrop University document linked to detailed descriptions of outcomes and assessments

Note: All Web addresses current as of publication date.

Print Resources

> Gaff, Jerry G., James L. Ratcliff, et al. 1997. *Handbook of the undergraduate curriculum*.
> > San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
> > In particular Part Five: Administration and assessment of the curriculum
>
> Maki, Peggy L. 2004. *Assessing for learning: Building a sustainable commitment across the
> > institution*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.
> > Primarily institution-level and program-level assessment
>
> Middle States Commission on Higher Education. 2003. *Student learning assessment: Options
> > and resources*. Philadelphia: Middle States Commission on Higher Education.

About the Authors

Ross Miller joined the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) in 1999, as director of programs for the Office of Education and Quality Initiatives, to assist in the planning and implementation of the Greater Expectations initiative. He is also assistant director of the AAC&U Institute on General Education.

Miller holds a BM and MM in trumpet performance from the University of Michigan and an EdD in music education from the University of Illinois. During his thirteen years at Nazareth College (Rochester, New York), he taught both undergraduate and graduate music education students while also serving as director of the graduate program. In an assignment as Nazareth's assessment coordinator, Miller was responsible for assessment of the college's general education program. He has served as a question writer in the arts for the National Assessment of Educational Progress and worked on a team developing a high school outcomes test in the arts for the New York State Education Department.

Andrea Leskes, vice president for education and quality initiatives at AAC&U since 1999, led the Greater Expectations initiative on the aims and best practices of undergraduate education for the twenty-first century. The principal author of *Greater Expectations: A New Vision for Learning as a Nation Goes to College,* Leskes also directs AAC&U's annual Institute on General Education, writes regularly for the association's quarterly journals, and consults with campuses on curricular reform.

Leskes holds a PhD in cell biology from the Rockefeller University and an MA in French from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. She formerly served as vice president for academic affairs and professor of comparative literature at the American University of Paris, vice provost for undergraduate education at Northeastern University, associate dean at Brandeis University, and assistant dean at Dartmouth College. ■

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March 2016 - January 2017

Applications will be accepted November 15, 2015 - February 15, 2016

Purpose of the Academy
The **WSCUC Assessment Leadership Academy (ALA)** prepares postsecondary professionals to provide leadership in a wide range of activities related to assessment of student learning, from facilitating workshops and supporting the scholarship of assessment to assisting administrative leadership in planning, budgeting, and decision-making related to educational effectiveness. ALA graduates have also provided consultation to the WSCUC region and served on WSCUC committees and evaluation teams; some have moved on to new positions with greater responsibilities. The Academy curriculum includes both structured and institutionally-tailored learning activities that address the full spectrum of assessment issues and places those issues in the national context of higher education policy on educational quality, accreditation, and accountability.

Who Should Participate in the Academy?
Higher education faculty, staff, and administrators who are committed to:
- Developing assessment expertise
- Serving in an on-going assessment leadership role at their institution
- Devoting significant time to complete ALA reading and homework assignments

Assessment Leadership Academy Faculty
ALA participants will interact with and learn from nationally-recognized higher education leaders. Faculty and Co-Facilitators of the ALA lead interactive class sessions and are available to participants for one-on-one consultations.

Faculty and Co-Facilitators of the ALA:
- **Mary J. Allen**, Former Director of the CA State University Institute for Teaching & Learning
- **Amy Driscoll**, Former Director of Teaching, Learning, and Assessment, CSU Monterey Bay

Guest Faculty Have Included:
- **Trudy Banta**, Senior Advisor to the Chancellor for Academic Planning and Evaluation, IUPUI
- **Marilee Bresciani**, Professor of Postsecondary Education Leadership, San Diego State University
- **Peter Ewell**, Vice President, National Center for Higher Education Management Systems
- **Adrianna Kezar**, Associate Professor for Higher Education, University of Southern California
- **Jillian Kinzie**, Associate Director, Center for Postsecondary Research & NSSE Institute
- **Kathleen Yancey**, Kellogg W. Hunt Professor of English, Florida State University

Learning Goals
Participants who complete Academy requirements will acquire foundational knowledge of the history, theory, and concepts of assessment; they will also develop expertise in training and consultation, campus leadership for assessment, and the scholarship of assessment.

Application Process and Deadline
Each year about 30 professionals are admitted. Participants are selected through an online application process. Applications for the 2016-17 class will be accepted from November 15, 2015 until February 15, 2016.

More Information
For more information and application materials, please see **Assessment Leadership Academy** on the WSCUC website http://www.wascsenior.org/ala/overview

Notes

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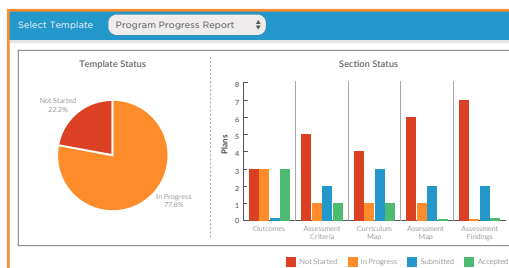
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