

Building Assessment into New General Education Courses

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Why Assessment?

- Improvement
- Benchmark - compare current performance to previous performance or national benchmarks
- Inform planning or decision making
- Inform policy discussions
- Evaluate programs
- Help attain additional funds/resources
- Celebrate success (continue or potentially expand)
- Accreditation requirements
- Other external pressures

From SACS

3.5.1 “The institution identifies college-level competencies within the general education core and provides evidence that graduates have attained those competencies.”

3.4.1 “The institution demonstrates that each educational program for which academic credit is awarded (a) is approved by the faculty and the administration, and (b) establishes and evaluates program and **learning outcomes.**”

Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (2004).
Principles of accreditation: Foundations for quality enhancement.

The Assessment Cycle



Goals

- Broad, general statements
- What the curriculum intends to accomplish
- Clearly linked to the University's mission statement

Learning Outcomes

- detailed, specific statements about how the curriculum meets the Goals
- “A graduate of Appalachian will be able to”
- Should be:
 - Specific
 - Measurable
 - Attainable
 - Realistic
 - Timely



Method

Key Questions

- What claims would a program (course faculty) like to be able to make regarding the impact of its services (course)?
- What evidence is required to convince a reasonable person that those claims are accurate?

Assessment Tools

- Student/Faculty Self-Reports
 - national (CSEQ, NSSE/FSSE, etc.)
 - home grown surveys (student and alumni surveys)
- Exams/tests
 - standardized tests (MFAT, ACT-CAAP, CLA, etc.)
 - course-embedded tests
- Course-Embedded Assessment - reports, projects, portfolios, syllabus review
- Overall work product – career portfolios, capstone projects/theses, etc.

Defining Some Terms

- Portfolios are collections of students' work over time that provides longitudinal evidence of student achievement.
- Capstone projects are culminating projects that provide evidence of how well a student integrates and applies principles, concepts, and abilities.
- Rubrics are scoring tools developed to help evaluate qualitative data by providing a specific set of criteria to be rated and what is needed to achieve each level of performance for each criterion (usually rated 1-4; unacceptable to excellent/undeveloped to exemplary).

Types of Measures

- Direct: students demonstrate what they gained;
product
 - Examples – portfolios, pre-/post-tests, exhibitions, paper, presentation, taped performances, clinical evaluations, observations, standardized tests, course-embedded assessments, capstone experience
- Indirect: report (self or other) of what they gained
 - Examples – surveys or focus groups of students, alums, or employers; exit interviews; external review of program; retention and graduation rates; involvement; success of students after graduation (graduate school, career)



Course-Embedded Assessment

Advantages to C-E Assessment

- STUDENT MOTIVATION
 - “authentic assessment”
 - Higher response rate
 - Better performance
- Kills 2 birds with 1 stone
 - Use same product for grade and assessment
- Expectations and results transparent to everyone

Grades vs. Assessment

- Grade = student performance
Assessment = course/program performance
- Grade = one student's work
Assessment = aggregated work of all students
- Disappointing grade → focus on changing student
Disappointing assessment → focus on changing course/program

C-E Strategy 1: Tests

- Embed questions related to learning outcomes into regular course exams
- Same questions for multiple sections of course (or potentially across all of general education)

Course-Embedded Tests

<u>Student</u>	<u>LO1</u>	<u>LO2</u>	<u>LO3</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Grade</u>
(# of ?s	20	20	20	40)	
1	20	12	8	38	78 C
2	20	20	15	40	95 A
3	19	16	12	30	77 C
4	20	19	8	40	87 B
5	18	18	14	35	85 B
Assmt.	19	17	11		

C-E Strategy #2: Rubrics for Papers, Presentations, Performances, Etc.

- Create a rubric to be used to evaluate student achievement of learning outcomes
- Steps to building a rubric:
 - Identify learning outcomes addressed by assignment
 - Specify what you are measuring
 - Select levels of achievement (ex. 1=poor to 4=excellent)
 - Clearly describe each level of achievement

Examples of Rubrics

- Examples of holistic scoring rubrics:

<http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/assessment/Rubrics.htm>

- Examples of primary trait analysis rubrics:

http://gened.geneseo.edu/pdfs/assess_tools_revised.pdf

<http://www.eiu.edu/~assess/> (see speaking rubric)

<http://www.csufresno.edu/ir/assessment/rubric.shtml> (see critical thinking rubric)

<http://www.sinclair.edu/about/gened/genedrubs/index.cfm>

- How to create a rubric from scratch

http://intranet.eps.k12.il.us/Assessments/Ideas_and_Rubrics/Create_Rubric/create_rubric.html (This is a site from the Chicago Public Schools and it provides an excellent step-by-step process for developing a rubric regardless of the level of learning.)

The background of the slide features a pattern of stylized autumn leaves in various shades of orange and brown, set against a darker orange gradient background. The leaves are scattered across the frame, with some showing detailed vein structures.

Examples of Indirect Measures

Writing Designator at ASU

- At the end of the semester, students answer the following:
 - Rate how much this course has helped your writing
 - How much feedback have you received on your writing in this course?
 - Did the feedback you received in this course help you to improve your writing?
 - Were you held to high standards of writing in this course?

Student Survey Items at W&M

Course:

1. Are you taking this course to fulfill GER1?
If not, when/how did you fulfill GER1?
2. Did you have problems getting into this course?
To what extent did [course]
3. involve numerical calculation?
4. explain why the approaches and calculations used
in the course work?
5. apply mathematics to study real-world problems or
to disciplines other than mathematics?

Note: Q3-5 match up directly with learning outcomes for W&M's GER1

Course Portfolios at W&M

- instructors submit an electronic course portfolio for one section of their course
 - narrative describing how course experiences align with learning expectations
 - Example: 1) numerical computations; 2) Mathematical theory; 3) practical applications
 - course syllabus, course material
 - examples of excellent and marginal student work
 - student survey responses (assessment office)

More information: http://www.wm.edu/wmoa/general_education_req.htm

Assessment Ideals

- more than one faculty member is involved in the assessment – inter-rater reliability
- multiple measures are used for assessment
- focus is NOT on an individual instructor or section of a course – assessment is about evaluation of a program (Gen Ed)
- cyclical – generally don't assess every outcome every year
- criteria for acceptable performance is established as part of the assessment plan
- this is not about keeping score, rather it is about institutional self-assessment

What to Include in Your Application

- Identify general education learning outcomes your course will address
- Identify method(s) of assessment
- Identify performance standards
 - What are your expectations?
- Identify who will be involved with assessment

What to Include in Your Final Report

- Identify general education learning outcomes your course addressed
- Identify method(s) of assessment
- Identify performance standards
- Summarize actual results
- Recommendations for future

Need Additional Information?

- Contact Us
 - Pete Wachs – wachspm@appstate.edu
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 - IRAP Office X4090
- The premiere source for internet resources on higher education outcome assessment:
<http://www2.acs.ncsu.edu/UPA/assmt/resource.htm>