Assessing Student Learning Outcomes A: Best Practices in Assessment and Accreditation

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NILOA’s mission is to discover and disseminate effective use of assessment data to strengthen undergraduate education and support institutions in their assessment efforts.

- Surveys
- Web Scans
- Case Studies
- Focus Groups
- Occasional Papers
- Website
- Resources
- Newsletter
- Presentations
- Transparency Framework
- Featured Websites
- Accreditation Resources
- Assessment Event Calendar
- Assessment News
- Measuring Quality Inventory
- Policy Analysis
- Environmental Scan
- Degree Qualifications Profile
- Tuning
- Learning System

www.learningoutcomesassessment.org
Congratulations to the 2017 Excellence in Assessment (EIA) Designees!
Mon, Aug 21, 2017 - 08:30 am

Five colleges and universities were named the 2017 Excellence in Assessment (EIA) Designees, recognizing their commitment to the comprehensive assessment of student learning outcomes as a means to drive internal improvement and advance student success: Bowling Green State University; James Madison University; Middlesex Community College; Rio Salado College; and Southern Connecticut State University. One institution, James Madison University, received the designation of Sustained Excellence in Assessment. Please join us in congratulating the 2017 EIA Designees! Application materials for the 2018 EIA Designation will be available in November.

New Issue of Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning
Mon, Aug 21, 2017 - 08:00 am

We invite you to peruse the most recent issues of Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning volume 49 Issue 2 and Issue 3. Included in these issues are Symbolic Translation and What Our Work Requires by Clifford Adelman, and Reframing Student Success in College: Advancing Know-What and Know-How by Jillian Kinzie and George Kuh, respectively.

Summer 2017 issue of Research & Practice in Assessment
Mon, Aug 21, 2017 - 08:00 am

The Summer 2017 issue of Research & Practice in Assessment is now available. Included in this issue are the articles "Examining Construct Validity of the Quantitative..."
Why assess student learning?

Accreditation standards

Questions we have regarding our practices and curriculum

Are students learning what they need in order to be successful in life and careers?

Are our schools and colleges worth the cost? (ROI)

How do we know students receive a high-quality education?

What do our credentials represent in terms of learning?
Your questions

What questions do you have about assessing student learning – what would you like to walk away from this morning knowing more about?
Overview

Focus on how schools can better communicate to a variety of audiences their assessment processes

Share resources available to support and assist colleges and schools undertaking assessment of student learning
Assessment Defined

Assessment of student learning is the systematic collection, review, and use of information about educational programs undertaken for the purpose of improving student learning and development.

About students and learning, not institutions
Assessment Cube of Misunderstandings

Definitions

Levels/Focus

Uses/Questions

Purposes/Value
Added Layers

Behind each side of the cube there are:

1. Theories about how students learn
2. Beliefs around what can be assessed
3. The “best” or “proper” means to assess student learning
4. How to warrant arguments about what students know and can do as a result of education

All with no agreements, leading to disputes built around unclear assumptions that impact practice with people dismissing other sides – remember assessment is a field and it’s a field that moves.
2017 Pre-release data

National Student Survey
Rubrics
Classroom-based Performance Assessments
Capstone Projects
Alumni Feedback
Local Surveys
Placement Exams
Local General Knowledge Measures
Employer Feedback
Externally-Situated Performance Assessments
General Knowledge Measures
Portfolios
Three Schools of Thought

Measurement

Compliance (Reporting)

Teaching and Learning (Improvement)
Measurement

Built upon scientific principles or empirical research, objective, rational, validity, and reliability

*The Multi-State Collaborative: A Preliminary Examination of Convergent Validation Evidence* ~Mark Nicholas, John Hathcoat, & Brittany Brown

- Testing and standardization
- Must be measureable
- Argue narrowing of curriculum
- Goal driven
- Focused on process
- Interventions
- Pre/post
- Comparisons
VALUE report
Compliance

Documenting institutional quality assurance through reporting frameworks

*Is assessment destroying the liberal arts?* ~Karin Brown

- Bureaucratic
- Laborious
- Time consuming
- Separated from teaching and learning
- Add on
- Accountability and quality assurance
- Reporting and archive
- Lots of data collection, minimal use
ACCREDITATION/ PROGRAM REVIEW

Identify Assessments

Gather Results

Package Results

Submit Reports

Write Outcomes
Using Evidence of Student Learning to Improve Higher Education

George D. Kuh, Stanley O. Ikenberry, Natasha A. Jankowski, Timothy Reese Cain, Peter T. Ewell, Pat Hutchings, Jillian Kinzie
But where are the students...?
Teaching and Learning

Focus on pedagogy, understanding of student experience, informing program improvement, embedded in curricular design and feedback, builds student agency

Does continuous assessment in higher education support student learning? ~Rosario Hernandez

- Driven by faculty questions regarding their praxis – is what I am doing working for my students?
- Improvement oriented
- Focus on individual students
- Students as active participants – not something done to them
- Formative
- Feedback
- Collaborative
- Assessment for learning
- Adaptive and embedded
Name Expectations for Learning

Communicate Expectations to Learners

Collect Student Work

Determine Extent of Learning

Strategize New Student Success Plans

IMPROVEMENT
What does good assessment look like for us?

Why do we think that what we are doing, for these students, will lead to enhanced learning, at this time?

“I think you should be more explicit here in step two.”
Principles of Local Practice

Develop specific, actionable learning outcomes statements.

Connect learning outcomes with actual student demonstrations of their learning.

Collaborate with relevant stakeholders, beginning with the faculty.

Design assessment approaches that generate actionable evidence about student learning that key stakeholders can understand and use to improve student and institutional performance.

Focus on improvement and compliance will take care of itself.
Evidence of student learning is used in support of claims or arguments about improvement and accountability told through stories to persuade a specific audience.

Need to tell our story and help students tell theirs.
But...

Toulmin (2003)

Evidence  Warrant  Claim

Warrants
Arguments
Why do we think the changes we make will lead to better outcomes?

What is assumed in the changes we select as it relates to how students understand and navigate higher education?
For instance...

Coverage and content
Opportunities and support
Intentional, coherent, aligned pathways

Within each of these is the belief about root causes – why students were not learning or not meeting the outcome and the mechanism by which the institution can help them succeed
Excellence in Assessment Designations

National recognition program for campus assessment leaders at two levels

Evaluation based on the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) Transparency Framework

Focus on campus-wide assessment – including student affairs & external stakeholders

Joint project of the VSA, NILOA, and the Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U)
Why did we create the EIA Designations?

Faculty & instructional staff

Students & Alumni

Student Affairs staff

Employers, subsequent institutions

Accreditors, governing boards

Program-level Assessment
(e.g., assessment of program-level learning outcomes, requirements for licensure, etc.)

College-level Assessment (e.g., assessment of college-level learning outcomes, competencies, etc.)

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e.g., assessment of college-level learning outcomes, competencies, etc.)

Faculty & instructional staff
What is working on your campus?

What is working well?

Where are there pressure points?

Which stakeholders are involved?
So what is happening now?
Assignment Charrettes

DQP Assignment Library

Search for an assignment by a keyword using the search box or by clicking on any specific tag.

Search By: [Title]

Academic Disciplines and Assignment Characteristics
- Arts and humanities
- Community engagement
- Exam
- Health Sciences
- Library assignment
- Online course
- Presentation
- Research methods
- Spreadsheet
- Business
- Education
- General education
- History and social sciences
- Life sciences
- Physical sciences
- Program assessment
- Self-assessment
- VALUE rubrics
- Capstone
- Engineering
- Group project
- Introductory course
- Mathematics and computer science
- Portfolio
- Reflection
- Sequenced/scaffolded assignments
- Writing assignment

DQP Proficiencies
- Analytic inquiry
- Broad and integrative Knowledge
- Communicative fluency
- Ethical reasoning
- Quantitative fluency
- Applied and Collaborative Learning
- Civic and Global Learning
- Engaging diverse perspectives
- Intellectual Skills
- Specialized Knowledge
Small Group Peer Review Process

25 minute segments per person/assignment

- Present assignment briefly—which outcomes, what course, which students, how does it work....
- Discussion with group (focus on questions on feedback form)
- Save 5 minutes for written feedback
- Breath
- Start again...
- Debrief at end
Assignment Design Resources

https://www.assignmentlibrary.org/
Alignment within courses

- Scaffolding Learning
- Assignment
  - Learning Outcomes
  - Evaluative Criteria
How assignments connect

- Scaffolding Learning
  - Assignment
    - Learning Outcomes
    - Evaluative Criteria
    - Learning Outcomes
  - Assignment
    - Evaluative Criteria
    - Learning Outcomes
  - Assignment
    - Scaffolding Learning
    - Evaluative Criteria
    - Learning Outcomes

Alignment

How do courses build towards mastery through repetition and increasing expectations for particular outcomes?

How do assignments and activities elicit student demonstrations of a specific learning outcome?

How do individual faculty contribute to this collective work in their courses?
Connections

Scaffolding Learning

Assignment

Learning Outcomes
Evaluative Criteria

Employers

Co-curricular

Implications for transcripts, career development, and pathways
But we have to make the connections clear!

Awareness of Learning Outcome Statements
Transparency in Assignments

Transparency in Teaching and Learning: https://www.unlv.edu/provost/teachingandlearning

Purpose
Skills you’ll practice by doing this assignment
Content knowledge you’ll gain from doing this assignment
How you can use these in your life beyond the context of this course, in and beyond college

Task
What to do
How to do it (Are there recommended steps? What roadblocks/mistakes should you avoid?)

Criteria
(Are you on the right track? How to know you’re doing what’s expected?)

Annotated examples of successful work
(What’s good about these examples? Use the checklist to identify the successful parts.)
Rubrics

Do we share our rubrics or criteria with students and actively engage them in the review process?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rubric Criteria</th>
<th>Student Evaluation</th>
<th>Faculty Feedback</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rubric Content</td>
<td>Stipulate why gave score did</td>
<td>Faculty stipulate why gave score did</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stipulate what they need to do to advance</td>
<td>Targeted feedback to improve</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Timing and Placement of Assignments

Do we consider student movement through curriculum in terms of the placement of signature assignments? When do we give students feedback and do they have a chance to do anything with it?
National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment
January 2017

Equity and Assessment:
Moving Towards Culturally Responsive Assessment

Erick Montenegro and Natasha A. Jankowski

Occasional Paper #29
www.learningoutcomeassessment.org
Connection Points

To ensure student success, it’s how all of the pieces connect together to support collective development of active and engaged learners.
More Resources
The Learning Systems Paradigm

DEGREES THAT MATTER
Moving Higher Education to a Learning Systems Paradigm

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Discussion time

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http://www.learningoutcomesassessment.org
www.assignmentlibrary.org
www.degreeprofile.org