Using Assessment to Ensure Student Success: Connecting Meaningful Assessment in Distance Learning

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DISTANCE LEARNING SYMPOSIUM 2017
NILOA

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

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- 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..."
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.
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
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
Strategize New Student Success Plans

Determine Extent of Learning

Collect Student Work

Communicate Expectations to Learners

Name Expectations for Learning

IMPROVEMENT
Epistemology

Assessment is fundamentally about epistemology – what does it mean to say a student knows or fails to demonstrate that they know something? How do we know students have learned? How can we say that students are learning or acquired knowledge? But what are our epistemologies?

- Compliance assessment – propositional knowledge describing a state of affairs – that students have learned
- Measurement models - set of individually necessary and jointly sufficient conditions which determine whether someone knows something
- There are beliefs – but that is not enough because our beliefs may not necessarily describe the ways things actually are so we need to justify our beliefs.

- It’s also questions of ethics and ontology – who gets to learn? Who are the learners?
What does good assessment look like for us in distance learning?

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.”
Want our assessment processes to be...
Meaningful
Manageable
Learner focused
Leads to improvement
Distance Learning

Community Building

Faculty role as coach

Problem-based learning

Formative feedback and feedforward

Universal design for learning

Understand learners (disaggregate data, but also motivation)

Analytics: learning analytics, action analytics, data analytics, predictive analytics
The Learning Systems Paradigm
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standards</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Course Overview</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Instructions make clear how to get started and where to find various course components.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Learners are introduced to the purpose and structure of the course.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Clarify expectations (sometimes called “netiquette”) for online discussions; email, and other forms of communication are clearly stated.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Course and/or institutional policies with which the learner is expected to comply are clearly stated, or a link to current policies is provided.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 Minimum technology requirements are clearly stated and instructions for use provided.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6 Prerequisite knowledge in the discipline and any required competencies are clearly stated.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7 Minimum technical skills expected of the learner are clearly stated.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8 The self-introduction by the instructor is appropriate and is available online.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.9 Learners are asked to introduce themselves to the class.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning Objectives (Competencies)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 The course learning objectives, or course/program competencies, describe outcomes that are measurable.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 The module/unit learning objectives or competencies describe outcomes that are measurable and consistent with the course-level objectives or competencies.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 All learning objectives or competencies are stated clearly and written from the learner’s perspective.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 The relationship between learning objectives or competencies and course activities is clearly stated.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 The learning objectives or competencies are linked to the level of the course.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assessment and Measurement</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 The assessments measure the stated learning objectives or competencies.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 The course grading policy is stated clearly.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 Specific and description criteria are provided for the evaluation of learners’ work and are tied to the course grading policy.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 The assessment instruments are sequenced, varied, and suited to the learner work being assessed.</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.5 The course provides learners with multiple opportunities to track their learning progress.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instructional Materials</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 The instructional materials contribute to the achievement of the stated course and module/unit learning objectives or competencies.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Both the purpose of instructional materials and how the materials are to be used for learning activities are clearly explained.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3 All instructional materials used in the course are appropriately cited.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4 The instructional materials are current.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5 Variety of instructional materials is used in the course.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6 The distinction between required and optional materials is clearly explained.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Course Activities and Learner Interaction</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 The learning activities promote the achievement of the stated learning objectives or competencies.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2 Learning activities provide opportunities for interaction that support active learning.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3 The instructor’s plan for classroom response time and feedback on assignments is clearly stated.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4 The requirements for learner interaction are clearly stated.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Course Technology</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1 The tools used in the course support the learning objectives and competencies.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2 Course tools promote learner engagement and active learning.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3 Technologies required in the course are readily available.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4 The course technologies are current.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5 Links are provided to privacy policies for all external tools required in the course.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learner Support</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1 The course instructions articulate in clear description of the technical support offered and how to obtain it.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2 Course instructions articulate in clear description of how the institution’s academic support services and resources can help learners succeed in the course and how learners can obtain them.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3 Course instructions articulate in clear description of how the institution’s academic support services and resources can help learners succeed in the course and how learners can obtain them.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.4 Course instructions articulate in clear description of how the institution’s student services and resources can help learners succeed and how learners can obtain them.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accessibility and Usability</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.1 Course navigation facilitates ease of use.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2 Information is provided about the accessibility of all technologies required in the course.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3 The course provides alternative means of accessing course materials in formats that meet the needs of diverse learners.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.4 The course design facilitates modularity.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.5 Course multimedia facilitate ease of use.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Transparency

Awareness of Learning Outcome Statements
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
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?
Alignment within courses

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

- Assignment
  - Learning Outcomes
  - Evaluative Criteria
  - Scaffolding Learning

- Assignment
  - Learning Outcomes
  - Evaluative Criteria
  - Scaffolding Learning

- Assignment
  - Learning Outcomes
  - Evaluative Criteria
  - Scaffolding Learning

- Assignment
  - Evaluative Criteria
  - Learning Outcomes
  - Scaffolding Learning
Transparency in Assignments

Transparency in Teaching and Learning: [https://www.unlv.edu/provost/teachingandlearning](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>
Connection Points

To ensure student success, it’s how all of the pieces connect together to support collective development of active and engaged learners.
Reimagining the Role of Technology in Higher Education

A Supplement to the National Education Technology Plan

JANUARY 2017
UNPACKING RELATIONSHIPS

INSTRUCTION AND STUDENT OUTCOMES

Natasha A. Jankowski
Director, National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment
Resources
DQP Assignment Library

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

Search By: Title  Search  View All

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
- Use of information resources
- Applied and Collaborative Learning
- Civic and Global Learning
- Engaging diverse perspectives
- Intellectual Skills
- Specialized Knowledge

Degree and Course Levels

- Associate
- Bachelor's
- Master's
Questions and discussion

Email: niloa@education.illinois.edu

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

The ability to make causal claims about our impact on students and their learning

Institutional structures and support + student = enhanced learning
Difficulty of Causal Statements

Mobility of students

Untracked changes

Changes in courses add up to program level change

Lack of clarity on what even counts as a program

Life

Levels at which use occurs

Longer than a year cycle

Loosely coupled relationships
But...

Toulmin (2003)

Evidence  Warrant  Claim

Warrants
Arguments
Theories of Change

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