Overview

- NILOA and Case Studies
- Summary of findings
- Institutional Examples
- Q & A

Overview of NILOA

NILOA’s mission is to document student learning outcomes assessment work, identify and disseminate best practices, and support institutions in their assessment efforts.

SURVEYS • WEB SCANS • CASE STUDIES • FOCUS GROUPS • OCCASIONAL PAPERS • WEBSITES • RESOURCES • NEWSLETTER • LISTSERVS • PRESENTATIONS • TRANSPARENCY FRAMEWORK • FEATURED WEBSITES • ACCREDITATION RESOURCES • ASSESSMENT EVENT CALENDAR • ASSESSMENT NEWS • MEASURING QUALITY INVENTORY • POLICY ANALYSES • ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN • DEGREE QUALIFICATIONS PROFILE

www.learningoutcomesassessment.org

Your Thoughts on Assessment

- What are the characteristics of “good assessment work”? What does it look like?
- What is the biggest challenge you face in advancing assessment to improve student learning on your campus?
Examples of Good Assessment Practice

- Purpose
- Selection process
- Case Study approach
- Institutions involved

http://www.learningoutcomesassessment.org/CaseStudies.html

Case Study Purpose

- Most institutions collect evidence of student learning, but it is not clear how results are being used to improve student outcomes
- We can learn from campuses that are using assessment data for improvement and decision making
- Serve as examples of ways to report and take action on assessment results

Case Selection and Design

- Selection criteria: CHEA Assessment award winners and nominees; Recommendations of experts in the field; Institutions identified via Webscans
- Design: Interpretive case studies focus on meaning participants make of their actions and experiences
- Data gathering techniques: interviews, web scan and document analysis

Case Study Themes

- Inspirational, instructive accounts of assessment to improve student learning; provide specific examples of practices associated with good assessment.
- Case themes:
  - Augustana – assessment review committee’s role in engaging faculty
  - Capella – assessment infrastructure and administrative support
  - Carnegie Mellon – assessment fostered through Center for Teaching & Learning; creative faculty work
  - Colorado State – online planning to support improvement
  - Juniata – assessment as scholarly inquiry; publicly shared data
  - LaGuardia CC – assessment; culture of assessment
  - North Carolina A&T – professional development and culture of inquiry
  - St. Olaf – faculty-led utilization-focused, backward-design
  - Texas A&M University – openness and student focused

Cross Case Study Report

Synthesis of insights and promising practices in using information about student learning from case study sites

www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/UsingAssessmentResults.htm
Broad Findings About Assessment Across Cases

- Institutional behavior is generally consistent with the Principles of Effective Assessment Practice identified (Banta & Associates, 2002)
  - Embedded assessment
  - Administrative leadership for assessment
  - Engaged faculty
  - Wide sharing
- Institutions aligned their assessment work with organizational structures and cultures, and focused their assessment efforts on specific problems or questions.

Assessment Activity Emphases at Case Sites

Advanced assessment practice by:
1. Focusing assessment efforts
2. Harnessing accountability for internal improvement
3. Communicating widely about assessment
4. Allowing time for internal stakeholders to make meaning of and to reflect on assessment results

1. Focusing Assessment Practice

- Specific problem/question regarding student learning, or emphasize interests of faculty
- Fosters faculty engagement & ownership, and creates a culture of inquiry
- Carnegie Mellon University: values and fosters diversity in how student learning outcomes assessment is undertaken within colleges/departments. Driven by questions raised by faculty about student learning and effective teaching and is informed by departmental curricular interests, goals, and the particular discipline.

2. Harnessing accountability for improvement

- Initial response was for accreditation. Then shifted to intentionally embed assessment into institutional culture and, specifically, institutional planning and improvement efforts.
- Augustana College: Shared an accreditation report with faculty during a retreat. Faculty found results acceptable, but felt the institution could do better. Formed 20 study groups, involving many faculty, to examine aspects of the college. Led to meaningful improvement that helped to advance assessment activities.

3. Communicate Widely

- Share results, successes, feature assessment results widely on websites.
- St. Olaf College: posted a video of its president speaking about the college’s assessment efforts, and uses several different means on its website to disseminate assessment results to multiple audiences including students, faculty, and staff.
- Colorado State: PRISM system (online portal for assessment results) is intentionally designed to be accessible to visitors but also has a login for faculty and staff.

4. Making Meaning & Reflection

- Build in time for reflection on evidence of student learning; make shared meaning of the data.
- LaGuardia Community College: has been a leader in the area of ePortfolios and has a well-established process for assessing student artifacts. Even so, the institution takes time to review this process and consider new projects.
To Ponder: Your Campus Assessment Practice

• What does assessment mean to your institution based on your history, values, mission, educational priorities, and student population?
• Who is currently involved in and engaged with assessing student learning?

Outcomes Assessment at LaGuardia

• Assesses student growth over time & uses data to improve pedagogies & programs
• Assesses student achievement of Programmatic and General Education Core competencies.
• Assessment of student work, gathered with ePortfolio, complements standardized test scores and IR data
• Supports Middle States & programmatic accreditation processes

Key Questions for Outcomes Assessment
1. What competencies/knowledge do we want our students to graduate with?
2. How do we know our students are graduating with those competencies?
3. How do we use assessment data to improve our programs?

What Should Students Know & Be Able to Do?

• Core Competencies: General Education
  – Critical Literacy (Reading, Writing, Critical Thinking)
  – Quantitative Reasoning
  – Oral Communication
  – Research and Information Literacy
  – Technological Literacy
• Programmatic Competencies
  – Defined by programs and majors
  – As appropriate, defined by outside accrediting bodies

The Assessment Process:
How do we know our students are graduating with these competencies?

• Faculty review a sampling of student work in the ePortfolio Assessment Database.
• Student work is assessed by faculty using faculty-developed rubrics for each core competency.
• Longitudinal outcomes: a comparison is made between freshman and senior work.
• Review of student work leads to recommendations for program improvement.
Benchmark Assessment Readings: Assessing Overall Student Progress

- Looked at artifacts from students with 25 credits or under vs. 45 credits or more
  - Beginning vs. end of student career.
- 1072 samples of student work scored.
- 29 faculty from 13 different areas participated as evaluators.
- Two readers scored work on a scale of 1-6 yielding a combined score for each student ranging from 2-12.

Making Progress: Avg. Gain Across Competencies = .87
Where We Want to Be: Score of 5 given by two readers for a total score of 10.

Closing the Loop
CTL Mini-Grant Program
Examples of Action Based-on PPRs:

- **Accounting**: used grant to develop new writing assignments, given that scores on critical literacy rubric needed improvement.
- **Computer Science**: used grant to revise 7 courses to address Gen Ed competencies (e.g. revised “Data Structures” to improve Research & Info Lit competency, etc.)
- **Business**: used grant to develop oral presentation assignments and create faculty “intervention” on how to do more effective presentations.

The LaGuardia Center for Teaching and Learning
Supporting Change

- Mini-Grant program allows programs to follow up on recommendations in the PPR.
- Core competencies and development of assignments threaded into CTL seminars.
- Faculty discuss, create & exchange ePortfolio-specific assignments.
- Capstone Seminar helps faculty create discipline-based ePortfolio assignments that showcase integration, culmination & key learning in Core Competencies.

Lessons Learned

- **Make Assessment Authentic**
  - Build assessment around the day-to-day work of students & faculty
  - Connecting assessment to the classroom can facilitate more effective recommendations and “closing the loop”
- **Allow Faculty Ownership**
  - Assessment director is a faculty member, additional faculty on the Assessment Leadership Team
  - Frame assessment as an intellectual enterprise- ongoing work of faculty rather than an external enforcement.
- **Commit Time and Resources**
  - Provide support to make change based on assessment (mini-grants, seminars)
  - Assessment is a learning curve. Give people time to understand assessment.
  - Evolution and revision are constant.
- **Go Public**
  - Sharing assessment data is key to creating community around assessment activities
TAMIU Demographics

- Location – Southwest Texas (Laredo), U.S.-Mexico Border
- Enrollment – 7,213
- Ethnicity – 93% Hispanic
- First Generation – 54% entering students
- Gender – 59% Female
- Undergraduate – 88.5%

Institutional Network Targeting Evaluation, Goals, Resources and Assessment Toward Effectiveness

- Annual Institutional Effectiveness Review (AIER) Process
- Strengths and Challenges
- University-wide Involvement
  - Program Coordinators
  - Assessment Committees
  - Broad-based engagement of discipline experts
  - 73 academic programs and 40 administrative units

Using Evidence for Improvement

- Bachelor of Arts in History
- Assessment Activity
- Use of Results
  - Student Performance
  - Quality of Instruction
  - Collaboration within Colleges
- From Appointed Coordinator to Supporter

Future Initiatives

- Promote transparency & access
- Transition to Electronic Assessment Management System (WEAVE)
- Provide Targeted Orientation Sessions
  - New Faculty
  - Academic Program Coordinators
  - Administrative/Educational Support Units
- Keep INTEGRATE alive and well!
Using Evidence to Improve

- Case study sites did not have common approaches to using evidence, but shared a strong desire to improve student learning and to critically examine institutional processes and practices from the classroom to extracurricular activities and everything in between to inform decisions to enhance student learning.

Additional Lessons Across Sites

- Assessment is a scholarly activity worthy of faculty attention and institutional respect
- Support is necessary - less in assessment techniques and more in fostering the use of results to improve
- Embed assessment in existing activities, no “add on”
- Involve a range of faculty, staff & administrators in assessment; spread responsibility
- Report widely on action taken on results
- Accreditation to facilitate good work
- Forefront assessment goals and desired changes in student learning

Taking Stock: Reflection Questions

- What does assessment mean to your institution based on your history, values, mission, educational priorities, and student population?
- Who is currently involved in and engaged with assessing student learning? Who needs to be?
- What resources are available and what is needed to move your assessment work forward?
- How do internal stakeholders view assessment of student learning? How are examples of good assessment practice shared?
- How do our external stakeholders view assessment of student learning?
- How are results communicated and to whom? Time to reflect on and make sense of results from assessment?
- How effective are our assessment processes in meeting desired institutional and program goals?

Q&A with NILOA, Texas A&M International University and LaGuardia Community College