Assessment In 5 Easy Steps

November 20, 2017

Dr. Jessica Dennis, Director of Assessment
Workshop Learning Goals

• By the end of this workshop participants will be able to:
  • Describe the stages of the assessment cycle.
  • Differentiate between indirect and direct assessment measures.
  • Locate existing sources of data to inform program improvement.
  • Formulate a program assessment plan.
Assessment in 5 Easy Steps

1. Pick a PLO (Program Learning Outcome) that is a priority.

2. Examine existing data.
   - Data from Institutional Research
   - University assessment results (info literacy, oral comm)

3. Formulate a plan to collect more useful data.
   - Capitalize on assessments faculty already use

4. Collect and analyze data.

5. Discuss and close the loop.
The Assessment Cycle
Why is assessment important?

- Improve student learning and success
  - Data-driven *culture of evidence* instead of anecdotes and opinions
- Inform curriculum revision
- Communicate the value of our program to our students and the public
- Program review and WASC Accreditation
The Assessment Cycle

1. Identifying Student Learning Goals
2. Aligning Goals with Courses
3. Gathering Evidence of Student Learning
4. Interpreting Evidence of Learning
5. Using Evidence to Improve Learning

Program-Level Assessment
Step 1: Choosing a Priority Learning Outcome
What is Meaningful Assessment?

• Should be *intentional* and *purposive*

• *Backward design* means beginning with the end in mind, anticipating the use of evidence

• Articulate questions important for the program:
  • Are there disparities in academic performance among various ethnicities in our program?
  • Are students able to transfer knowledge between our courses?
  • Do students improve their cultural competence skills as a result of our program?
How should we decide what is meaningful?

• Consider strategic planning priorities
• Collect data to address salient issues faculty have observed
• To following best practices- assess each PLO on a 5-year cycle
Institutional Learning Outcomes at Cal State LA

• **Knowledge: Mastery of content and processes of inquiry**
  
  CSULA graduates have a strong knowledge base in their academic major and can use powerful processes of inquiry in a range of disciplines. They engage contemporary and enduring questions with an understanding of the complexities of human cultures and the physical and natural world and are ready to put their knowledge into action to address contemporary issues.

• **Proficiency: Intellectual skills**
  
  CSULA graduates are equipped to actively participate in democratic society. They are critical thinkers who make use of quantitative and qualitative reasoning. They have the ability to find, use, evaluate and process information in order to engage in complex decision-making. They read critically, speak and write clearly and thoughtfully and communicate effectively.

• **Place and Community: Urban and global mission**
  
  CSULA graduates are engaged individuals who have contributed to the multi-lingual and multiethnic communities that constitute Los Angeles and the world of the future. They are aware of how their actions impact society and the environment, and they strive to make socially responsible decisions. They are community builders sensitive to the needs of diverse individuals and groups and committed to renewing the communities in which they live.

• **Transformation: Integrative learning**
  
  CSULA graduates integrate academic learning with life. They engage in community, professional, creative, research and scholarly projects that lead to changes in their sense of self and understanding of their worlds. Graduates integrate their knowledge, skills and experience to address complex and contemporary issues and act ethically as leaders for the 21st century.
The Big Five Core Competencies as Defined by WASC

• Critical thinking
  • the ability to think in a way that is clear, reasoned, reflective, informed by evidence, and aimed at deciding what to believe or do. Dispositions supporting critical thinking include open-mindedness and motivation to seek the truth.

• Quantitative Reasoning
  • the ability to apply mathematical concepts to the interpretation and analysis of quantitative information in order to solve a wide range of problems, from those arising in pure and applied research to everyday issues and questions. It may include such dimensions as ability to apply math skills, judge reasonableness, communicate quantitative information, and recognize the limits of mathematical or statistical methods.
The Big Five Core Competencies as Defined by WASC

- **Oral Communication**
  - Communication by means of spoken language for informational, persuasive, and expressive purposes. In addition to speech, oral communication may employ visual aids, body language, intonation, and other non-verbal elements to support the conveyance of meaning and connection with the audience. Oral communication may include speeches, presentations, discussions, dialogue, and other forms of interpersonal communication, either delivered face to face or mediated technologically.

- **Written Communication**
  - Communication by means of written language for informational, persuasive, and expressive purposes. Written communication may appear in many forms or genres. Successful written communication depends on mastery of conventions, faculty with culturally accepted structures for presentation and argument, awareness of audience and other situation-specific factors.
The Big Five Core Competencies as Defined by WASC

- **Information Literacy**
  - according the Association of College and Research Libraries, the ability to “recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use the needed information” for a wide range of purposes. An information-literate individual is able to determine the extent of information needed, access it, evaluate it and its sources, use the information effectively, and do so ethically and legally.
Activity #1: Pick a Priority

• Which PLOs are your department’s strengths?
• Which are your weaknesses?
• What is one question you would most like to answer with regard to your PLOs?
Step 2: Examine Existing Data Sources
Indirect Methods of Assessment

• Graduation or Completion Rates
• Placement Rates
• Student Survey
• Student Interviews or Focus Groups
• Alumni Survey
• Employer Survey
• Faculty Survey
• Exit (end of program) Survey or Interviews
• Reflection Essays
• Diaries or Journals
• Data from Institutional Surveys (NSSE)
• Curriculum/Syllabus Analysis
• Checklists
Existing Data Sources from Institutional Research (IR)

• See IR data pull reference sheet
• Interactive reports of enrollment trends and graduation rates by gender and ethnicity
• Admission and course data, including bottleneck course analysis
Surveys Regularly Administered by IR

• Entering Freshman and Entering Transfer Survey
  • Collected every year on admissions process, high school experiences, view of self, finances, expectations of time at Cal State LA, degree attainment goals

• Senior Survey
  • Collected in 2013 and 2015 on time-to-degree, perceptions of faculty, campus community, skill development, time allocation, plans after graduation, different areas of satisfaction

• Baccalaureate Alumni Survey
  • Conducted in 2015 targeting recent graduates, early career, and mid-career, regarding undergraduate education experience, current activity/employment, career, pursuit of additional education, education-related debt

• National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
  • Administered in 2014, 2017 with freshmen and graduating seniors focused on student engagement (academic challenge, learning with peers, experiences with faculty, campus environment) and advisement
Recent Data Collected by Assessment Team to Examine Institutional Learning Outcomes

• Informed by the Educational Effectiveness and Assessment Council (EEAC)
  • Results available from Jessica Dennis

• **Information Literacy (2017)**- Standardized Assessment of Information Literacy Skills (SAILS) test given to sample of freshmen and seniors
  • 35 Business, 20 Engineering/Computer Science, 17 Science/Math, 32 Social Science/Psychology, 42 Other (Education, Law, Performing Arts, etc.)

• **Oral Communication (2017)**- Seniors presentations in capstone courses were videotaped and scored with a rubric
  • A&L (COMM 4300, COMM 4390), B&E (BUS 4150, BUS4970), CCOE (COUN 4940A), HHS (COMD 3190, KIN4250), NSS (ANTH 4970, CHEM4311, PSY 3040).
Activity #2: Existing Data

• Make note of any IR or Assessment Team data source that could inform your program and answer key questions you have.

• What is the data source?

• What question can it answer?
## Oral Communication Scores: Psychology ($n = 23$)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proficiency Score</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Delivery</th>
<th>Supporting Material</th>
<th>Central Message</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.75-4.0</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>3 (13%)</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>2 (9%)</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.0-3.5</td>
<td>15 (65%)</td>
<td>14 (61%)</td>
<td>10 (44%)</td>
<td>15 (65%)</td>
<td>18 (78%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.0-2.75</td>
<td>8 (35%)</td>
<td>6 (26%)</td>
<td>9 (39%)</td>
<td>6 (26%)</td>
<td>4 (17%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.0-1.75</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>3 (13%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
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Note. Scoring was as follows: 1 = Benchmark (Does not Meet Competency), 2 = Milestone (Minimal Competency), 3 = Milestone (Meets Competency), 4 = Capstone (Exceeds Competency).

What trends do you notice?  
What questions are left unanswered?  
How could we collect more useful data?
Step 3: Formulate a Plan to Collect More Useful Data
Capitalize on Existing Assessments Used within the Program

• Re-examine assessments used in the past.

• Find out what course-based assessments are used by faculty.

• Are any faculty willing to share results from their course-based assessments?
  - Faculty who have participated in CETL course redesigns have results assessing the effectiveness of their practices.

• Brainstorm how these can be expanded to inform about the effectiveness of the program as a whole.
Indirect Methods of Assessment

- Graduation or Completion Rates
- Placement Rates
- Student Survey
- Student Interviews or Focus Groups
- Alumni Survey
- Employer Survey
- Faculty Survey
- Exit (end of program) Survey or Interviews
- Reflection Essays
- Diaries or Journals
- Data from Institutional Surveys (NSSE)
- Curriculum/Syllabus Analysis
- Checklists
Direct Methods of Assessment

- Capstone Products, Theses, Dissertations
- Comprehensive Exams
- Pass Rates on Certification or Licensure Exams
- Published (Standardized) test (e.g., Major Field Test)
- Term Papers or Projects
- Class Oral or Poster Presentations
- Off-campus Presentations (for clients, agencies, etc.)
- Case Studies
- Portfolios
- Artistic Performances, Recitals, & Products
- Oral Exams or Competency Interviews
- Simulations
- Embedded Questions in Course Exams
Example Strategies of Department-Wide or Program-Level Assessment

- Administering standardized tests to a sample of students
- Embedding a set of items measuring the PLO into final exams of several class sections
- Collecting products (such as papers, posters, etc.) from several classes and scoring them with a common rubric
- Creating a common assignment for a set of classes and collecting the scores (graded with a common rubric) from instructors
- Asking students to self-reflect on their achievement of the learning outcome
- Conducting focus groups with students
Why rubrics?

- Chance for faculty to explicitly articulate and specify criteria for evaluating student learning
- Student work can be scored to examine for which skills are they meeting expectations and which need improvement
Creating a Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>1 - Does not meet expectations</th>
<th>2 - Meets expectations</th>
<th>3 - Exceeds expectations</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listens effectively</td>
<td>What does this look like?</td>
<td>What does this look like?</td>
<td>What does this look like?</td>
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<td>Writes in a professional manner</td>
<td>What does this look like?</td>
<td>What does this look like?</td>
<td>What does this look like?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Speaks clearly and concisely</td>
<td>What does this look like?</td>
<td>What does this look like?</td>
<td>What does this look like?</td>
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</table>

Total:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1 - Beginner</th>
<th>2 - Developing</th>
<th>3 - Accomplished</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interacting with Colleagues</strong></td>
<td>• Alienates colleagues and co-workers or does not interact with others.</td>
<td>• Acknowledges colleagues and co-workers.</td>
<td>• Is friendly to colleagues and co-workers and encourages and/or motivates others.</td>
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<td><strong>Listening to Others</strong></td>
<td>• Listens to colleagues inattentively or does not show signs of active listening.</td>
<td>• Listens attentively to colleagues.</td>
<td>• Listens attentively to colleagues, and takes initiative to provide input and/or recommendations.</td>
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<td><strong>Respect for Difference</strong></td>
<td>• Shows lack of respect for those whose perspectives or backgrounds may be different from their own.</td>
<td>• Occasionally shows lack of respect, but corrects behavior after reminders of how to show respect for those whose perspectives or backgrounds may be different from their own.</td>
<td>• Always displays respect for those whose perspectives or backgrounds may be different from their own.</td>
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<td><strong>Adapting to Change</strong></td>
<td>• Has difficulty with unexpected situations and change, expresses a negative reaction or high anxiety.</td>
<td>• Responds to unexpected situations and change expressing some anxiety.</td>
<td>• Adjusts quickly in difficult and unexpected situation.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Exceeds Competency (3 points)</td>
<td>Meets Competency (2 points)</td>
<td>Does Not Meet Competency (1 pt.)</td>
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<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong> Concisely described background information is logically related to hypotheses</td>
<td>Information is relevant but may be too wordy</td>
<td>Information is confusing or not clearly related to hypotheses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Method and</td>
<td><strong>Easy to understand method and results</strong></td>
<td>Describes method and results, but clarity could be improved</td>
<td>Difficult to understand methods and/or results</td>
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<tr>
<td>Results</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td><strong>Connects findings to other research, thoughtful description of implications or future research</strong></td>
<td>Describes conclusions and future research, but may not connect to other research</td>
<td>Description of conclusions is confusing and implications are unclear</td>
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<tr>
<td>Style and Format</td>
<td><strong>APA Format</strong> An occasional error, but demonstrates knowledge of rules</td>
<td>Minor errors in format, but cites appropriately</td>
<td>Major errors and/or missing citations</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Citations</strong></td>
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<td>Syntax and</td>
<td><strong>An occasional error</strong></td>
<td>Some errors (can be repeated) but not distracting</td>
<td>Errors make it difficult to understand</td>
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<td>Use of Language</td>
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<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td><strong>Visually engaging, professional, neat, and organized</strong></td>
<td>Info. is organized, but may be visually boring or crowded with too small font</td>
<td>Components are difficult to follow or hard to read, may look messy</td>
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Assessment Resources

- Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) VALUE rubrics
  - **Intellectual and Practical Skills, including**
    - Inquiry and analysis
    - Critical and creative thinking
    - Written and oral communication
    - Quantitative literacy
    - Information literacy
    - Teamwork and problem solving
  - **Personal and Social Responsibility, including**
    - Civic knowledge and engagement—local and global
    - Intercultural knowledge and competence
    - Ethical reasoning and action
    - Foundations and skills for lifelong learning

- National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA)
- Degree Qualifications Profile (DQP)
Activity #3: Assessment Plan

• Pick 1 PLO and brainstorm a plan:
  • What assignment or activity will you use?
  • How will you score student achievement?
  • What classes would you target for sampling and when?
  • Which faculty will be responsible for coordinating data collection? Data analysis?
  • How will you analyze the results? Will you disaggregate results in some way?
  • How will results be shared, discussed, and used to make changes?
  • When will the PLO be assessed again?
Step 4: Collecting and Analyze Data
Dos and Don’ts of Data Collection and Analysis

DO

• Form a department assessment committee charged with regularly collecting and disseminating data
• Ask for faculty volunteers
• Give faculty early notice regarding assessment plans
• Disaggregate results across time, populations, and outcomes
• Protect the confidentiality and anonymity of students and faculty by examining results at the group level
• Use results to inform changes

DON’T

• Ask for help at the last minute
• Pressure faculty to comply with assessment activities
• Use assessment results to call attention to individual faculty or students
• Use assessment results to judge or punish faculty
• Expect perfection
• Collect more data than you can use
Step 5: Discuss Results and Close the Loop
Closing the Loop: Strategies for Effective Use of Assessment Results

• Present results at department meetings or retreats to stimulating faculty discussion on student learning and pedagogy

• You might also:
  
  • Present results to student groups or within key classes to engage students in their own learning
  
  • Report results on the website to demonstrate student achievement or raise awareness of learning goals
  
  • Seek input from alumni or employers to improve practices
Using Results to Create A Culture of Evidence

• Use results:
  • To examine skill development across the curriculum
  • To examine curriculum content coverage and areas for program modification
  • To improve instruction and introduce new pedagogies
    • Contact CETL for resources and support
  • To improve and refine your assessment process/methods
# The 5-Year Assessment Plan

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>17-18</th>
<th>18-19</th>
<th>19-20</th>
<th>20-21</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PLO1</td>
<td></td>
<td>Action plan and timeline</td>
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<td>PLO2</td>
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<td>Action plan and timeline</td>
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<td>PLO4</td>
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<td>PLO5</td>
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<td>Action plan and timeline</td>
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</table>

- PLO1: Action plan and timeline
- PLO2: Action plan and timeline
- PLO3: Action plan and timeline
- PLO4: Action plan and timeline
- PLO5: Action plan and timeline
## Comprehensive 5-Year Assessment Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ILO</th>
<th>PLO</th>
<th>SLO</th>
<th>Course where each SLO is assessed</th>
<th>Assessment activity/assignment used to measure each SLO</th>
<th>Assessment tool used to measure outcome success</th>
<th>Assessment schedule – how often SLOs will be assessed</th>
<th>How data/findings will be quantitatively or qualitatively reported</th>
<th>Designated personnel to collect, analyze, and interpret student learning outcome data</th>
<th>Program data/findings dissemination schedule</th>
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<td></td>
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<td>Specify the embedded assignment such as oral pres., written exam, essay, etc.</td>
<td>Collect for each class &amp; analyze every other year, etc.</td>
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Next Steps

• What have you learned today that you want to share with others in your department?

• Write down 1-3 you can do this semester to keep your assessment momentum going?