DEVELOPING A COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT PLAN

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Assessment Certificate Program (ACP)

Collaboration between DePaul and Loyola, Academic Affairs and Student Affairs

Workshops:
• Core content focused on the assessment cycle
• Don’t have to sign up for ACP to participate in workshops
• Can take a few workshops and decide to sign up for the ACP!
ACP Requirements

Requirements:

• Attendance at 6 workshops:
  • Intro to Assessment (at home campus) *does not have to be taken first*
  • Four workshops that you select (at DePaul or Loyola)
  • Final Workshop (at home campus)

• Completion of a culminating project of your choice

Visit http://acp.depaultla.org/ to:

• Sign up for the ACP
• Sign up for individual workshops
• Suggest future workshop topics
• Volunteer to present/co-present
• Get more information about or propose a culminating project
Workshop objectives

During this workshop, we will:

• Discuss why planning is important to our work
• Present considerations for developing a plan
• Review elements of a comprehensive assessment project plan
Why Create A Plan?
Small Group Activity

• Each group has 8 cards representing 8 different courses in the Undergraduate Basket Weaving Program

• Your objective is to place the 8 courses in the order that you think students should take them

  • #1 = first course taken, #8 = last course taken

• Keep track of your rationale for how you order the courses

• After 10-15 minutes, designate a representative to report your course sequence and a brief rationale
What if You Knew This?

• Purpose of Course Sequencing:
  • To provide students a logical path through the underwater basket weaving program that is in alignment with the goals of the program.

• Program Goals:
  • Students should take all basket weaving and underwater arts courses before moving onto the integration of the two fields by taking their underwater basket weaving courses.
  • Students should learn all contextual information (theory, history, sociocultural and temporal factors) prior to developing skills.
What is an Assessment Plan?

• A framework to guide your assessment processes
• “Getting your ducks in a row”
• A dynamic map
  • There’s the path... and then there’s the bear...
• A conversation starter
• Continuity
What is an Assessment Plan at Loyola?


I. Program mission and goals (how your assessment plan is linked to your mission and goals or that of Loyola) (optional)

II. Strategic plan (how your assessment plan is linked to your strategic plan or that of Loyola) (optional)

III. Student learning outcomes (stated in measurable terms: students will demonstrate/articulate/discuss/analyze, etc.)

IV. Curriculum map linking student learning outcomes to courses (optional but highly recommended)

V. What specific instruments or techniques will you use (e.g. surveys, pre-post tests, embedded questions, and rubrics)?
What is an Assessment Plan at Loyola?

VI. How will you determine whether students are making successful progress toward the student learning outcomes (e.g. benchmarking)?

VII. What is your timeline for conducting your assessment(s)? Consider:
   a. Any time needed to develop assessment measures
   b. When will these measures be implemented? By who?
   c. When will you analyze your data? Who will do this?
   d. When will you report on your findings?

VIII. Who will be in charge of reporting on your assessment findings? Who will you report your findings to?

IX. Who needs to be involved in your assessment process?

X. Do you need any help or resources from FCIP in order to implement your assessment processes? If so, please let us know at assessment@luc.edu.
Assessment Process

Mission/Purposes
Educational Objectives

Gather Evidence
Interpret Evidence

Enhance teaching/learning; inform institutional decision-making, planning, budgeting

How well do we Achieve our educational objectives?

Source: AAHE/NCA Higher Education Learning Commission
Evidence of Assessment Process

Assessment Loop

Mission/Purposes

Educational Objectives

How well do we achieve our educational objectives?

Gather Evidence

Assessment Reports indicating one or more outcomes selected for assessment

Interpret Evidence

Assessment Reports describing how data analyzed

Enhance teaching/learning, inform institutional decision-making, planning, budgeting

Assessment Reports that include both recommendations based on current project’s results and information about actions taken based on previous projects’ results

Source: AAHE/NCA Higher Education Learning Commission
Assessment vs. Research/Evaluation

Broadly speaking, assessment is:

• More formative (improvement of learning)
• A continuous process
• Not intended for broad generalization
• More focused on practice than theory
• More impacted by time and resource limitations
• Less precise in terms of design (and that’s ok!)
• More susceptible to politics (and Politics) and institutional change
• Meant to answer “what has been done” and “what needs to be done”

Laying the Foundation
How to determine what to assess

- **Guiding documents**
  - Mission and Vision statements
  - Institutional, College/Division, Departmental or Program Initiatives
  - Professional Standards

- **Other Documents**
  - Previous Assessment Projects
  - Most Recent Academic Program Review or Department Review
  - Meeting Minutes or Notes
Linking Assessment to Student Learning

University Learning Goals

College/School/Divisional Learning Outcomes

Departmental Learning Outcomes

Program Learning Outcomes

Course/Activity-Based Learning Outcomes
Who Should Be Involved With the Project

- Who is responsible for delivering learning related to the project?
- Who will organize and lead the project?
- What other faculty or staff would benefit from being part of the project?
- Who else might have an interest in the project?
Stakeholders and Audiences:

• In small groups, discuss who your department’s stakeholders and audience are. What is the benefit of sharing your report with these particular groups?

• If you have been involved with previous assessment projects, with whom did you share the report and for what purpose?

• After 10 minutes, designate someone to report out your list of stakeholders and audiences, and either why it would be beneficial to share the report with these groups, or how it was beneficial to share in the past?
Project Planning
Project Planning

It is important to think about all elements of the plan

• Determining the outcome(s)/question(s)
• Choosing an appropriate methodology
• Communicating your results
• Being realistic about your timeline
Review the Project Plan

• Are there elements that surprised you or that you don’t normally consider when developing an assessment project plan?

• Which parts of the plan may be trickier for you to address?
Determining the outcome(s)/question(s)
## Learning Outcomes vs. Performance Metrics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Performance Metrics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Derived from mission and purpose</td>
<td>Derived from description of the work of department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measures contributions to student learning (was the experience transformative?)</td>
<td>Measure performance of the work (did students complete a task?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement = Effectiveness</td>
<td>Achievement = Productivity, Satisfaction or Accomplishment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Require criteria to define levels of effectiveness</td>
<td>Require criteria to define levels of performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual and collective feedback to shape department programs and services</td>
<td>Individual feedback to shape department systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment: how effective were we?</td>
<td>Assessment: how well did we perform our tasks?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the train headed in the right direction?</td>
<td>Is the train on time?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are students learning something?</td>
<td>Are students satisfied with our programs and services?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Layers of Learning Outcomes

University Learning Goals

College/School/Divisional Learning Outcomes

Departmental Learning Outcomes

Program Learning Outcomes

Course/Activity-Based Learning Outcomes
Levels of Learning Outcomes

• **College/School/Divisional Learning Outcomes**
  allows for integration, shared responsibility for student learning across departments

• **Departmental Learning Outcomes**
  students can learn through multiple programs and services offered within the department

• **Program Learning Outcomes**
  students can achieve through participating in one or more activities or services within one program area of a department

• **Course/Activity-Based Learning Outcomes**
  students can achieve through participation in a singular activity or service at one point in time
Residential Education

• **Divisional LO:** Students who participate in Student Affairs programs and services will develop a strong sense of personal identity and form mature, respectful relationships with others.

• **Departmental LO:** Students who engage in Residential Education programs will demonstrate personal responsibility and respect for others.

• **Programmatic LO:** Students who are involved in the residence hall judicial process will be able to describe student rights and responsibilities in the judicial process. (Personal Responsibility/Respect for Others)

• **Activity LO:** Students who participate in a judicial meeting with their residence director will be able to identify the specific policy in the Code of Conduct which was violated.
Methodology
Data and You

• Data do **NOT** make decisions
  “Statistics are used much like a drunk uses a lamppost; for support, not illumination.”
  - Vin Scully

• Data must be restructured into information that:
  • Provides a balanced view of the situation
  • Identifies issues and establishes progress
  • Is relevant to and sufficient for addressing key issues
Collecting Data

• Driven by the learning outcome (purpose)

• Remember to explore existing data

• Remember to consider direct and indirect methods

• Align method with your outcome and the type of information you need
Scope

• What specific population of students will you assess?
• Of the total population what percentage will be invited to participate?
• Will the potential set of data adequately answer the assessment question?

Other considerations:
Do you plan to present or publish the results externally?
• If so, how will you gain consent from students participating in the project?
COMMUNICATING
RESULTS
Institutional Data in the News

“The bad (less good?) news for higher education is that

a) colleges and universities sit on huge amounts of untapped... data about student learning and campus operations; and

b) academic organizations do not have a great history of using data to aid and inform decision-making.”

Communicating Results: **WHY**

**Main Question:** Why is communicating data so important?

- Increases commitment to assessment
- Increases value of assessment
- Increases transparency with stakeholders
- Helps celebrate your successes
- Gives more evidence than anecdotes
Communicating Results: **WHO**

**Main Question:** *Who are your audiences and stakeholders?*

**Internal:**
- The Department and Department Head
- Associate Dean / Associate Vice Provost
- Students
- Your supervisor (if different than the department head)
- The broader institution, Board of Trustees

**External:**
- Accrediting bodies
- Employers
- Other peer institutions
- Alumni
- Conference
- Media (local newspaper, school newspaper)
It’s not just **what** you communicate, but **how** you communicate it.
Communicating Results: WHAT

Main Question: What is your message? How will your data be used to enhance your message?

What specifically do you want each to know?

What are the main message points you want to get across?
  • Successes
  • Improvements
  • Neutral information
Communicating Results: HOW

Main Question: What avenues can we use to communicate our results?

• Assessment Report (primary)
• Briefs
• Audio/Visual
• Handout or poster
• Newsletter
• Assessment Conference
• Assessment corner of a director’s meeting
Timelines
Developing a Realistic Timeline

• Consider the best time to collect the data you need
• Start with your deadline and work backwards
• Allow enough time to:
  • develop and execute methodology
  • develop assessment tools
  • analyze/interpret results
  • write the report

**Keep in mind time parameters of fellow faculty/staff and other partners**
Project Planning

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Upcoming Assessment Workshops

Sign-up for future assessment workshops on the ACP Website:
http://acp.depaultla.org

March 18 – Introduction to Assessment at Loyola
March 25 – Designing Rubrics
April 15 – Cultural Competency in Assessment (Loyola)
April 16 – Cultural Competency in Assessment (DePaul)
May 11 – Writing Effective Reports
Contact Information

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