INTRODUCTION TO ASSESSMENT AT LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

Friday, January 30, 2015

Michael Beazley, Student Development
Shannon Milligan, Faculty Center for Ignatian Pedagogy
Assessment Certificate Program
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!
- We will be adding more workshops
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.depaultlac.org/](http://ACP.depaultlac.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

By the end of the workshop, participants will:

• Have a basic understanding of assessment, including its definition, levels of assessment and types of assessment

• Know how program-level assessment is structured at Loyola, including the sources Loyola uses to create structure and guidelines for assessment

• Know how Loyola’s mission and Ignatian Pedagogy relate to assessment
Name?
Title?
Where do you work?
Poll: How does assessment fit into your role?
Part 1: Introduction to Assessment

Part 2: Guidelines and Structure for Program-Level Assessment at Loyola

Part 3: Assessment at Loyola
Part 1

An Introduction to Assessment
What is Assessment?
An iterative process involving:

- “Systematic collection of information about student learning”
- Capitalizing on available resources: personnel, time, etc
- Most importantly: to drive decision-making about program effectiveness toward meeting set targets
- Especially involving student learning!

Externally Relevant, Which Can Be Scary

- Forbes Magazine “Top Issues Facing Higher Education in 2014”
  - Renewal of the Higher Education Act
  - Workforce preparation
  - Accreditation

- Who decides?

Course/Activity Level: Unit of analysis is Individual Student Learning

Program/Office Level: Unit of analysis is Program-Wide Student Learning

Department/Unit Level: Unit of analysis is learning of all students within the department or unit

College/Division Level: Unit of analysis is learning of all students within the college or division

Institutional Level: Unit of analysis is learning of all Loyola students
Student learning happens everywhere, not just in the classroom
  • Learning Reconsidered
  • National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
  • Kuh’s High-Impact Practices

Demonstrate that (and how) learning occurs

Collaborate to provide richer evidence
Broadly speaking, assessment is:
- More formative (improvement of learning or processes)
- A continuous process
- Not intended for broad generalization
- More focused on practice than theory
- More susceptible to politics and institutional change
- Meant to answer “what has been done” and “what needs to be done”

## Difference between Grades & Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRADES</th>
<th>ASSESSMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goal is to make a <strong>single judgment</strong> of student performance across entire course</td>
<td>Goal is to determine how well students are <strong>mastering an expected learning outcome(s)</strong> throughout their program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lumps together all outcomes/objectives learning and non-learning to create <strong>one judgment of student performance</strong></td>
<td>Explicitly focuses on one or more defined program learning outcomes to <strong>determine how well students are learning that outcome(s)</strong>, then make <strong>improvements</strong> (based on theory of continuous improvement)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Includes elements not related to what students learned (ex. extra credit, deductions for unexcused absences)</td>
<td>Does not include elements other than student learning tied to the program’s defined learning outcomes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Types of Assessment

Summative

Formative

Developmental

*this is not a comprehensive list
Purpose: to make a single evaluative judgment regarding performance.

Example: final examination

Timing: at the end of a process, such as a chapter, course, or event
Formative Assessment

Purpose: to give feedback to allow for improvement.

Example: “muddiest point” exercise, journaling during a retreat

Timing: while a process is occurring

Note: Regardless of timing, most assessment at program-level and higher is formative
Developmental Assessment

**Purpose:** to determine how well students are developing certain skills or competencies – generally based on a theory of development (ex. global citizenship; multiculturalism)

*Especially useful when no expectation students can or will fully develop a skill or competency during program*

Example: a rubric used across time to measure growth on identity development

**Timing:** throughout process – frequently assessment performed multiple times
Primary Reasons: Because we care about the quality of our curricula, programs, and instruction

To tell our story and stories.

Secondary: Accreditation
Part 2

Guidance for and Structure of Program-Level Assessment at Loyola
National
- National Accreditation is available for certain schools that do conform with “traditional” higher education, such as trade and technical colleges.

Regional
- Regional Accreditation is required for all colleges and universities that offer federal financial aid for students.

State
- Teacher preparation programs are under the jurisdiction of the state and are required to meet state standards.

Professional
- Certain programs have their own professional accreditation requirements (such as law, clinical psychology, nursing, business, social work, public health, etc.)

*State and Professional Accreditation Standards tend to be much more specific and stringent than regional accreditation standards.
Regional Accreditation: HLC

Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association

HLC is our regional accrediting body (largest of the 6 regional accreditors)

Why is HLC/Regional Accreditation Important?

- Required for our students to receive federal financial aid
- Required for students’ credits to transfer to almost any reputable higher education institution
- In most fields, required for students degrees to be recognized in the workplace
- Required by many employers to provide tuition compensation to their employees

Our accreditation status is made public and speaks to our institution’s overall quality

- Any areas of concern identified during reviews and visits may be made public as part of our statement of affiliation status (could raise concerns re. institutional and/or program quality with the public)
2014–2015: The Year of Accreditation

- Site visit: February 23 and 24th, 2015
From the HLC Accreditation Criteria 4b:

The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.

1. The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.

2. The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.

3. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.

4. The institution’s processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.

From www.ncahlc.org
The Assessment Cycle

PLAN! (Including writing outcomes)

Gather evidence to support outcomes (Collect data)

Act on findings (Making changes and communicating findings)

Reflect on and interpret findings

Analyze data
Learning outcomes are statements of what students should know or be able to do. They are also:

1) Measurable and observable
2) Clearly written
3) Meaningful
4) Performed by students
5) Transferrable
6) (Realistically) Aspirational (at the right level for your students)

Already know what you want students to learn; learning outcomes solidify and create common agreement on programmatic learning goals among faculty/staff
Faculty/Staff-driven process; should involve as many faculty/staff as possible in creating questions

Need to tie questions directly to one or more of your program’s stated learning outcomes
Consider:

- **Who** you will assess
- **What’s** feasible and already being done
- **When** you will collect data
- **Where** you might find collaborators and existing data
- **Why**: driven by the learning outcome(s) you will measure and/or the question you want to explore
- **How** many students are needed?
“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.”

Analyzing/Interpreting Results

Remember: data assist with telling your story and inform decision-making. Data can also be used for good or to mislead (choose wisely)

Common Methodologies

- Scoring Guides (e.g. rubrics)
- Statistics (descriptive, less often inferential)
- Qualitative (e.g. ethnography, critical theory, coding)

Interpretation of results should be a collective effort
Based on your interpretation of results, what changes might need to be made to improve student learning of your intended outcomes?

Should involve as many of a program’s faculty and staff as possible (accountability)
Communicating Results/Recommendations

So you can

• Share your story!
• Promote transparency

Who should you communicate your results with?

What are the best ways to communicate your results?

• How does this differ based on your audience?
Taking Action

Not enough to simply make recommendations, also need to make plans to take action on the recommendations.

Considerations for planning actions based on recommendations:

• **Timeline** (idea of when you may be able to implement planned actions based on your recommendations)

• **Potential Barriers** (identify any potential barriers to implementing planned actions)
  • Examples: Program restructuring, leadership changes, lack of resources, running out of coffee, etc.
Thoughts:

- You might assess 1-2 learning outcomes per year, on a cycle-and that’s ok!
- You may not feel like you have enough data to make changes to outcomes or curriculum/activities after one year-that’s ok, too!
- Some years you may tweak the process instead-totally ok
- Some years you may celebrate great findings and make no changes-hooray!

The main takeaway is that assessment should not be a “one-off”

**Especially important after major changes to the program, such as curriculum revision, program restructuring, major faculty/staff changes, etc.
Part 3

Assessment at Loyola
Overall, programs and offices have great autonomy in all aspects of assessment, from creation of learning outcomes to how results are used to inform change...

...but we do need to hear from you at least once a year
Assessment’s Role in Administrative Program Review (APR)

- Student Development has an APR cycle
  - Usually two departments undergo an APR each year
  - Internal review prepared by the department
  - External reviewers also do a site visit
  - Recommendations for change offered in final reports
Assessment Plans and Reports

Academic:
- Must have an assessment plan on file with FCIP
- Must submit an annual assessment report to FCIP
- Templates on FCIP website under “Assessment”

Student Development:
- Must submit an Annual Report, which includes a report of assessment activities and plan for the assessment cycle

Co-curricular, non-Student Development
- Processes typically internally set
Why Do We Assess at Loyola?

Because we promise to prepare people to lead extraordinary lives

Because our transformative education calls for “Expanding Horizons and Deepening Knowledge”

Because reflection leading to action is an important component of Ignatian pedagogy
Ignatian Pedagogy Paradigm

- Context
- Experience
- Reflection
- Action
- Evaluation

The cycle flows from Context to Experience to Reflection to Action and back to Evaluation.
The More You Know...

**Faculty Center for Ignatian Pedagogy**
- Director and Coordinator of Assessment
- Assistance with course and program-level, curricular and co-curricular

**Student Development**
- Director of Assessment
- Assessment Working Group
- Assistance with activity and program-level

Other faculty and staff members

Questions?
Thank you for joining us!

Michael Beazley: mbeazl1@luc.edu
Shannon Milligan: smilligan@luc.edu