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Assessing Assessment
Draft October 2009

All dimensions of the assessment process presume sensitivity to the particular institutional, college, departmental, and individuals' contexts. It is expected that initial efforts will be unevenly distributed across the different dimensions, that pilot activities will be revised, and that each program will focus and implement assessment in ways appropriate to its own distinct context, needs, and questions.

1. Assessment Team and System

Absent	Minimal	Emerging	Developing	Adequate	Effective	Outstanding
0	1	2	3	4	5	6
ABSENT	The assessment process engages program faculty, leadership, and other stakeholders indirectly involved with the program (students, graduate students, cross-institutional faculty, accreditors, alumni, advisory boards, and employers) as appropriate; the system is recurring and dynamic, and implemented and refined over time for continuous improvement.					

2. Program Goals, Outcomes, and Measures

Absent	Minimal	Emerging	Developing	Adequate	Effective	Outstanding
0	1	2	3	4	5	6
ABSENT	Goals and outcomes reflect stakeholder consensus and, curricular alignment, and support WSU strategic initiatives. Multiple measures are complementary and are designed to illuminate questions faculty and administration care about, yielding useful information..					

3. Action Plan

Absent	Minimal	Emerging	Developing	Adequate	Effective	Outstanding
0	1	2	3	4	5	6
ABSENT	Assessment system informs and guides demonstrable change and engages all instrumental program personnel in the scholarship of teaching and learning. Actions may include changes and improvements to pedagogy, curricula, faculty development, and assessment practices in order to enrich the student learning experience.					

4. Administrative Leadership & Support

Absent	Minimal	Emerging	Developing	Adequate	Effective	Outstanding
0	1	2	3	4	5	6
ABSENT	Assessment process prioritized and robustly supported by program leaders, including significant allocation of time and resources; policy engages stakeholders, and process yields information used by administration and faculty with demonstrable impact on curriculum, teaching practice, and student learning outcomes.					

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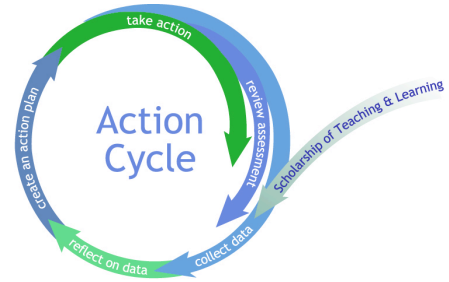
Assessment of Assessment

Washington State University

Office of Assessment and Innovation

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October 2009



1. Assessment Team and System

	Absent		Minimal		Emerging		Developing		Adequate		Effective		Outstanding	
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6							
ABSENT	Assessment purpose primarily focused on tracking student progress.		Assessment purpose clearly focused on accreditation; may compare educational performance with educational purposes and provide some guidance for curricular and course design.		Assessment purpose is first to improve students' learning experiences. Purpose demonstrates an exploration about real questions about teaching and learning that engages faculty experience. It follows that purpose integrates program initiatives with institutional mission, informs curriculum and instruction, and guides decisions about professional development and resource allocation.									
	Program participation includes one or two faculty or staff to comply with accreditation requirements but little evidence that assessment is understood to be integral to teaching and learning.		A substantial number of key members of the program have been designated to meet regularly to address the assessment process. External stakeholders (alumni, employers, accreditors, cross institutional partners, students, grad students, etc) contribute to the assessment process periodically.		All program faculty, key staff and external stakeholders participate regularly and are engaged in a series of activities (evidence gathering, analysis, action plans, and pedagogical innovation) based on evidence gathered and that apply the scholarship of teaching and learning for continuous improvement.									
	Program reporting & communication is largely external, limited to a few faculty who may have knowledge of assessment initiatives, but syllabi, activities, and assessment practices provide little indication of stakeholder engagement.		The report is shared with multiple audiences as well as faculty and staff. Faculty are generally aware of outcomes and ongoing assessment process, though participation in program assessment – and the implementation of identified changes may not be fully shared.		A systematic communication process has been established and includes ALL program stakeholders—faculty, staff, students—as appropriate. Public dialogue is welcomed. Reports to external agencies and within institution include clear strategies and support for change (time, funding, teaching & learning resources/centers, etc); Assessment is educative; provides innovative models of education and assessment, informing internal and external stakeholders.									

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2. Program Goals, Outcomes, Measures

Absent 0	Minimal 1	Emerging 2	Developing 3	Adequate 4	Effective 5	Outstanding 6
ABSENT	<p>Program Goals are numerous, potentially excessive in quantity; may appear to privilege topic coverage. Goals may not communicate unique program strengths (curriculum, pedagogy, student learning experiences). May lack alignment with institutional goals.</p>		<p>Goals are focused on competency and limited in number, complement institutional goals, and communicate unique program strengths (curriculum, pedagogy, and/or student learning experiences).</p>		<p>Goals are overarching & focused on key competencies; effectively represented and integrated across courses throughout program; align with institutional mission and goals; and clearly link to concrete curriculum, pedagogical approaches, and student learning experiences.</p>	
	<p>Student learning outcomes are plentiful, abstract, conflate coverage with observable performance, or may focus principally on information students have learned rather than skills and application, or approaches to learning.</p>		<p>Outcomes are concrete and focus on core learning, identifying knowledge, skills, and application that students can demonstrate and that can be assessed; may include approaches to learning.</p>		<p>Outcomes focus on what students know and what they can do with what they know, identifying not only knowledge, skills, and applications but also values, attitudes, and habits of mind that contribute to successful achievement.</p>	
	<p>Measures are loosely aligned with learning outcomes; may focus on a single measure, or on what information has been learned; may not be embedded in coursework or clearly related to teaching or learning activities.</p> <p>Most measures are indirect measures (based on perceptions) rather than direct measures of performance.</p> <p>Measures may not address questions identified by or that concern faculty or administration. Measures may emphasize compliance with limited attention to collecting evidence that could yield insights into student learning or development or other aspects of program impact.</p>		<p>Multiple measures align with learning outcomes and focus on student performance (direct measures); make use of core course activities.</p> <p>Assessment includes a base of direct measures, in addition to indirect measures; measures designed with some alignment.</p> <p>Measures may address questions identified by faculty or administration. Measures attempt to collect evidence that provides insight into student learning or processes, cognitive or affective development, or other aspects of program impact.</p>		<p>Multiple measures focus on students' performance, privileging direct measures of student learning and the learning process; are strategically aligned and embedded in core course activities across the program; align with learning outcomes.</p> <p>Indirect measures provide complementary evidence on perceptions or reflections. Design is informed by best practices in SoTL.</p> <p>Measures clearly address questions faculty and administration care about. Measures can contribute formative data to guide program improvement; may assess effectiveness of core learning activities; degree of curricular coherence; cognitive and affective development of students; impact of instructional design or innovations or program climate; or other educational processes or program outcomes.</p>	

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	<p>Evidence (Data) is easily obtained and characterized by quantity (ie, numbers of students retained, graduated, etc.) rather than quality.</p> <p>Evidence may be compromised by lack of breadth, depth, validity and/or reliability.</p> <p>Assessment may lock faculty and students into activities that target uniform impact; may undermine students' unique purposes for learning.</p>	<p>Evidence focuses on one or more dimensions of student learning outcomes.</p> <p>Evidence includes reasonable breadth (sample size, cohort selection, etc) and depth (purposeful alignment and scope). Has at least minimally acceptable validity and reliability (or referential adequacy); or demonstrates commitment to an assessment process that builds validity and reliability.</p> <p>Assessment activities do not deter students in their unique purposes for learning.</p>	<p>Evidence integrates multiple dimensions of student learning outcomes or learning processes, and/or teaching and learning activities.</p> <p>Evidence is credible, with solid breadth (sample size, cohort selection, etc) and depth (purposeful alignment and scope); is valid and reliable (or has referential adequacy); applies best practices in data collection and assessment.</p> <p>Assessment activities support students in their unique purposes for learning.</p>
	<p>Analysis may focus on indirect measures (such as course evaluations or exit surveys), and lack a foundation in direct measures.</p> <p>Limited integration of measures. May not consider relevant context (student evaluations, for instance, may be averaged and ranked with little regard to class size & level, or relationship to course outcomes, instructional innovations, or program goals).</p> <p>Analysis and reflection engage a limited number of faculty, administrators or other stakeholders; have loose ties with processes and people with responsibilities and opportunities to implement change.</p>	<p>Analysis includes two or more direct measures and focuses on a key attribute of the program.</p> <p>Analysis begins to integrate direct measures and indirect measures; may consider findings in the light of SoTL research or program context.</p> <p>Analysis and reflection is representative of the work of more than a few teaching faculty in the program. Encourages questions and reflection. May apply SoTL research.</p>	<p>Multiple measures are considered and presented coherently and as complementary, clearly illuminating attributes of the program.</p> <p>Analysis balances the findings from direct measures of performance with those of indirect measures; analysis is informed by SoTL research and current literature and specific context of program, etc.</p> <p>Reflection is compelling and representative of the work of many teaching faculty in the program. May raise new questions or consider data in a new light.</p>

3. Action Plan

		Absent		Minimal		Emerging		Developing		Adequate		Effective		Outstanding	
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6							
ABSENT	<p>Relationship to evidence or the evidence itself is problematic. There is little integration of literature on teaching and learning. Previous recommendations may be selectively unheeded.</p>	Evidence or action planned is perhaps limited, but are appropriately qualified: better evidence gathering strategies are planned or proposed, or changes are measured. Plans may include strategies to engage more reflection and analysis by faculty, staff, and students, and plans include greater engagement in the scholarship of teaching and learning.						Action plan draws on credible evidence, analysis, and prior lessons learned to systematically inform and reshape teaching and learning practice and expand the scholarship of teaching and learning. It identifies clear & reasonable strategies, timelines, essential resources, specific roles, responsibilities, and administrative support for follow through.							
	<p>Relationship to curriculum Action plan is vague or focused on general goals like improving outcomes, or retention with little attention to the processes that required for achieving those goals. Plan provides little evidence of feedback that will engage stakeholders.</p>	Action plan includes new ways of organizing curriculum, introducing new pedagogies, or new strategies for conceptualizing and measuring learning.						Action plan identifies new and more effective ways to align and integrate new curricula, with innovative pedagogies and strategies for conceptualizing and measuring learning. It provides a clear rationale for how it supports important student learning objectives and institutional goals and builds on prior assessment and innovation. Expands community engagement by integrating with other disciplines and communities.							
	<p>Relationship to teaching practices is missing or eclipsed by focus on student performance with little attention to accounting of <i>how</i> students learn (or fail). Perhaps strategies for decreasing class size are pursued.</p>	Action item may include professional development opportunities, encouragement of teaching focused grant opportunities, strategies that redistribute teaching responsibilities in ways that engage graduate students more fully, librarians or other professionals. internships or lab sections may be identified as strategies to explore.						Action plan includes ongoing assessment of teaching innovations and associated learning and learning strategies. Action plans therefore recognize and build on identification of program and faculty strengths and best practices, value and support informed innovation, and ongoing faculty development, including allocation of time & resources. The plan actively promotes culture of collaboration and faculty learning communities and contributes to SoTL							

4. Administrative Leadership & Support

Absent 0	Minimal 1	Emerging 2	Developing 3	Adequate 4	Effective 5	Outstanding 6
ABSENT	Leadership engagement as evidenced in communication with stakeholders is limited to generalities and usually one way. Concrete examples are limited—perhaps claims of student satisfaction, graduate rates, etc.		Communication with stakeholders related to assessment and teaching and learning is two-way. There is evidence that students, faculty, and external stakeholders have engaged or provided input into the assessment process.		Leadership participates in assessment; recognizes responsibility to the public for holding meaningful learning outcomes goals and expectations for students by providing information about how well students meet those goals and how program strives continually improve. External stakeholders as well as internal stakeholders are regularly engaged in structured feedback. Faculty who engage in SoTL are featured in publications and presentations.	
	Leadership engagement as evidenced in SoTL is evidenced by support for occasional workshops and recognition and promotion of publications or grants that focus on SoTL.		Leadership identifies and disseminates scholarship in teaching, learning and assessment; supports speakers and visiting expertise, and supports student engagement in focus groups or panel discussion on their experience with curriculum, etc.		Leadership promotes a culture of evidence, engages representatives from across the educational community, and encourages evidence-based innovation in the classroom and in curricula. Leaders model SoTL by engaging in the Scholarship of Leadership related to teaching, learning, and assessment.	
	Leadership engagement as evidenced in policy that acknowledges the contributions of faculty to research in teaching and learning and the participation in assessment initiatives.		Leadership encourages examination and policy responses to nuances of assessment, for instance, student evaluations are used in ways beyond ranked averages.		Leaders embrace responsibility for institutionalizing change. Assessment initiatives are available in current policy documents, and policy includes participation policies like release time or other ways of valuing service or building assessment capacity. Key attributes of a culture of evidence are reflected in program priorities (budget, activities, etc.)	

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Primary Sources

Nine Principles of Good Assessment Practice

Adapted from American Association for Higher Education, *Assessment Forum*: Alexander W. Astin; Trudy W. Banta; K. Patricia Cross; Elaine El-Khawas; Peter T. Ewell; Pat Hutchings; Theodore J. Marchese; Kay M. McClenney; Marcia Mentkowski; Margaret A. Miller; E. Thomas Moran; Barbara D. Wright.

The American Association of Higher Education summarized nine principles for good assessment practice. The principles are rich with detail about the linkages between assessment and learning. The ability for faculty to understand and apply these principles to their courses and programs was the primary goal of the initiative.

The Transformative Assessment Project is a three-year project designed to elicit new ideas about assessment practices and systems that will transform teaching and learning, and to help institutions of higher education put these ideas into action. Together, staff from the NLII, the Flashlight Program of the [TLT Group](#), the [AAHE](#), and the [Coalition for Networked Information](#) have set up the Transformative Assessment Project (TAP) Team to develop, explore and apply these ideas. Current members of the TAP Team are Gary Brown, Darren Cambridge, Steve Ehrmann (TLT), Joan Lippincott (CNI), Patricia McGee, Vicki Suter (NLII) and Robin Zuniga (TLT); Colleen Carmean served as a member during her tenure as NLII 2002 Fellow (see her November/December 2003 Technology Source article on her participation, "Assessment Boot Camp," at <http://ts.mivu.org/default.asp?show=article&id=1056>).

<http://www.educause.edu/ELI/Archives/TransformativeAssessment/2599>

MEMORANDUM FOR THE HEADS OF EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

October 9, 1009

FROM: Peter R. Orszag, Director

Office of Management and Budget, Executive Office of the President, Washington DC 20503

SUBJECT: Increased Emphasis on Program Evaluations

Assessment of evidentiary support for budget priorities. Agencies should identify their major budgetary priorities and assess the adequacy of evidence supporting those priorities. Agencies should also identify key priorities for further evaluation in the coming years. In addition, for any new initiative or significant expansion of an existing program, agencies should:

- Provide credible evidence of the program's effectiveness;
- Describe how the agency plans to demonstrate the program's impact or otherwise learn from the initiative, and how the agency plans to act on the new information; or
- Explain why neither of these approaches is appropriate

http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/assets/memoranda_2010/m10-01.pdf